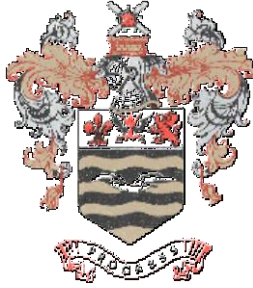


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BLACKPOOL COUNCIL

Tuesday, 21 November 2023

To: The Members of Blackpool Council

Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of **Blackpool Council** to be held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Blackpool on Wednesday, 29 November 2023 commencing at 6.00 pm for the transaction of the business specified below.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Lewis'.

Director of Governance and Partnerships

Business

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

(1) the type of interest concerned either a

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

and

(2) the nature of the interest concerned

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

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2023 (Pages 1 - 4)

To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 20 September 2023 as a true and correct record.

3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive official announcements from the Mayor.

4 PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS (Pages 5 - 6)

To receive representations and questions from members of the public in accordance with Procedural Standing Order 9.

5 EXECUTIVE REPORTS (Pages 7 - 36)

To consider the following portfolio reports to Council from each Cabinet Member:

- a) Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Tourism, Arts and Culture
- b) Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Partnerships and Performance
- c) Cabinet Member for Levelling Up – Place
- d) Cabinet Member for Climate Change
- e) Cabinet Member for Children’s Services
- f) Cabinet Member for Levelling Up – People
- g) Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Street Scene and Neighbourhoods
- h) Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
- i) Cabinet Member for Young People and Aspiration

Members are reminded that:

- Each Executive Member has up to three minutes to present their portfolio report (a green light will indicate there is one minute remaining, red for when the time is up). There will then be an opportunity for questions/comments.
- There will be three minutes per question/ comment from any Councillor on anything within the portfolio and no limit to the number of times a Councillor can ask a question.
- There will be no set overall maximum time for each report to be debated although the Mayor will decide when a suitable time has elapsed and move to the next report.

6 MARTON MOSS NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (Pages 37 - 120)

To consider the recommendations from the Executive at its meeting on 6 November 2023 regarding the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Development Plan.

7 LANCASHIRE DEVOLUTION (Pages 121 - 124)

To provide an update on the current discussions relating to the setting up of a Lancashire County Combined Authority and an accompanying devolution deal with Central Government.

Members are asked to note that a more detailed report will be circulated in due course as this information is not available at the time of publication of this agenda.

8 SCRUTINY UPDATE REPORT (Pages 125 - 130)

To consider the Scrutiny Update Report for 2023/2024.

9 AUDIT COMMITTEE UPDATE REPORT (Pages 131 - 144)

To consider the Audit Committee Half Yearly Report for 2023/2024.

Venue information:

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

Other information:

For queries regarding this agenda please contact Sarah Chadwick, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser, Tel: (01253) 477153, e-mail sarah.chadwick@blackpool.gov.uk

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

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Present:

Councillor Campbell (in the Chair)

Councillors

Baker	Ellison	Jones	S Smith
Bamborough	Farrell	Marshall	Taylor
Benson	Fenlon	B Mitchell	Thomas
Boughton	Flanagan	C Mitchell	Walsh
N Brookes	Galley	D Mitchell	Warne
P Brookes	Hobson	Roberts	Webb
S Brookes	Hoyle	Roe	Williams
Burdess	Hugo	D Scott	Wilshaw
Cartmell	Humphreys	Mrs Scott	
Cooper	Hunter	Sloman	
Critchley	Jackson	M Smith	

In Attendance:

Neil Jack, Chief Executive

John Blackledge, Director of Community and Environmental Services

Antony Lockley, Director of Strategy and Assistant Chief Executive

Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health

Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships / Monitoring Officer

Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance

Jenni Cook, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser

Jenny Bollington, Media Manager

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 28 JUNE 2023

Resolved: That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 28 June 2023 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements made by the Mayor.

4 EXECUTIVE REPORTS AND COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT

The Council received reports from the Executive Members on areas within their portfolio.

Members also received a report from representatives of the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority in relation to the work being undertaken by the authority.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2023

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

Notes:

1. Councillor Benson, Cabinet Member for Young People and Aspiration agreed to confirm for Councillor M Scott if RAAC (concrete) was present in any Council buildings, Council-owned buildings or assets.
2. In response to a question from Councillor Walsh regarding the additional CCTV cameras in the town, Councillor Burdess, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Street Scene and Neighbourhoods agreed to provide written confirmation of the planned consultation and proposed locations.
3. Councillor Farrell, Cabinet Member for Levelling Up: People, agreed to provide a written response to:
 - Councillor Warne on the number of people supported by projects helping with food, cost of energy and wider essentials
 - Councillor Galley on the financial consequences and risks associated with Catering Services contracts with academies.
4. Councillor Hobson, Cabinet Member for Children's Services agreed to provide Councillor Sloman with details of the mechanism in place to ensure that practical burdens were borne by authorities that placed looked after children within the borough.
 - Following a question from Councillor Cooper, Councillor Hugo, Cabinet Member for Climate Change agreed to provide details of the recycling facilities available for larger Council owned buildings.

5 HONORARY ALDERMEN

Following a deferral from the last meeting, members considered proposals for a special meeting to be held to confer the title of Honorary Alderman for recently retired councillors that wished to be considered for the award in line with agreed criteria.

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

- '1. To agree to hold a special meeting of Council to confer the title of 'Honorary Alderman' of the Borough of Blackpool under section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to three former councillors:
 - Don Clapham
 - Gary Coleman
 - Allan Matthewsthe time and date of this to be agreed by the Mayor.
2. That the Group Leaders continue to meet to review the Civic Honours available in Blackpool and report back to a future meeting on any recommended changes'.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2023

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

Mayor

(The meeting ended at 7.57 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance

Tel: 01253 477127

E-mail: lorraine.hurst@blackpool.gov.uk

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Council:
29 November 2023

PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS - SPEAKERS

- | NAME | SUBJECT |
|--------------|---|
| 1. Ian White | Mr White wishes to speak on the following issue:

“I would like to speak in support of the Council's new consultation on the expansion of the Selective Licensing scheme across the town's 8 inner wards. Detailing the benefits that earlier schemes brought.” |

A response will be given by Councillor Mark Smith, Cabinet Member for Levelling Up - Place. No other Councillors are permitted to speak on this item.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2. Tom Barlow,
Blackpool Park
Golf Club | Mr Barlow wishes to speak on the following issue:

“We have since March of last year been emailing councillors with the details regarding the plight of both Blackpool Park Golf Club (BPGC) and the golf course. Although we have been keeping the Leader of the Council along with Alan Cavill fully apprised of the situation, we wish to ensure that all councillors understand the significance of what will happen if the council fails to protect this public asset.” |
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A response will be given by Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council. No other Councillors are permitted to speak on this item.

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

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Executive Member Report to the Council
29 November 2023

AGENDA ITEM 5(a)

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBER FOR TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE – COUNCILLOR LYNN WILLIAMS

Portfolio areas of responsibility:

- Tourism and marketing services
- Tourism-based regeneration
- Arts and culture
- Illuminations
- Built heritage
- Planning and land use
- Corporate Services (ICT, HR, Customer First, communications)
- Financial management

Introduction

The cabinet member will present the report to Council and report on any key issues.

Theme 1 - Budget 2023/24

Local Authority finances remain challenging with now at least 40 councils reported in the media as declaring or about to formally declare challenges with their financial standing and there are many others who are known to be struggling. In response a Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee has been established to investigate the level of financial distress across local authorities with Blackpool Council being invited to present evidence on this matter in November.

The third external financial monitoring report for the Council for the current financial year was presented to the Executive on 6 November 2023. The key financial headlines for Blackpool Council as at month 5 are as follows:

1. An overall forecast adverse revenue outturn variance of **£4.9 million**, an improvement on earlier forecasts. This includes £6.0 million for Children's Social Care but with some positive trends in residential care placements emerging; £3.5 million for Adults' Social Care commissioning placements and a likely worsening trend; £0.5 million on home-to-school transport demand, offset by £1.6 million 'savings' in treasury management due to some slippage on capital schemes, £1.3 million from other services and a further £2.2 million from budgeted transfers to reserves that are no longer required. Pressures arising from the local government pay award should be offset by a commensurate saving from reducing electricity tariffs.

2. Residual working balances are still positive at **£1.9 million** and whilst this is low, it is significantly improved on the £1 million forecast at month 3.
3. Earmarked revenue reserves at **£28.6 million**.
4. Ongoing work with the Safety Valve Programme of the Department for Education is making significant inroads to the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant's medium-term financial plan, whose deficit should have reduced from £2.8 million to **£1.6 million** by 31 March 2024 and breakeven by 2024/25.
5. The aggregate of profits and losses across the Council's wholly-owned companies forecast at a net loss of **£0.4 million** but improving all the time post-COVID.
6. A budget gap currently forecast in year 1 (2024/25) of the next 3 years' medium-term financial plan of **£22.8 million**, which is being worked on constantly.
7. The new business critical systems of *TechnologyOne Financials* and *Midland HR i-Trent* are now fully live and functionality being employed to improve strategic financial planning whilst delivering processing efficiencies.
8. The backlog of external audits of the Council's statements of accounts is being addressed, with 2020/21's due to be signed off in advance of the next Audit Committee in November and 2021/22's expected to be approved by March 2024.

Considering the financial challenges being faced by the Local Government sector, the Council's financial position continues to be difficult but relatively stable. With further demographic and inflationary pressures expected over the coming years, we continue to press for recognition of these extra costs in future funding settlements.

Theme 2 - Showtown – Museum of Fun and Entertainment

Showtown - Blackpool's first museum which celebrates the development of tourism through popular entertainment including Blackpool Illuminations, the Seafront and Promenade, Circus, Magic, Popular Dance and Performance is set to open its doors to the public in March 2024.

The museum site is now visibly starting to take its final form, with set works and installation of audio visual and interactive displays due for completion at the end of November 2023.

Collections and loan installations will take place in December through to January including loans from the Victoria and Albert Museum Collection.

Showtown will create 40 jobs in its first year and 20 volunteering opportunities offering over 300 volunteer days per year. Additionally, Showtown is expected to attract approximately 200,000 visitors per year, generating £14.65 million net additional visitor expenditure for the local economy and providing life-enhancing opportunities for learning, engagement and employment.

Identification, interviewing and auditioning of the opening Cast and Crew and management team commences next month. There is an interactive programme of recruitment aimed to attract and retain emerging creatives and strong business and commercial acumen to the team, with suitable emerging induction, training and development activities.

Showtown will be operated by the newly-approved charity, the Blackpool Heritage and Museum Trust, with existing Blackpool Council Heritage Team, Learning and Engagement Team and Marketing Team colleagues aiming to be TUPE'd across to the new Trust for 1 January 2024. Any further new colleagues will commence in role directly with the Blackpool Heritage and Museum Trust.

Showtown's pre-opening marketing activity commences whilst BBC Strictly Comes Dancing is in town, followed by a heavy pre-opening campaign from January 2024 working with Visit Blackpool, local and regional partners as well as national profile for launch. A series of soft opening events will take place in the fortnight directly preceding opening, and Showtown will open to visitors on Friday 15 March 2024 ahead of Easter and prepared for our first full season.

General questions / comments

Councillors will have the opportunity to raise questions / comments on any matter in the Cabinet Member's portfolio.

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DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBER FOR PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE – COUNCILLOR IVAN TAYLOR

Portfolio areas of responsibility:

- Relationships with all the Council wholly owned companies and the shareholder lead Cabinet Member
- Relationships with partner organisations:
 - Blackpool Tower complex and associated buildings (Merlin)
 - Hounds Hill Shopping Centre
- Corporate strategy development and research
- Governance
- Contracts, policy and purchasing

Introduction

The cabinet member will present the report to Council and report on any key issues.

Theme 1 - Houndshill Development Update

Following the purchase of the Houndshill Shopping Centre in 2019, the Council purchased land to build an extension in 2021 and this has now been developed in to the “Backlot Diner” to compliment the cinema. Backlot took possession of these in October and are working toward a spring 2024 opening. The cinema multiplex will house multiple screens, including one of the largest IMAX screens in the country.

Theme 2 - Waste and Environmental Services

Blackpool Waste Services (aka ENVECO) is the Council’s wholly-owned waste and environmental services company, formed in 2019 to deliver much valued kerbside refuse and recycling collections. In September 2021 it took on responsibility for Street Cleansing, the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC), StreetScene Services and associated frontline services that help to maintain clean streets in Blackpool.

This integration of staff and physical resources has led to new ways of agile, co-ordinated working, delivering improved environmental outcomes for local residents, businesses and visitors to Blackpool. By improving co-ordination of the services it delivers, ENVECO has achieved a visible improvement in cleanliness across the town, particularly in the treatment of weeds, and has improved access to recycling collections and facilities.

Further significant developments include the design and implementation of a 'Cleansing Inspection Management System' to make sure all streets in the town are manually inspected and graded according to cleanliness every month. The data gathered is used to plan future works and the resources needed to continually improve the standard achieved. Elsewhere, by putting additional resources into the Neighbourhood Environmental Action Team, ENVECO has realised a step change for both residents and members in the delivery of integrated environmental services. Improved co-ordination with the BID team has also led to an improvement in the appearance of the town centre.

Building on these achievements, the Company is now considering how to adapt to major changes in government policy on waste and recycling. Following a number of delays, the UK Government is bringing forward environmental policies designed to reduce waste and carbon emissions, including the Resources and Waste Strategy and Environment Bill. Over the coming years, these will include changes such as:

- Separate weekly food waste collections;
- Introduction of the Deposit Return Scheme;
- Packaging Reforms, including extended producer responsibility; and
- Simpler Recycling.

The provision of a separate weekly collection of organic food waste from every household in the UK by the end of 2025 will increase the cost burden on local authorities. The process will require the procurement of specialist vehicles and it is anticipated will need more frontline staff. The Government has suggested that this important and positive measure would be funded, but has yet to clarify how the funding would be allocated. The Council hopes that sufficient New Burdens Funding is provided to avoid putting pressure on budgets elsewhere.

Another new initiative that the team is working to prepare for is the Deposit Return Scheme. This scheme, due to be implemented nationally by the end of 2025, is designed to encourage people to return their plastic and metal drinks containers by providing a small financial incentive. The implementation of this scheme could reduce the amount of material collected from households, leading to ENVECO needing to consider the number and type of vehicles needed, the routes of collection rounds and the method of collection among other factors, including a potential reduction in income from the recyclate collected.

We are also seeing the introduction of the Extended Producer Responsibility places responsibility on manufacturers to pay for the disposal of their packaging and end-of-life products and therefore encourages them to find ways of reducing the amount of material used and making it more recyclable. In this way, it addresses one of the main concerns voiced by some climate advocates that the responsibility for reducing, re-using and recycling should not sit mostly with consumers. Based on the 'polluter pays' principal, it will be accompanied by an Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) which will allow for some flexibility as manufacturers make changes to their processes. Ultimately the aim here is that packaging waste reduces, which will again impact on the configuration of collection services locally.

“Simpler Recycling” relates to identifying a set group of materials that can be recycled across the country, no matter where you live in the UK. It aims to increase participation in recycling by considering which materials can be disposed of in the same bin, with an aim to minimise the number of bins households need but ensuring that recyclate is in the best condition possible, such as allowing disposal of dry material in the same bin.

Taken together, the current changing landscape is one which will prompt significant positive change and potential but which includes uncertainty and serious risks in terms of funding, procurement and operations. To address this, the Council and ENVECO have recently established two key project delivery groups which will also consider further issues related to climate change and the future sustainability of the Company and its operational infrastructure.

General questions / comments

Councillors will have the opportunity to raise questions / comments on any matter in the Cabinet Member’s portfolio.

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CABINET MEMBER FOR LEVELLING UP: PLACE - COUNCILLOR MARK SMITH

Portfolio areas of responsibility:

- Economic development based regeneration including growth and prosperity
- Enterprise Zones
- Town Deal, Levelling Up and Community Renewal Funding
- Asset management/ Council owned properties
- Strategic housing
- Strategic transport management
- Building Services
- Business Improvement District (BID)

Introduction

The cabinet member will present the report to Council and report on any key issues.

Theme 1 - Talbot Gateway Phase 2 - Hotel and Tram

Robertson Construction is looking to complete work on the Holiday Inn hotel in January 2024. When the work is complete RBH Management will prepare the hotel for opening by Easter 2024, alongside the temporary car park and new underpass. Recruitment to the management team has commenced, with the plan that further staff recruitment will begin early in the New Year.

The tramway extension is now complete. The area has now been handed back to the hotel contractor to complete the external works to building, after which the overhead cables will be installed. Blackpool Transport is conducting staff training and intends to start operation of the additional tram service shortly after the hotel is opened.

Theme 2 - High Street Accelerator funding bid

In September 2023, the Council was one of only ten places receiving an invitation to host the government's new High Street Accelerator Pilot Programme. This aims to encourage local stakeholders to work in partnership to support the long-term revival and regeneration of declining High Streets through accelerating development.

The programme provides seed funding of £237,000 until March 2025 to support activity that will make the identified area cleaner, safer or more appealing. The overall objective is that addressing these issues will lead to increased private investment in the area. The programme also opens up access to a share of £5 million “Green Spaces Funding” to improve greening in the chosen area agreed by the partnership.

If successful, Blackpool Council would oversee the initial stages of the programme. The future management will then be driven by a public-private sector partnership covering the identified area and chaired by a representative of the private sector. The detailed arrangements will be reviewed if and when the council’s proposed High Streets are confirmed as a pilot.

Confirmation of interest was required by 26 September 2023 and a formal short bid was submitted by 16 October 2023, highlighting the Abingdon Street and Queen Street area as the proposed target focus that met the government’s specific criteria. A government decision on the approval of the chosen High Streets is expected in November 2023.

Theme 3 - Abingdon Street Market Opening - Phase 2 Update

The Council purchased Abingdon Street Market in October 2020 after securing £3.63 million from the Getting Building Fund, appointing local company Little Blackpool Leisure to operate the market. Since re-opening the food court in May 2023, the feedback has been very positive and has already helped new footfall into the town centre. Earlier this month Little Blackpool Leisure opened the retail section with 14 vibrant retail stalls offering a range of products and services, including fresh produce. This is a very exciting prospect for Blackpool enabling new start-ups to have a platform for growth and for more established businesses to secure a footing in the heart of Blackpool town centre.

Theme 4 - Blackpool Central Update

Construction of the new multi-storey car park is due for completion early next year. The developer is due to hand the car park over to the Council in December 2023 following which the Council, as the long term operator, needs to undertake a package of fit out works prior to the car park coming into use in early 2024.

Proposals for the relocation of Blackpool Courts from existing facilities on Chapel Street to Devonshire Road site are being managed by His Majesty’s Courts and Tribunal Services. A planning application for the new development was received during October and subject to a positive decision this could see development activity on the site take place sometime during May/June next year, for a completion of the facilities in late 2025.

General questions / comments

Councillors will have the opportunity to raise questions / comments on any matter in the Cabinet Member’s portfolio.

CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE - COUNCILLOR JANE HUGO

Portfolio areas of responsibility:

- Climate change
- Energy and environment
- Flood and water management
- Coastal defence schemes and sea water quality
- Strategic waste management
- Parks and green environment
- Life Events (including cemeteries and crematorium, registrars and Coroner's support)

Introduction

The cabinet member will present the report to Council and report on any key issues.

Theme 1 - Renewable energy

On 26 June 2019 the Council approved a Climate Change emergency declaration which aims to make the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2030 and achieve 100% clean energy across the Council's full range of functions by 2030.

In October 2021 and April 2022, UK Government released the Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener and the British Energy Security Strategy. Both emphasised the need to accelerate deployment of renewable energy generation to put the UK on the path to zero and provide greater energy and price security. Energy markets have shown unprecedented price increases and volatility in 2022, with supply uncertainties and increased risk keeping prices above pre-pandemic levels. If the Council is to achieve its carbon emission targets, increasing the deployment of renewables is essential in tackling emissions and Blackpool is an excellent location to explore renewable power sources such as wind, tidal and solar.

With the sun providing enough daily energy to power the world 10,000 times over, solar power is a globally abundant resource. There is currently 14GW of solar capacity in the UK split between large scale projects to smaller scale rooftop solar. Officers are starting to deploy solar panels across the Council's estate, with the potential for an initial phase of roof mounted solar on a number of buildings including Palatine Leisure Centre, Moor Park Health and Leisure Centre, Starr Gate Tram Depot, Sandcastle and Layton Depot. Work will complete in the next few weeks to install solar power at the Winter Gardens, with panels capable of generating around 5% of the building's requirement, delivering a potential saving of £1.2 million over 25 years and likely to pay for the cost of installation in less than 4 years.

The review of assets also identified a fantastic and exciting opportunity which could make a significant contribution to Blackpool's renewable energy ambitions through the potential for a ground-based solar farm at Blackpool airport. The potential £14.2m scheme, which would not affect the operation of the airport, would generate some 18.7 million kilowatt hours of renewable electricity per annum, equivalent to the demand of 6,000 average UK homes or 75% of the Council's annual electricity requirement. The proposal is currently in detailed economic technical appraisal.

The UK has the best wind resource in Europe and work continues to review the Council's estate for locations to add to the Council's current turbines. Due to the urban makeup and health and safety constraints sites are limited but opportunities continue to be explored. The development of off shore wind farms locally could allow the Council to take renewable energy directly. Discussions are on-going with the Council's energy suppliers and the developers to understand the costs and supplier needs.

The UK is estimated to have around half of the potential wave and tidal resource in Europe and with one of the highest tidal ranges in the UK, the Fylde could be a suitable location. There is currently work ongoing to develop a scheme on the Fylde estuary, although projects have struggled due to the financial model in place for such schemes. Other projects under development and consideration include using heat from data centres in heat networks and ways of storing surplus energy in batteries to address "intermittency" (the change in the amount of power which can be produced by renewables due to changing weather conditions).

The Council has recently seen the deployment of its first low carbon/ Net zero heating retrofit project at the Grange community centre, comprising air source heat pump and roof mounted solar. The @thegrangere newables project is an excellent opportunity using renewable energy technologies in a community centre environment, reducing carbon dioxide emissions and energy costs, assisting the local community and putting the Council on the path to sustainable heating solutions and the decarbonisation of heat. The system is performing well and in the first 4 months of operation the solar system met the full electrical requirements of the building. The solar system should generate enough electricity to power the heating system over the year.

This model is now being deployed at the Shared Prosperity Fund funded Palatine Library – Eco Hub Project. Electricity North West has now confirmed the requirements for the heat pump power supply and work is due to get underway shortly.

Theme 2 - Update on Electric Vehicle Charging

Although the UK Government has pushed back the ending of petrol and diesel car sales to 2035, the Zero Emission Vehicle mandate placed on car manufacturers still requires 80% of new vehicles sold by 2030 to be battery-powered electric vehicles. Sales and leases of pure electric vehicles in Blackpool remain comparatively low, with 574 registered in the town as at October 2023. This is mirrored by a low number of publicly-available charging facilities. Latest figures

show that there are only 22 public chargers per 100,000 people in the borough, with 76% of devices provided directly by the Council through Local Transport Plan funding.

In order to meet its targets, the UK Government has recognised the need to increase provision of charging facilities aimed at the domestic market. As a result, it has established the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure fund to provide facilities for people without off-street parking to charge their vehicles. The fund provides financial support to the Council so that staff can work with private charge point providers on providing more chargers locally. The majority of devices need to be “fast” chargers which replenish batteries over 4-8 hours, which is a similar speed to that achieved by domestic chargers and which are typically used overnight.

The Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure support body, working on behalf of the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles, has assessed Blackpool to be amongst the first group of Councils ready to progress their funding applications. Officers will now make a further submission by 30 November setting out the Council’s plans for funding. Subject to approval, this could result in a contract being awarded to the successful charge point operator in September 2024.

At its meeting on 7 November 2023, Executive approved a submission based on an approach referred to as the “Residential Charging Sites” model. The key priorities of the model are:

- To deliver sufficient chargers which enable 100% of residents without off-street parking to access a charger within a 5 minute walk;
- In line with the consultation on the Council’s Electric Vehicle Strategy, to minimise the cost of charging to users, including options such as discounted off-peak charging;
- To use existing car park sites where possible, starting with Council sites, and prioritising a rollout to places where there is evidence of a desire to adopt electric vehicles;
- To explore the use of carparks at other community facilities such as health facilities, schools, church and private car parks. These would be delivered through the appointed Charge Point Operator in discussion with the relevant organisation;
- To consider other options where existing car park sites cannot be obtained, such as: the use of rapid chargers at a preferential rate; ways of safely enabling charging over a footway; or promotion of a domestic charger-sharing scheme offered via various phone apps.

The Residential Charging Sites charging model is different to “on-street charging” models favoured by the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles, where chargers are provided outside houses between existing parking bays and spaces, on footways, or via street lights. Due to low electric vehicle take-up levels in Blackpool currently, and the parking issues this would cause in areas already at parking capacity, the Council intends to avoid providing on-street chargers wherever possible during the lifespan of the current Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy (2023-2027). Sites which may be considered for installations are ones where chargers could be installed without displacing any overnight residential parking – for example, where there are wide roads with residential properties on one side – but only where there is no other space available off-street. Whilst guidance suggests that the government is expecting to fund Councils to deliver an on-

street model, the approach currently represents the best balance between supporting the agenda and pragmatism that balances Blackpool residents' needs, including non-electric vehicle drivers.

Even without Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure funding, the Council expects the number of public chargers in Blackpool to pass 100 next year, mostly through Council provision but with some private installations. The funding would significantly increase the pace of delivery. The exact numbers of chargers to be provided will not be available until after the tender process, with the ability to meet the Council's target for provision a key criteria for the award of a contract. The Council is also keen to use the relationship with the appointed charge point operator to explore the delivery of more "rapid" charging sites (which can replenish batteries much more quickly than "fast" devices) in key locations in the town.

General questions / comments

Councillors will have the opportunity to raise questions / comments on any matter in the Cabinet Member's portfolio.

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES - COUNCILLOR JIM HOBSON

Portfolio areas of responsibility:

- Children's social care and targeted intervention services
- Care leavers
- Early help
- Fostering/adoption/permanence planning
- Children's commissioning
- Family Hubs
- Early Years

Introduction

The cabinet member will present the report to Council and report on any key issues.

Theme 1 - Regional Fostering Hub

The ability of Local Authorities nationally to place children into foster care has become a national issue. Foster carer numbers are falling, with more foster carers leaving than joining last year. This is compounded by a high rate of people who drop out of the process to become foster carers, with 138,000 enquiries leading to just 8,000 applications, of which only around 4,000 are ultimately approved. Whilst in some cases this is due to the appropriate screening of applications, these rates vary around the country suggesting some approaches are more successful in recruitment and retention of this valuable and key resource.

Funded by the Department for Education, the Regional Fostering Hub is a collaboration between ourselves and Blackburn with Darwen, Lancashire, Westmorland and Furness and Cumberland Councils designed to go some way to meeting the challenge of bringing more people to fostering.

The Regional Fostering Hub has three key elements:

- Develop a clear multifaceted communication strategy to boost enquiries;
- Improve the support for potential foster carers expressing an interest;
- Develop an enhanced retention offer to keep existing carers and attract new carers into a more supportive environment.

The recruitment hub will act as a regional front door and redesign the customer journey following enquiry. Whilst the details will be worked out jointly by the participating Councils, this will include:

- Giving people a dedicated welcome;
- Providing enquiry services staffed by experienced call handlers and foster carers supporting and guiding applicants up to the approvals stage;
- Advising on initial suitability and keep in touch with potential carers to ensure their interest is valued;
- Handing over high quality prospective carers to their local Councils.

Whilst the approval process will continue to be the responsibility of the individual local authorities, the support hub will also provide support alongside the application and assessment process for those who proceed.

The Department of Education will also provide funding directly to the town to enable Blackpool to set up the “Mockingbird” model of foster carer support, which is structured around the support and relationships an extended family provides. It does this by building a community of six to ten satellite foster families called a “constellation”, which is led by a foster hub home carer and liaison worker and which offers peer support for foster carers and guidance alongside social activities and sleepovers to strengthen relationships and permanence.

Theme 2 – Children’s Social Care Workforce

Children’s Services across the country continue to grapple with a staffing crisis. More Social Workers are leaving the profession than entering and there is an increasing number of workforce roles open to Social Workers taking them away from frontline practice with children and families. The situation has also been exacerbated by the cost of living crisis resulting in many staff leaving to work on an agency basis.

Often the gaps within workforce have to be filled by agency workers who provide necessary additional resources but can lack experience and skill. With most only having a week’s notice period, turnover can be disruptive for the service and have a massive impact upon the children and families they are working with. They are also paid at significantly higher gross rates to their permanent colleagues which penalises the loyalty of our permanent staff and can cause disquiet.

Nationally the use of agency staff is currently running at 17% of the workforce, whilst the average in the North West is significantly higher at over 22%, with some areas’ Social Work workforces made up of between 35 and 40% of agency staff. Positively, Blackpool is bucking the trend, with a figure of just 13% bringing much needed stability to the support we provide to children and families.

The Care Review identified Workforce as a key challenge and in October the government published a consultation proposing the national rules that should be in place in Spring 2024. These include:

- Local Authorities to agree and comply with regional agency social worker price caps;
- The notice period for each agency social work assignment to be aligned with the contractual notice period for substantive staff in the same or an equivalent job role;
- Local Authorities not to engage agency social workers for a minimum period of three months after they have left a substantive role within the same region;
- That Local Authorities should only engage agency social workers with a minimum of three years post-qualifying experience in direct employment in a UK local authority.

Some areas, such as Greater Manchester, have already come to a collective agreement about the approach prior to April 2024. In Lancashire, Blackpool's Director of Childrens Services Vicky Gent is leading a pan-Lancashire approach to the national rules.

Ultimately in Blackpool there is a continuous focus upon workforce and ensuring workforce stability is maintained. A stable workforce is key to ensuring the Council achieves positive outcomes for children and families and the most effective interventions occur when with a constancy of practitioner. The two strands to achieving that are recruitment and retention. An approach has been adopted that is the key to both recruiting and retaining staff and will ensure that a culture is in place that is supportive and that allows people to be the best they can be and do the best that can do, supported by managers who offer high challenge but also provide high support. The workforce are the main tool available to deliver successful outcomes for children and families and will always be a key priority.

General questions / comments

Councillors will have the opportunity to raise questions / comments on any matter in the Cabinet Member's portfolio.

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CABINET MEMBER FOR LEVELLING UP: PEOPLE - COUNCILLOR JO FARRELL

Portfolio areas of responsibility:

- Public health and health protection
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Harm reduction
- Domestic abuse
- Leisure services including leisure management, Active Blackpool, Community Sport, PE and schools' sports and outdoor pursuits
- Libraries
- Housing options and homelessness
- Decent Homes
- Housing related support and sustaining private sector tenancies
- Catering
- Equality and diversity
- Adult Learning
- Getting People into Work including Positive Steps and Business Growth Prosperity
- Relationship with Department for Work and Pensions and Job Centre Plus
- Social Value
- Welfare benefits and Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Introduction

The cabinet member will present the report to Council and report on any key issues.

Theme 1 - Blackpool Together – Welcoming Warm Spaces – Winter 2023 programme

Over 70 representatives from the voluntary sector attended a recent Blackpool Together winter planning event. Our “Welcoming Warm Places” winter programme has launched and over 25 locations will be offering support across Blackpool over the winter. Welcoming warm places are at the bases of many community groups, libraries and a range of local churches, halls and community cafes.

Welcoming warm places are free, safe and supportive spaces that residents can visit.

They offer somewhere to:

- look after physical and mental health
- get access to support, advice and often have free Wi-Fi
- enjoy the company of others

- stay for a while in a warm and comfortable space
- usually obtain something to eat and a hot drink

A publicity and awareness campaign will be launched which will include social media and leaflet drops. The outreach campaign will also continue with attendance at town centre and other key locations.

Grant funding has been made available with support from HM Governments DWP Household Support Fund and Blackpool Council Public Health. Community Groups are able to make applications for projects.

Funding awards for Welcoming Spaces since April 2023 total approximately £360,000 and are estimated to reach over 4,000 households. Funding is also available for projects that support residents with issues relating to cost of living and health and wellbeing.

Details of all warm spaces can be found on www.fyidirectory.co.uk and a freephone telephone support line is also available on 0808 175 3379 for those that might have difficulty accessing the internet or finding it hard to find the support they need.

Theme 2 - Street Safety and Domestic Abuse

Respect for women and the freedom of everyone when walking around our town should feel from the tyranny of harassment from others for any reason, concerns us all. People should feel safe travelling to and from work and education; using public transport and enjoying all the excellent entertainment, day and night, that the town has to offer. Delivering this feeling of safety across our town is a key part of ensuring we really “level up” for the people of Blackpool. Officers supporting my portfolio have worked hard to attract national funding in to Blackpool and ensure it is routed into making our streets safer, working in partnership across the public, private and third sector to develop a culture of respectful behaviours and early intervention in harassment and negative, harmful relationships. Early intervention and awareness raising is essential. We have introduced Green Dot – a proven, safe and effective intervention approach across a range of sectors and are working hard to see it roll out even wider.

Our **#itstopshere** campaigns have been effective in engaging young people, businesses and activists in exploring how we can “design out” spaces and behaviours that make people feel less safe – and we are seeing impact. But still, too often, our streets do not feel as welcoming and safe for all as they should do.

Sadly, although we hope to see the impact of education and interventions to improve outcomes in the long term, we continue to see high levels of Domestic Abuse in Blackpool and continue in our efforts, across the partnership, to address it.

Use of Civil Tools and Powers

The Community Safety Team frequently utilises its Powers under the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014 to prevent and intervene where Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) has taken place.

Recently, the team has piloted the use of Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) and Community Protection Notices (CPNs) in cases of Domestic Abuse where other interventions have proven ineffective, or are not available to victims. The issue of these notices are proving to be particularly useful in the instances where a perpetrator's behaviour has not reached the threshold for arrest and preventative restrictive conditions are not in place. Victims and families have reported very positive outcomes, with the warnings, which are usually applied as part of a suite of protective and preventative interventions available to the team, keeping victims safe from further harm. At this time, we believe Blackpool is the only authority using its powers in this way.

Supporting Change

Prevention and early intervention to support change is a key part of the Strategy to address the wide ranging harms of Domestic Abuse. Alongside support for victims there are programmes that aim to transform the behaviour of perpetrators of Domestic Abuse. A recent addition to the programmes available is the Drive Project, led by Lancashire Constabulary. The Drive Project is a collaborative approach to tackling domestic abuse, by bringing together police officers, support agencies, caseworks and directly with those presenting abusive, challenging and violent behaviour. The Drive Project provides a case manager who acts as a single point of contact for perpetrators. The project is supportive of the perpetrator's capacity to change, whilst never losing sight of the victim and their thoughts, feelings and wellbeing.

Supporting victims to stay in their own home

A key ask of the coproduced strategy that has commenced delivery was a reduction in the pressure on victims of domestic Abuse to "flee" their home to feel safe. Instead, wherever possible, the focus on helping them to maintain the stability of their home will be strengthened, by making it a safe and secure environment free of fear. Safe Accommodation funding has been used to support innovative work to make a person's own home, often their family home, safer and more secure. In particular, but not in isolation, the use of video doorbells to maintain safety, alongside specialist outreach support and risk management has given victims a greater sense of control and safety. It has also supported effective interventions from the judicial system by strengthening the evidence base when sadly, bail conditions are breached. Over 300 video doorbells have now been fitted across the town to support victims and prevent future harm.

White Ribbon

I am pleased to see so many of my fellow councillors expressing their support through the wearing of their white ribbon. Blackpool Council is an accredited member of White Ribbon.org and as such, support is given not only during the 16 Days of Action, but throughout the year. Council employees are encouraged to become White Ribbon Champions and Ambassadors and we have a great partnership with key stakeholders across the town.

A few highlights of the visibility of the campaign in Blackpool this year will include –

- The White Ribbon Tableau placed prominently on the promenade
- Blackpool FC will warm up wearing their White Ribbon Shirts and display visual cues relating to White Ribbon, including a notice on the match day screen and in their match program and will be encouraging people to join the ambassadors programme.
- We will have both a White Ribbon and a Green Dot Stall at the Houndshell Shopping Centre on the 24th November to coincide with the opening of the new Department Store and Black Friday

There is an extensive programme to raise awareness of the impact of Domestic Abuse and how to safely support the reduction of harm throughout the 16 Days of Action and I doubt anyone will miss at least one form of the engaging messaging which will be town wide.

General questions / comments

Councillors will have the opportunity to raise questions / comments on any matter in the Cabinet Member's portfolio.

CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, STREET SCENE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS – COUNCILLOR PAULA BURDESS

Portfolio areas of responsibility:

- Public protection including environmental protection, Trading Standards, licensing, food control, health and safety, housing and planning enforcement
- Community safety, CCTV, security and civil enforcement
- Highways and traffic management
- Street lighting
- Integrated Transport Services including adults, children and Rideability Community Transport Services and school crossing patrol
- Parking services
- Private Sector Housing Licensing/ Selective Licensing
- Street cleansing including trade waste, Household Waste Recycling Centre, Local Environmental Action Team and building cleaning

Introduction

The cabinet member will present the report to Council and report on any key issues.

Theme 1: Public Space Protection Order for Parks, Green Spaces and Cemeteries

Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) are intended to deal with a particular issue that is detrimental to the local community's quality of life, by imposing conditions on the use of specific areas which apply to everyone. They are intended to help ensure that people can use and enjoy public spaces safe from anti-social behaviour.

Across Blackpool, a number of different PSPOs are in operation to tackle anti-social behaviour locally. Public consultation regarding the proposed PSPO for parks and cemeteries was undertaken by Infusion Research for 10 weeks from mid-June, offering visitors to Blackpool's parks, green spaces and cemeteries an opportunity to tell the Council about their experiences and concerns to determine whether or not a PSPO should be introduced.

A total of 1,483 responses were received to this consultation. 1,440 responses were collected through an open access online survey, 41 responses collated from face-to-face engagement work in Stanley Park and 2 email responses were sent into Blackpool Council. Initial engagement has also taken place with the Police, via the Chief Inspector for the Blackpool area. Formal consultation with Lancashire Constabulary and other statutory consultees, including the National Probation Service (NPS), Lancashire Fire and Rescue, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner will take place prior to implementation.

The consultation found that 95.8% to 97.8% of the respondents were in agreement to giving Police and Council officers greater powers to deal with anti-social behaviour and substance misuse in our parks and cemeteries. Almost 1,000 people who responded to the consultation stated that they had personal experience of the issues they had highlighted, whilst another 300 said they had heard about the issues that they were highlighting from neighbours, friends, family and the media.

The problem of most concern which was reported by respondents was 'dogs off-lead focusing on the impact to wildlife'. Comments from a significant proportion of respondents have asked for better enforcement including CCTV, more park wardens and a better police presence.

Following the views expressed in the public consultation, the Council's proposals include additional powers to deal with:

- Dogs off leads near Council owned water bodies of Blackpool
- Illegal or unauthorised camping including the use of tents/caravans and other vehicles
- People causing harassment, alarm, distress or vandalism
- People causing anti-social behaviour
- Substance and alcohol misuse
- Unauthorised vehicles driving within the area.

The proposals will not include regulation or enforcement regarding the use of remote controlled vehicles or commercial activities due to the lack of support for this in the public consultation. Signs will be erected in parks, green spaces and cemeteries to inform the public of the PSPO relevant to that area.

Theme 2 - Highways

Blackpool Council's Road Asset Management Strategy is a series of documents that set out how the Highways and Traffic Management division maintains roads and footways in Blackpool in the short, medium and long term. It includes details of the principles on which the document is based, its objectives and overall strategy for the development of roads and their management and maintenance.

The Council consistently receives top-tier funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) due to the careful and consistent management of its network and the accurate reporting of network data via the self-assessment process. This is made possible by the extent and quality of information that the Council holds on the network in a Geographical Information System called Asset Stream, which allows all elements of the highway to be easily located and conditions assessed. This is then used to prioritise works needed to improve the condition of the highway and is supported by a regular and routine inspection regime, including both walked and driven inspections carried out by a team of inspectors.

The investment strategy and program ensures that the network works and is safe and this approach is reflected in a huge reduction in the number of tripping claims being made, with payouts reducing from around £1.6m in 2008/09 to just £719 in 2022/23. As a result of the robustness of the system, 95% of claims are successfully defended.

In addition to their long-standing focus on effectiveness and efficiency, maintenance and investment works to the highway now also have an emphasis on being carbon-aware and sustainable, reducing our environmental impact. The previous approach of removing all material for disposal and fully replacing them with new materials is now much less common, with recycling and innovative surface treatments now much more common. Earlier intervention to extend the life of a road with smaller treatments reduces carbon emissions and working collaboratively with suppliers and contractors to determine the best treatments adds to the success of this approach.

Project Amber was established in 2019 to involve small and medium sized businesses in the maintenance process, aiming to provide the right treatment at the right time, in the right place. The framework set up by our highways team has since been adopted by other authorities, demonstrating how we are providing leadership across the highways sector and allows us to achieve the best value in all aspects, including time, carbon savings, disruption and cost.

Following data analysis which showed it to be one of the country's 27 most statistically dangerous roads, the government has awarded the Council £1.1 million to improve the Talbot Square to St Walburgas roundabout route, including Talbot Road, Westcliffe Drive and Poulton Road. The design options for the route are still in the early stages, with the highways team currently providing direction to some specialist scheme design experts. Although the funding comes with tight restrictions around the type of changes which are needed and the location they are delivered at, this welcome financial boost is likely to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured in road traffic accidents.

The quality of the highways supports good road safety, which has been included as a priority in the Community Safety Plan for the first time. After a series of incidents regarding the shocking behaviour of parents dropping off children outside our primary schools, we have prioritised the review of the highways around all 33 primary schools in the borough, engaging a consultancy firm to conduct a targeted Highway review of our 33 Primary Schools in collaboration with the schools and their staff. Our aim is to ensure the safety of children during their arrival and departure times at the school, morning and afternoon. To do this required observation of the access points, road layout, driving and parking behaviour during peak times, allowing tailored changes to be proposed based on each individual school's needs.

Following a successful trial at Armfield Academy, we plan to introduce "red restrictions" at some schools, which are typically seen in London on key strategic routes. On a red route, stopping is strictly prohibited and anyone contravening this will receive an immediate Penalty Charge Notice. In addition to this, measures such as refreshing the current restrictions,

implementing new restrictions, increasing enforcement of existing restrictions, or making physical changes to the layout are being considered.

General questions / comments

Councillors will have the opportunity to raise questions / comments on any matter in the Cabinet Member's portfolio.

CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE – COUNCILLOR NEAL BROOKES

Portfolio areas of responsibility:

- Adult provider services including Commissioned services for adults
- Adult social care assessment and support
- Adult respite, day services, Care at Home, supported living and residential services
- Adult safeguarding
- Reablement and intermediate care
- Health integration including funding and services delivery
- Regulated care sector/ inspection/ quality monitoring
- Adult mental health, learning disability, frail older people and physical disability services

Introduction

The cabinet member will present the report to Council and report on any key issues.

Theme 1 - Active into Autumn Event

Following the success of the Blackpool Place-Based Partnership event “Spring into Spring” in March 2023, the partnership, in conjunction with Public Health colleagues, followed this with a larger scale marketplace event in September 2023, “Active into Autumn”.

Active into Autumn is a fantastic example of partnership working across Blackpool, demonstrating how to listen to and how to work with our communities. The purpose of the event was to encourage people to get out and about and connect to their communities. It showcased the many great activities and support available across the town, including health and fitness activities, educational classes, volunteering and job opportunities.

The event had a strong presence from over fifty voluntary, community and social enterprise and statutory organisations in Blackpool, supporting the full spectrum of needs and demonstrating practical partnership working in action. One of the main benefits of bringing a diverse group together is the relationships made and knowledge shared. For example, a GP was made aware of a locally run service which is able to collect residents and take them to their GP appointments and is now promoting this to colleagues. Similarly plans were considered to advertise a local dental service on the radio. This service is available to parents of children aged 4 and under where they can gain access to dental services for their children.

The event provided a great opportunity for organisations to network and make their own connections to better support Blackpool residents. It was wonderful and inspiring to see so many organisations together under one roof and to hear about the abundance of activities and

support which is available to the local community. Blackpool Place-based Partnership plan to host both events again in 2024.

Theme 2 - Equipment Recycling

As the newly formed regional Integrated Care Board takes shape, there are plans to move towards a more joined up model to commission certain goods and services, such as an end-to-end equipment service. Representatives from Blackpool, Blackburn and Darwen, South Cumbria Councils and Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board are exploring the possibility of designing a joint scope and service specification. If there is sufficient appetite, an Integrated Care Board-led partnership would be formed to lead the development and procurement exercise. This work is in its infancy and if a partnership is formed, then it is anticipated this work would take a minimum of 2-3 years to complete and implement a new Integrated Care Board wide equipment service offer.

Meanwhile, Blackpool is developing an interim equipment solution to bridge the gap until details of the potential wider procurement strategy becomes known. The interim solution will include break clauses so the Council can join any with any future Integrated Care Board wide solutions at a future date and allows us to continue to recycle equipment in line with our 2030 carbon emissions target. For some years there has been a recycling service of high value specialist equipment but there was nothing in place for the high volume lower cost aids to daily living until 2021, when work took place with Enveco and the equipment supplier Liveasy to pilot a 'Return to Reuse' scheme. People are encouraged to return any unused items of equipment to the Household Waste Recycling Centre and these items are collected weekly for decontamination, repair and re-issuing. In the first six months of this year, 707 pieces of recycled equipment have been re-issued instead of a new item.

Theme 3 - Adult Carers' Strategy Update

A five-year Adult Carers' Strategy and associated action plan has been presented at the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee, with an action work plan in place. Regular quarterly update meetings will take place at Adult Social Care Senior Management Team meetings to ensure progress. The monthly staff carers group, Care to Chat, continues to meet on a regular basis, with engagement taking place to develop a best practice guidance document. A review of the carer awareness training held on iPool is also underway. Monthly update meetings continue to be held with Blackpool Carers Centre, who are assigned as lead on a number of the actions in the Adult Carers Strategy.

General questions / comments

Councillors will have the opportunity to raise questions / comments on any matter in the Cabinet Member's portfolio.

CABINET MEMBER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ASPIRATION – COUNCILLOR KATH BENSON

Portfolio areas of responsibility:

- Schools under LA control, community schools
- Children with Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- LEA support to academies and voluntary aided schools
- School place planning, organisation and buildings
- Education diversity and support units/service e.g. Pupil Referral Units
- Youth Services
- Youth Employment and Education

Introduction

The cabinet member will present the report to Council and report on any key issues.

Theme 1 - South Shore Academy's Ofsted Inspection Report

South Shore Academy underwent an Ofsted inspection on 27 June 2023. The inspection report was published on 11 October 2023, with the school receiving a rating of "Inadequate" and now requires "special measures". The report identified a number of significant issues which are impacting on outcomes for children.

South Shore Academy was previously rated as "Inadequate" in 2015 and was subsequently rated as "Requires Improvement" in 2017 and 2019. The previous school was also rated as "Inadequate". South Shore Academy also has a termination warning notice.

Blackpool Council has worked closely with Bright Futures Trust, who have the funding agreement for South Shore Academy, to agree a way forward for issues related to safeguarding and special educational needs and/or disabilities. The Council will continue to work closely with the Trust and the Department for Education to ensure that standards improve quickly.

Theme 2 - Wrap around childcare programme

There has been a recent communication from central government about its ambition to ensure that by 2026, all parents in England with primary school aged children will be able to access term time wraparound childcare from 8am to 6pm. Parents will then have the certainty that they can go to work and return to collect their children from a safe, accredited provider.

Currently, around 60% of schools provide this option for parents. The national wraparound childcare programme is part of the childcare reforms announced at the 2023 Spring Budget.

To support this ambition, the government announced that it will provide up to £289 million of start-up funding over two academic years to support local authorities and providers in England to introduce or expand childcare provision on either side of the school day, which parents of primary school-aged children will be able to pay for or contribute towards the cost of this provision.

The programme funding aims to remove barriers to setting up new provision or expanding current provision, including removing the financial risk of setting up new provision when demand is not guaranteed. It is based on a “pump prime” model, whereby relatively small amounts of government funds are provided to spur growth.

There is a revenue funding stream and a capital funding stream and officers are currently exploring ways in which the funding can be used to provide internal capacity to deliver the projects and where this additional provision is best located. Funding cannot be used to subsidise places but can be used to help establish an offer so that it then becomes sustainable.

General questions / comments

Councillors will have the opportunity to raise questions / comments on any matter in the Cabinet Member’s portfolio.

Report to:	COUNCIL
Relevant Officer:	Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting:	29 November 2023

MARTON MOSS NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN - Adoption (Making) of the Neighbourhood Plan

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the recommendations from the Executive at its meeting on 6 November 2023 regarding the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Development Plan.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To formally “make” the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Development Plan with immediate effect, with the consequence that it becomes part of the statutory Development Plan for the designated area.

2.2 To authorise the Director of Communications and Regeneration to undertake the necessary steps for the adoption process to be completed and that delegated powers be given to the Head of Planning Strategy to make any final modifications to improve readability; correct any factual matters or typographical errors; and the final presentation of the document.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Localism Act 2011 give local communities direct power to develop their shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. Neighbourhood planning provides a set of tools for local people to get the right type of development for their community.

3.2 The Council formally designated the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum on 26th March 2019 in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan (General) Regulations (as amended) 2012 - Regulations 7 and 10. This established the process for the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum (MMNF) as the qualifying body to produce a neighbourhood plan for the designated area.

3.3 The Forum submitted their draft plan, which covers the period 2020 to 2030, to the Council (Regulation 15) in August 2022. The Council published the draft plan for consultation in

accordance with Regulation 16 in October 2022.

- 3.4 The Council appointed an independent examiner in February 2023, in agreement with the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum, in accordance with Regulation 17 and the examiner published his report (refer Appendix 6b), which the Council received on 29th March 2023.
- 3.5 The Council published its decision in accordance with Regulation 17a and accepted the examiner's recommendations and proposed modifications to allow the Referendum Plan (refer Appendix 6a) to progress towards becoming a 'made' plan and part of Blackpool's development plan, subject to a 'yes' vote in a referendum.
- 3.6 The referendum was held on 5th October 2023 in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012 (as amended in 2013). There was a turnout of 32.19%. Of the votes received 246 (90.44%) voted 'yes' in response to the referendum question, "Do you want Blackpool Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Marton Moss to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?" ([Marton Moss neighbourhood planning referendum results \(blackpool.gov.uk\)](https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/marton-moss-neighbourhood-planning-referendum-results))
- 3.7 The majority "yes' votes mean the Council is now required to formally 'make' (adopt) the Plan.
- 3.8 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No
- 3.9 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

- 4.1 None as the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan has been produced in line with the relevant planning regulations and as outlined in paragraph 3.6 supported by a majority of voters in the referendum on 5 October 2023.

5.0 Council priority:

- 5.1 The relevant Council priorities are both:
- "The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool"
 - "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience"

6.0 Background information

- 6.1 The Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (Adopted January 2016) at Policy CS26 promotes a neighbourhood planning approach for Marton Moss, to develop neighbourhood planning policy, which supports the retention and enhancement of the distinctive character of the Moss, whilst identifying what circumstances development may be acceptable. Policy CS26 also defines the boundary for the neighbourhood area.
- 6.2 In November 2017, the local community voted in favour of producing their own neighbourhood plan for Marton Moss and the Executive endorsed this approach at their meeting on the 19th February 2018. The Council subsequently formally designated the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Area on 26th March 2019, as well as the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum, in accordance with Regulations 7 and 10 respectively of the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations.
- 6.3 Over the past 4 years, the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum has been developing a draft Neighbourhood Plan covering the period 2020 to 2030. To assist in the drafting of the Plan, the Forum appointed Envision Consultants. In addition, other consultants were engaged to build evidence to support the policies and proposals in the Plan.
- 6.4 The Plan (Refer Appendix 6a) sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in the designated Marton Moss Neighbourhood Area in accordance with S.38A of the 2004 Act
- 6.5 The Plan includes policies and proposals which cover:
- **Design and the Local Environment** - requiring new buildings to be well designed, be in character with the local area and improving biodiversity; safeguarding areas of major open land from being inappropriately developed and securing environmental improvements; and to specifically improve the roadside appearance and retain the open character of the land at School Road/Midgeland Road Junction.
 - **Housing Development** – allocating a limited number of housing sites and guiding the number, sizes, and types of new homes on each site; allowing windfall housing on unallocated sites provided they meet the policy’s strict criteria;
 - **Horticultural and Equestrian Uses** - supporting where possible horticultural businesses providing guidance regarding future alternative uses; and horse stabling and

riding activities supporting equestrian development subject to certain criteria being met.

- **Heritage and Community** – a specific policy relating to Midgeland Farm to enable restoration and community use.

- 6.6 Community engagement has been at the centre the plan, with involvement of the public and various stakeholders at many stages of the process, which is acknowledged by the Examiner. The consultation statement submitted with the draft plan at the Regulation 16 stage provides detail of the consultation and engagement that has been undertaken by the MMNF (blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Planning-environment-and-community/Documents/S03-Consultation-Statement-Final.pdf).
- 6.7 In March and April 2022 public consultation was undertaken in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations allowing residents and stakeholders, including the Council, to comment on the policies and site allocations proposed within the draft plan.
- 6.8 Following this consultation, the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum made some changes in response to the representations received and submitted in August 2022 the Submission Draft Plan to the Council in accordance with Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Plan (General) Regulations. The Council publicised the draft plan and supporting documents for consultation for a 6 week period, in accordance with Regulation 16.
- 6.9 Following the Regulation 16 consultation, the Council appointed an independent examiner in February 2023, in agreement with the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum, to enable the plan to move to examination, in accordance with Regulation 17. Via Intelligent Plans and Examinations Ltd., examiner Andrew Mead was appointed to undertake the examination of the draft plan.
- 6.10 The role of the examiner is to scrutinise the plan and determine whether the plan meets basic conditions as required by the Localism Act. It is usual for the examiner to recommend modifications to a plan in order for it to meet the basic conditions before it can go forward to the referendum. The basic conditions comprise:
- having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the plan
 - the making of the plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development
 - the making of the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan of the authority (or any part of that area)

- the making of the plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations
 - prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposals for the order
- 6.11 The examination into the neighbourhood plan took place via written representations without the need for hearing sessions. Having considered all the information before him the Examiner made some additional requests to both the Council and the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum, which he set out in his procedural matters letter. The Examiner also carried out an unaccompanied site visit to the area.
- 6.12 The Examiner's report (Appendix 6b refers) was received on 29 March 2023 and concluded that with the proposed modifications, the policies within the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1; have regard to national guidance; would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; and would meet the Basic Conditions and legal requirements. In summary, the Examiner recommended that the Plan, once modified, should proceed to referendum.
- 6.13 With respect to referendum, the Examiner considered that the referendum area should not be extended beyond that which the Plan relates. The Examiner came to this conclusion that the Plan, as modified, has no policy or proposal significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary, requiring the referendum to extend to areas beyond the Plan boundary.
- 6.14 The Examiner recommended seven proposed modifications to the plan, which are set out in the appendix of the Examiner's report at pages 17 and 18. These modifications relate to the following policies:
- MM1, relating to building design, to ensure the policy takes in to account Planning Policy Guidance on drainage;
 - MM2 relating to open space character and removing the reference in the policy to, 'significant open land elsewhere';
 - MM4 adjusting the wording on 4 of the 21 housing site allocations to state an upper limit for the number of dwellings that can be developed on these sites;
 - MM6 which relates to market gardening businesses, amended wording to protect amenity of neighbouring occupiers and conformity with Core Strategy and Local Plan Part 2 policy;
 - MM8 amended wording in relation to the restoration and community role of

Midgeland Farm; and finally

- MM9 to ensure the designated Local Green Space took account of the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition, the Examiner recommended that the front cover of the Plan should state the period covered by the Plan, which is 2020 to 2030.

6.15 Officers reviewed the Plan in light of the proposed modifications and concluded that the Examiner’s modifications are necessary for the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions. The Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum also considered the proposed modifications, and following a meeting with the Council on 21st April 2023 agreed that the modifications are acceptable. Consequently the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum modified the Plan accordingly, confirmed that they wished the Plan to proceed to referendum.

6.16 The referendum was held, in accordance with legislation, on 5th October 2023. The question used in the referendum is set by the ‘Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012’, and was:

“Do you want Blackpool Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Marton Moss to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?”

6.17 There was a turnout of 32.19%. Of the votes received 246 (90.44%) voted ‘yes’ in response to the referendum question ([Marton Moss neighbourhood planning referendum results \(blackpool.gov.uk\)](https://blackpool.gov.uk)). The majority “yes’ votes mean the Council is now required to formally ‘make’ (adopt) the Plan

6.18 **Next Stages**

As required by legislation, once the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan is adopted and Regulation 19 Decision Statement (refer Appendix 6c) is published, the respective documents need to be made available as soon as reasonably practical by publishing on the Council’s website and a printed copy needs to be made available for inspection. Also, the Council has to notify any person who asked to be notified of the making of the plan that it has been adopted and where and when it may be inspected.

6.19 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 6a – Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan (and Policies Map) – Referendum Plan

Appendix 6b– Examiners Report on the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan

Appendix 6c – Draft Regulation 19 Decision Statement

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 The work is being undertaken within existing budgetary provisions.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 In accordance with regulation 12 (4) Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as applicable by virtue of s38A (3) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004), the Council must hold a referendum if it is satisfied either:

a. The proposed Neighbourhood Plan meets the following conditions:

(i) The basic conditions are met

(ii) It is compatible with the ECHR

(iii) It complies with the provision made by or under s38A (6) and s38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Or

b. The proposed Neighbourhood Plan would meet the criteria if modifications were made (whether or not recommended by the examiner).

The modifications set out by the Examiner that were incorporated into the plan to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan met the basic conditions and legal requirements and enabled the Plan proceed to referendum. The referendum took place on the 5 October 2023. The majority “yes’ votes mean the Council is now required to formally ‘make’ (adopt) the Plan. The Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan, when made, will become part of the Council’s statutory development plan.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 Once ‘made’ (adopted), the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan for Blackpool. Without its progression, this will compromise the implementation of adopted policy in the Core Strategy - Policy CS26 Marton Moss and undermine the neighbourhood planning process determined through the designation of the

neighbourhood plan area and forum to provide a local policy framework to further direct development within the designated area, which reflects the priorities of the community. In addition, as the Neighbourhood Development Plan is considered to meet the Basic Conditions and legal requirements, the Council are required to adopt the plan due to the successful outcome at referendum.

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people:

11.1 The Examiner confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions subject to the recommended modifications which were incorporated into the Plan. One of the basic conditions is that the Plan must be compatible with human rights requirements. The Examiner is satisfied that the Plan will not have a discriminatory impact on any particular group of individuals. There are not considered to be any equality impacts relating to recommendations of this report.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 The Plan was supported by a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment. It is considered by both the Examiner and Council Officers that the Plan meets the Basic Conditions in terms of sustainability.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 The Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum has undertaken consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, which is set out in the Consultation Statement submitted with the Regulation 16 draft of the Plan. Officers have worked alongside the Neighbourhood Forum since its establishment and provided comments on the plan prior to Regulation 14 stage and on the consultation draft of the plan at Regulation 14 and 16 stages. The Consultation Statement details who has been consulted on the plan through the process, including the local community and consultation bodies as set out in Schedule 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 Background information and various submitted documents can be accessed on the Blackpool Council Website under the following link:

www.blackpool.gov.uk/martonmossnp

Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan 2020 - 2030



Referendum Plan
June 2023

MARTON MOSS NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Front cover picture – open land at Chapel Road as viewed from Eastbank Avenue

This Plan has been prepared by Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum with the assistance of



Foreword

I never thought I would become involved in planning the future of the Moss (I'm a dentist by trade, now retired) let alone lead the Forum. However, having attended the public meetings put on by the Council, to consider how the area should be planned, I became drawn in. I realised this was a good opportunity to properly guide what should and shouldn't happen.

I am a great believer in doing things the 'right' way, doing it 'by the book'. This plan is offered as the book. I know many local residents have been frustrated by the very strict controls on new building, set by Core Strategy Policy CS26. Yet at the same time the residents want to keep the open aspects, green spaces and the distinctive charm of the area.

Despite Policy CS26, some inappropriate development and housing has been allowed in recent years on appeal, justified on land supply grounds. This is no way to properly plan or to preserve local character.

The challenge with the Neighbourhood Plan has been to get the right balance between enabling well designed modest amounts of development whilst still keeping the local character of the Moss. I hope you agree we've pitched it about right.

Preparing the Plan has been a big effort. I would like to thank the Forum's Committee for their big commitment to the task and the assistance of Julian Jackson from Envision. I also thank all the Members of the Forum for your support.

Stephen Woodhouse - Chairman of Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum

MARTON MOSS NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

The Forum came into being in unusual circumstances. The Blackpool Core Strategy – Part 1 of the Local Plan – includes Policy CS26 that only applies to Marton Moss. This Policy has two parts to it. One part strictly limits new development in a manner that treats Marton Moss as an area of countryside. However, those restrictions are intended to apply only until such time as they are replaced by “*neighbourhood policy which supports the retention and enhancement of the [area’s] distinctive character, whilst identifying in what circumstances development including residential may be acceptable.*” The full text relating to Policy CS26 is reproduced in Appendix A.

The background to Policy CS26 is that at an early stage of preparing the Blackpool Core Strategy large scale development was considered a possibility in the south east part of Blackpool, including Marton Moss. Following receipt of many local objections to this proposal and the Council reassessing the amount of housing needed across Blackpool, the scale of proposed development in this part of the borough was greatly reduced.

Following adoption of the Core Strategy in 2016 Blackpool Council started a dialogue with the Marton Moss community as to how a neighbourhood planning type approach could be taken forward. During November 2017 the Council held engagement ‘drop-in’ events for local people as part of a consultation process. The publicity material produced explained the two options of how a neighbourhood planning type approach could come about. At the time Blackpool Council were about to start work on the Part 2 Local Plan – the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies document. Developing neighbourhood policy as part of the Part 2 Local Plan was presented as one option, the other option put to local people was for the community to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The consultation asked local people to send in written comments to the Council saying which neighbourhood planning type approach they supported. The outcome of this ‘poll’ was that most people who replied, all but by a small margin, voted for a Neighbourhood Plan to be prepared.

Given that the Marton Moss area does not have a Parish Council a Neighbourhood Forum comprised of local people needed to be established to produce the Neighbourhood Plan. To help with setting up a Forum the Council arranged a residents’ meeting in May 2018 to explain what would be involved.

Out of this meeting a group of people came together to consider the remit of a Forum and discuss the planning issues affecting the area. The Place Standard¹ approach was used to help these people express their understanding of the Moss. These discussions were later pursued with the wider community at regular, formally minuted meetings and from these the applications seeking designation of the Neighbourhood Area and Forum were prepared and submitted to the Council.

On 26 March 2019 Blackpool Council formally designated the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Area and Forum. The boundaries of the Area are identical to the spatial extent of Policy CS26. The overall purpose of the Forum, along with its aims and ambitions are set out in Appendix B.

At the time of designation, the Forum had over 70 members. As of January 2022, Forum membership stood at over 300 households drawn from all sectors of the local population including the traveller community, there are also approximately 650 members of the private Marton Moss Facebook group.

The establishment of the Forum means that the Neighbourhood Plan and Part 2 of the Local Plan are being prepared separately but alongside one another. Certain general policies in Part 2 of the Local Plan relate to the whole of Blackpool including Marton Moss, but site-specific policies for the Neighbourhood Area are only put forward in the Neighbourhood Plan.

¹ <https://www.placestandard.scot/>

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. It would be all too easy to dismiss why local residents place Marton Moss in such high regard. This is because at first sight the Area appears to comprise a random mixture of buildings with different design styles. However, it is a place with a fascinating history that once played an important part in providing fresh food produce for the tourism related demands of Blackpool and town dwellers elsewhere in Lancashire and Yorkshire. There are a few fine surviving buildings that pre-date that period and numerous remaining residences characteristic of market gardening.

2. Today the many once thriving horticultural businesses of the Moss are very much reduced with only very few now operating. The area has become a predominantly residential one, all be it interspersed with a few other commercial enterprises. This change over the last 50 years or so has meant that the Moss has become generally more open and pastoral in character typified by homes (some original, some modern replacements) with large gardens, interspersed with numerous plots of land used for equestrian related activities and larger tracts of open land. These uses each contribute to the distinctive appearance of Marton Moss and provide touchstones for its future development.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

3. It is a development plan that is prepared by representatives of a local community, either a Parish Council, or where there is not one, as in Marton Moss, a specially set up Neighbourhood Forum. A Neighbourhood Plan can cover a wide range of planning matters but not those of a strategic nature, nor minerals extraction and waste management. Those latter aspects along with a full range of detailed planning policies applicable across Blackpool are the responsibility of the Borough Council set out in the various documents that make up the Local Plan. Once the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan is completed it will have equal official status to the Local Plan for the matters it covers.

How far into the future will the Neighbourhood Plan look?

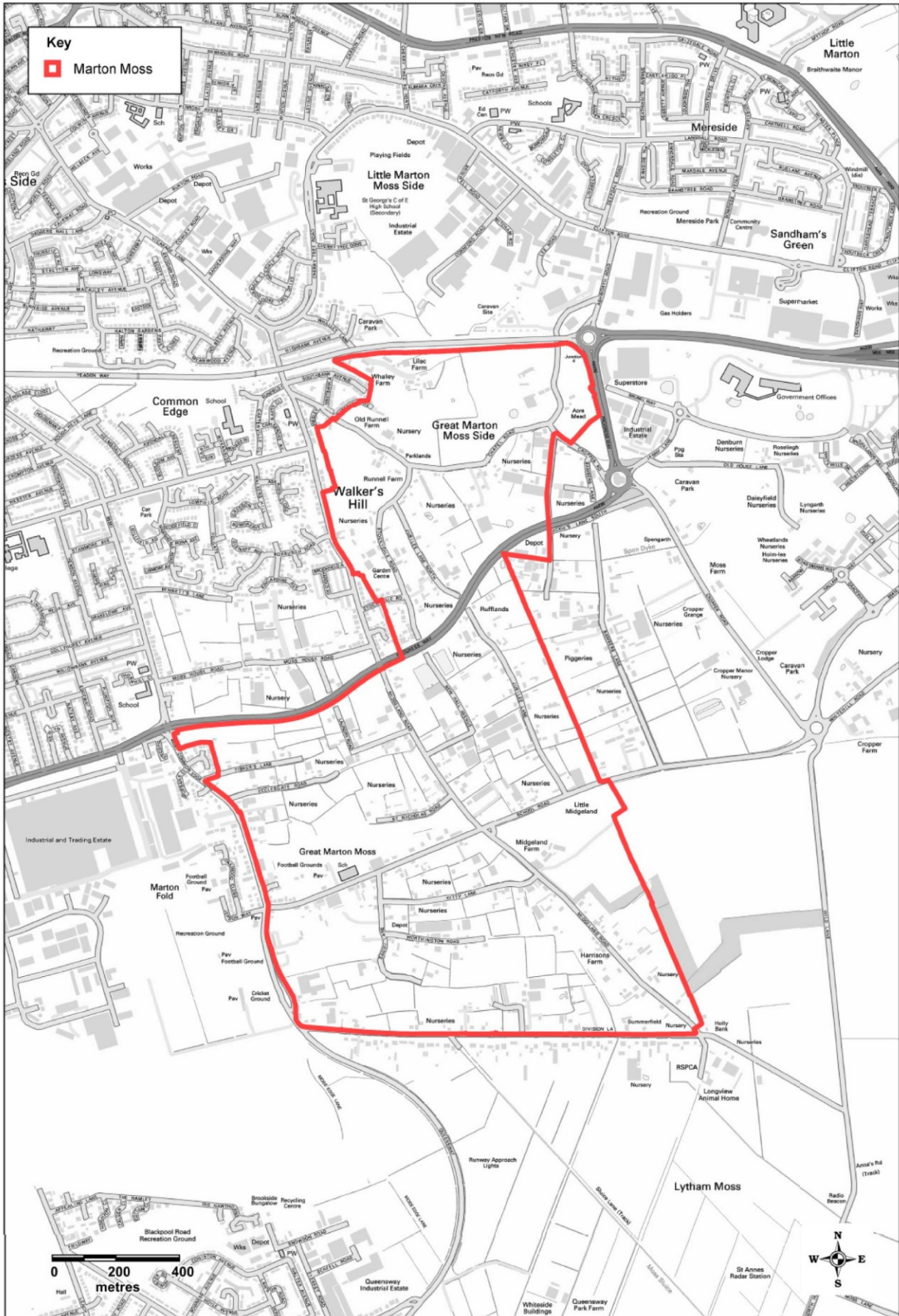
4. The time period over which a Neighbourhood Plan can apply can range from 5 to 15 years. The Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy and Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies have a plan period of 2012 to 2027. However, the Forum has decided that the appropriate period for this Neighbourhood Plan is 10 years. In precise terms this means the Plan period is from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2030.

What area does the Plan cover?

5. The Plan Area coincides with the spatial extent of Core Strategy Policy CS26 which will be replaced by the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan Area is shown on the next page.

What stage of preparation has the Plan reached?

6. The Plan has now been examined by independent Examiner Andrew Mead. He recommended the Plan should be modified and then proceed to referendum. The Examiner's Report can be viewed at <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Planning-environment-and-community/Documents/Marton-Moss-NP-Examiner-Report-290323.pdf>. The Council has considered each of the recommendations and the reasons given for them in the Examiner's Report as required by Regulation 12 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Council endorses all the recommended modifications and the reasons given for them. The Council is satisfied that the Plan, as modified to accord with the recommendations in the Examiner's Report, meets the legal requirements and basic conditions as set out in legislation.



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Neighbourhood Plan Area

What are the main changes that have been made to the content of the Plan since the previous engagement stage?

7. The proposed modifications are set out in the [Examiner's Report](#).

What must Neighbourhood Plans take account of?

8. Neighbourhood Plans cannot be produced in isolation from other planning policies. Neighbourhood Plans are required by the relevant regulations to accord with certain Basic Conditions or requirements, these are reproduced in full in Appendix C. Firstly Neighbourhood Plans must have regard to national planning policies and advice issued by the Government. These are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance. Both contain relevant general considerations as well as specific aspects that refer directly to Neighbourhood Plans.

9. Neighbourhood Plans are also required to generally conform with the strategic policies of the development plan (see Appendix D). The development plan mainly comprises the various parts of the Blackpool Local Plan. This means the adopted Core Strategy (Part 1) and in the adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (Part 2 of the Local Plan). The various documents that make up the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (produced in partnership with Lancashire County and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Councils) also comprise parts of the development plan. All planning applications are decided first and foremost taking account of the relevant policies and proposals of the development plan; account is also taken of other - 'material considerations' – i.e. relevant matters.

10. A further Basic Condition relevant to Neighbourhood Plans is that they should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development – the separately produced Strategic Environmental Assessment refers to this in detail. Finally, Neighbourhood Plans are expected to comply with other environmental requirements in the case of Marton Moss this is particularly in relation to internationally protected wildlife; that is covered by the Habitats Regulations Assessment. A Basic Conditions Statement has been produced and shows how this Neighbourhood Plan meets all the Basic Conditions.

11. This Plan uses information from a wide range of sources. Appendix E lists the key evidence documents that have been drawn on, including specially commissioned work that has also been carried out. Through the Government funded Neighbourhood Support Programme, numerous Technical Support packages have been used to contribute evidence to the Plan's preparation. These packages include Housing Needs Assessment, Design including Design Codes and Site Options & Assessment, the latter building on a Call for Sites – plots of land suggested for housing development by their owners, and Housing Site Viability.

What are the future stages of the Plan?

12. The next stage is the referendum of all voters in the Marton Moss Area. If the Plan passes the referendum with a majority of local residents' support the Council will be able to formally 'make' the Plan and it will come into full effect.

2. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

13. Taking its cue from the overall purpose, aims and ambitions of the Forum (Appendix B) the Plan’s Vision of what the area will be like by the end of the Plan period (in 2030) is as follows:

Vision – The Forum’s view of what Marton Moss will be like by 2030

14. Marton Moss has stayed mainly open and green in appearance with well-maintained public spaces and attractive main thoroughfares. It is a place that is easy to walk, cycle and horse ride through in safety on well connected-up signed routes and off-road paths that provide for healthy recreation. Midgeland Farmhouse and its’ associated original buildings are partially retained and land nearby is a community park popular with local people.

15. The housing built over the 2020 – 2030 period has been in keeping with the character of the Moss and provides accommodation for a range of needs. The other significant buildings constructed over the Plan period are also well designed and respectful of the area. The development provided is well adapted to climate change by having minimal impact, including in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and energy use. The natural environment is home to a wider range of wildlife than it was in 2020. The area is now well drained with a very low risk of flooding.



Midgeland Road South

16. To help to achieve the Vision a series of Objectives have been produced. The Objectives help decide the scope of the Plan and the remit of the key provisions of it – the Policies. The Objectives and how they relate to the Policies is set out in the following two tables.

Objectives

	OBJECTIVE	HOW ACHIEVED?	OTHER BENEFITS
1	To preserve and enhance the distinctive heritage character, landscape, and overall appearance of the area.	Through good building design, limiting development densities and keeping important tracts of open land substantially undeveloped.	Increases local pride in the area and an aesthetically pleasing location is recognised to improve health and wellbeing.
2	To save from complete loss the historic Midgeland Farmhouse and original buildings.	By measures to preserve any remaining structures and/or a programme of archaeological recording.	Reduces the risk of vandalism and fly-tipping.
3	To safeguard and enhance natural habitats and improve the variety of wildlife, with new development required to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.	Through development avoiding harm to internationally as well as locally significant habitats and important species as well as requiring developers to contribute to biodiversity improvements.	Contributes to the open character and appearance of the area as well as feelings of well-being.
4	To ensure that new development is in keeping with the look, scale, and form of existing buildings.	Through good building design in accordance with the provisions of the Marton Moss Design Code.	Increases local pride in the area.
5	To enable housing development that meets a range of accommodation needs.	By supporting on appropriate sites new housing comprising a variety of accommodation types.	Helps enable local people to stay within the area and attracts in new residents, so diversifying the population.
6	To protect existing recreation grounds and provide additional open leisure space that is away from the coast and its wildlife functionally linked land.	By protecting existing recreational grounds as Local Green Space and opening-up land at Midgeland Farm for community park use.	Increases opportunities for physical exercise, improves mental well-being and the amount of social interaction.
7	To make it easier and safer to move through the area without being dependent on motor vehicles.	Through the provision of new/improved footpaths, bridleways and cycling opportunities connected to existing throughfares and open spaces.	Increases opportunities for physical exercise, improves mental well-being and amount of social interaction. Improvements in air pollution would be a direct benefit of reducing reliance on motor vehicles.
8	To support locally appropriate development proposals associated with horticultural and equestrian activities.	Through allowing appropriately sited installations and buildings plus for horticultural enterprises allowing complementary uses to financially support the main business.	Helps support local employment, and with equestrian uses, retain the openness of the area. There would also be improvements to health and wellbeing.
9	To ensure that new development will be safe from flooding for its lifetime without increasing risk elsewhere and, where feasible, improves land drainage.	By new development avoiding land at risk of flooding, incorporating fully compliant sustainable drainage systems, and providing improvement works to adjacent drainage dykes where necessary.	Helps maintain open water features for the benefit of local wildlife.
10	To allow tourism accommodation uses that are in keeping with the open character of the area.	By supporting tourism proposals that maintain the open, pastoral character of the Moss.	Helps support local employment and bring benefits to the local economy as a whole.

Which Policies Will Deliver What Objectives?

	OBJECTIVES	POLICIES									
		MM1	MM2	MM3	MM4	MM5	MM6	MM7	MM8	MM9	MM10
1	To preserve and enhance the distinctive heritage character, landscape and overall appearance of the area.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2	To save from complete loss the historic Midgeland Farmhouse and original buildings.								✓		
3	To safeguard and enhance natural habitats and improve the variety of wildlife, with new development required to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.	✓	✓		✓	✓					
4	To ensure that new development is in keeping with the look, scale and form of existing buildings	✓			✓	✓		✓			
5	To enable housing development that meets a range of accommodation needs.				✓	✓					
6	To protect existing recreation grounds and provide additional open leisure space that is away from the coast and its functionally linked land.								✓	✓	
7	To make it easier and safer to move through the area without being dependent on motor vehicles.		✓								✓
8	To support locally appropriate development proposals associated with horticultural and equestrian activities.						✓	✓			
9	To ensure that new development will be safe from flooding for its lifetime without increasing risk elsewhere and where feasible improves land drainage.	✓			✓	✓					
10	To allow tourism accommodation uses that are in keeping with the open character of the area.		✓								

3. SPATIAL PORTRAIT

Physical Profile

Where is Marton Moss?

17. The designated Marton Moss Neighbourhood Area is at the south eastern extremity of Blackpool, to the east of the Airport. It is away from the sea, being over 2km from the coastline. The north east corner of the Area is close to the western end of the M55 motorway.

18. The term 'Marton Moss' historically refers to a larger area than is covered by this Neighbourhood Plan. Some of the land excluded from the Neighbourhood Plan Area within Blackpool has been, or is in the process of, being developed; the remaining part is within Fylde Borough. However, for the purposes of this Neighbourhood Plan the terms 'Marton Moss', and the 'Moss' for short, relate only to the designated Neighbourhood Area.

What comprises Marton Moss?

19. The northern boundary of the Neighbourhood Area is formed by Yeadon Way which continues the westward alignment of the motorway towards the South Shore part of Blackpool town. The eastern boundary of the Area coincides with the administrative boundary of Blackpool with Fylde Borough as does the southern boundary also marked by Division Lane, land on the northside of which is within the Area. The south western boundary of the Area broadly follows Common Edge Road and then cuts eastwards along the south side of Progress Way before switching northwards approximately aligned with Midgeland Road and finally heads diagonally north eastward across to Yeadon Way.

20. The Area comprises approximately 2 square kilometres. The land is largely flat and low lying, mostly between 5 and 10 metres above sea level. Prior to human settlement, Marton Moss, as the name suggests, was an area of open moss land with poorly drained mainly peaty soils. The land immediately to the east and south in Fylde Borough had similar natural characteristics.

21. It is not possible to say precisely how many people currently live at Marton Moss because the official statistical areas do not closely coincide with the Neighbourhood Area boundary. At the time of the 2011 Census of Population the 'best matching' four of the five statistical areas which cover at least part of Marton Moss had 1,249 residents, whereas counting all five areas the number was 1,616 residents but a substantial proportion of those lived outside the Area. However, in comparison with the Borough as a whole, these figures equate to only approximately 1% of the total population of Blackpool.

Historic Character

22. Only a few discovered remains of early human occupation of the Area exist. A Bronze Age axe and animal skin coracles have been found. However, there are some surviving traces of human settlement construction from these times. It appears likely that the generally marshy ground conditions did not lend themselves to human habitation although there were small areas of slightly higher, drier land. The first recorded works to drain the wider area date from the 14th Century however for the most part intensive draining of Marton Moss did not occur until the widespread enclosure of fields, from the mid-18th to mid-19th Centuries. The exception to this is the slightly higher ground in the vicinity of the long-established Chapel Road where the land was enclosed earlier, in Medieval times, a process referred to as 'Ancient Enclosure'. Typically though, across most of the Area, the field boundaries from the

later land enclosures were marked by drainage ditches accompanied by trees (often pollarded) and hedgerows. Paths and bridleways followed the same alignments. Many of these features still exist.

23. Human habitation of the Area only occurred very gradually in the post-Medieval period. Building construction was confined to the few areas of dry land when the use of locally sourced materials prevailed - stone cobbles for walls and thatching over timber cruck framed roofs. A few preserved examples of these structures remain as listed buildings (see Appendix F) they provide a tantalising glimpse of what the building forms were like when the Area was sparsely populated. In other buildings dating from this time the traditional construction has since been replaced by or concealed by tiled roofs and brick facades.

24. The mossland was first used in Medieval times for peat extraction, with excavations spreading out from the few main trackways that existed. It was not until this upper layer of peat had been removed that the ground was used for cultivation. Initially there was no exceptional demand for food produce from the reclaimed land. That situation changed when Blackpool, itself up until then only a small settlement, was connected to the national railway network; the first train services operated from 1846. A market for horticultural produce was then opened-up not just with the burgeoning seaside resort but also through demand from elsewhere in Lancashire, and especially Yorkshire.

25. The architectural tradition of the Area prevailing today is mainly derived from the relatively recent past - the 19th Century - when the main demand for building construction came from the horticultural businesses. Typically, market garden plots were between 1¼ and 1¾ of an acre in size (about half a hectare) and were usually occupied by a road frontage house with an access track down one side of the dwelling to the cultivated area at the rear. Such houses were originally modest proportioned cottages which were often later replaced by taller Victorian villas. The need to house other horticultural workers led to numerous additional dwellings being built as 'twin' (semi-detached) and short terraces on or near the holding.

26. The accessibility of the railway opened-up a source of mass-produced bricks from east Lancashire and roofing slate from Cumbria and Wales. The bricks used were typically red and glossy finished particularly when used on the front elevations of houses. Vertical sliding sash windows became popular instead of the earlier casement ones and Yorkshire style (horizontal sliding) sashes. Wealthier owners added more elaborate detailing to their residences with stone lined window openings, perforated bargeboard detailing and terracotta ridge tiles and finials. The road frontages of these homes were usually marked with brick-built garden walls and stone gate posts.

27. The 20th Century brought different building styles reflective of the widely prevalent national fashions of the times. As elsewhere in the country, increased mobility of people with the rising use of the motor car led to an influx of new residents into the Area particularly during the 1930's. At that time numerous semi-detached brick-built houses were constructed with harling (rendered finish) first floor facades. Also, many bungalows were erected as detached or semi-detached properties with central doorways flanked by bays on either side.

28. From the 1950's onwards various individually designed detached houses and bungalows were constructed on infill plots between other properties or as replacements for earlier residences. These homes were sited on either main road frontages or directly facing the narrower side lanes. Very little in-depth housing development occurred in the Area during the 20th Century. More recently, housing on small culs-de-sac has occurred mostly just outside the boundary of the designated Area, except that is for the substantial 'Magnolia Point' housing estate between Midgeland Road and Stockydale Road.

29. Market gardening activity on the Moss probably reached its peak in the 1960s. Since then, the large rise of international trade in salad foodstuffs and flowers has led to highly competitive market conditions with the business being increasingly dominated by large-scale producers. This has caused most of the local growers to cease their activities and led to the redundancy of their glasshouses.

Present Day Character

30. The settlement pattern that exists over most of Marton Moss today largely stems from individual landowners buying up and sub-dividing land into small plots to devote to market gardening during the second half of the 19th Century. However, some parts were not used for intensive horticulture. In the north of the Area, particularly the land between Chapel Road and Yeadon Way was generally not so used. The latter remains as open land and is considered to be of archaeological significance due to early field enclosure. It also acts as an open break separating the more built-up parts of Marton Moss from the more urbanised parts of Blackpool.

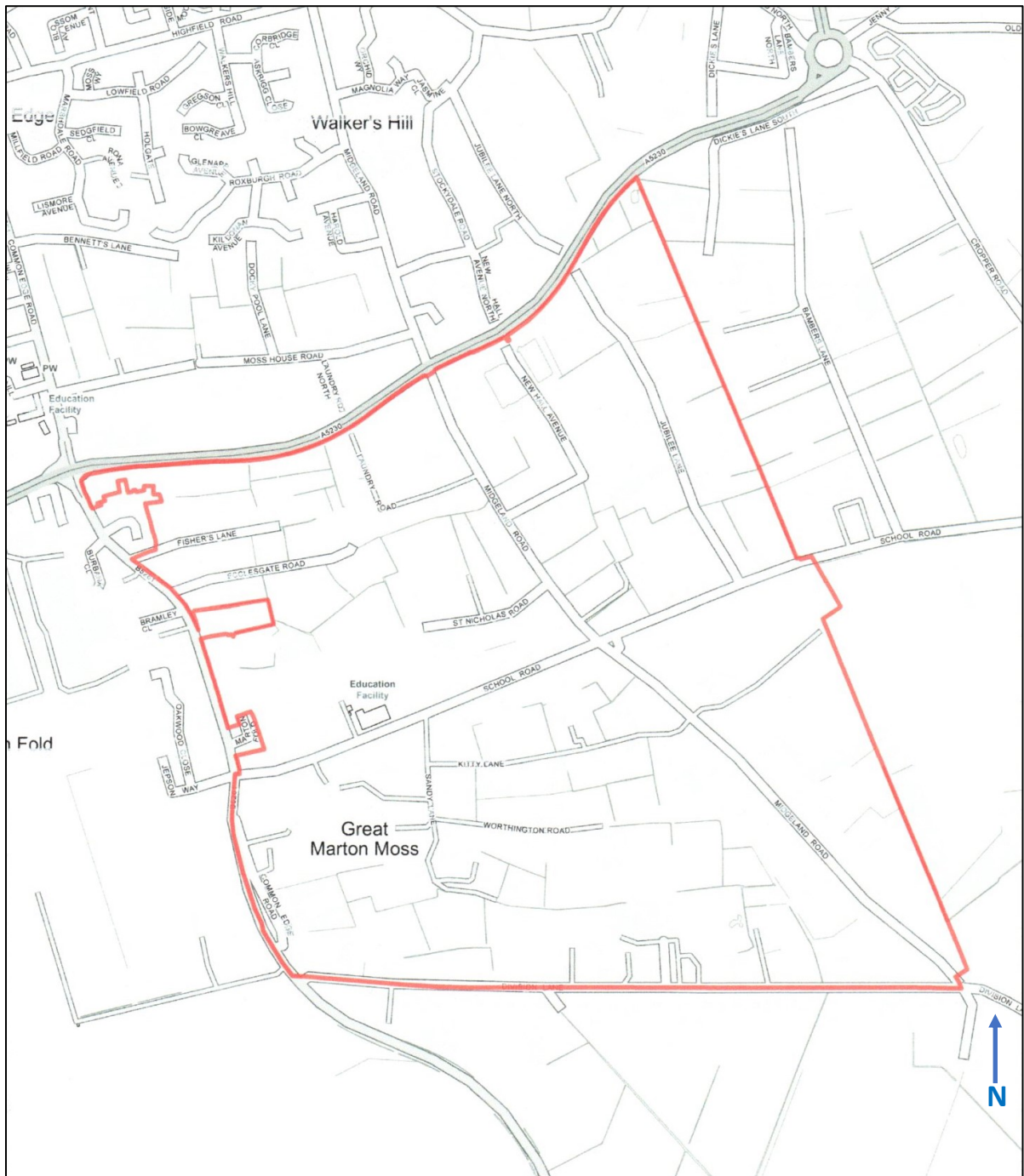
31. Further south another tract of land that has long remained largely open is around Midgeland Farm on the eastern edge of the Area. The locally listed former farmhouse is now derelict, the surrounding land was used as a landfill site in the late 1960s and 1970s, it is now mown for hay. Two more substantial areas of open land – south of Ecclesgate Road and in the vicinity of Worthington Road and Sandy Lane are also tracts that have largely not been used for market gardening.

32. These landholdings, with their naturalised field boundaries and quiet lanes, are the basis of the pastoral semi-rural present-day character of the Moss. However, this is an appearance that has partly evolved from the decline of horticultural activities such that the Area has become predominantly residential. Similarly, whilst away from the main through roads the Area has a peaceful charm, by contrast the arterial routes of Progress Way, Common Edge Road and School Road are busy with traffic and congested at peak hours.

33. Now only very few market garden producers remain active within the Area. Some former glasshouses lie derelict, but most have been completely removed with many of the plots acting as large open gardens for individual houses. Other plots have become paddocks for horses, flanked by stable blocks. There are also caravan uses in numerous guises that occupy former market garden plots – such as vehicle storage, tourist camping sites and compounds for the Traveller and Showperson families. Some of the former horticultural land is mown occasionally for hay, grazed mainly by horses or is completely un-used. There are various other small business uses scattered across the Moss.

34. Two locations have been re-modelled to act as surface water flood attenuation basins, one south of Chapel Road and the other off Ecclesgate Road. These only exceptionally hold water in times of heavy storms. Elsewhere there are some static water bodies - a man-made fishery lake at New Hall Avenue just south of Progress Way and a few isolated naturalised ponds. The Area however supports an extensive network of drainage dykes that developed as the Moss was drained and became used for market gardening. These watercourses remain important for drainage and flood control purposes today, they also act as significant wildlife habitats.

35. The southern two-thirds of the Moss was designated a Conservation Area in 2019 – the extent of this is shown on the map overleaf. The land excluded from the Conservation Area, north of Progress Way to Yeadon Way, is of a similar character except there is a modern housing estate at 'Magnolia Point', served off Midgeland Road North, and a small enclave of mixed commercial uses off Dickies Lane North in the north east of the Area.



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Marton Moss Conservation Area

Community Profile

36. The characteristics of the Marton Moss population, the homes people live in, and their economic status differ quite markedly from the residents of Blackpool as a whole. Given that only about 1% of Blackpool's population lives on the Moss it would be surprising if there were not some differences. However, the variations between the two are not a statistical quirk but highly relevant to how the two areas should be planned. Unfortunately, up to date data are hard to come by given that the main source originates from the 2011 Census of Population.

37. Nevertheless, compared to Blackpool as whole, Marton Moss has:

- a greater proportion of older people and fewer in younger age groups (adults under 45 and children) a situation that became more pronounced between 2001 and 2011 suggesting that families moved away from the Neighbourhood Area during that time²;
- a much higher percentage of detached properties, a similar proportion of terraced houses but far fewer flats;
- a greater incidence of owner-occupied homes and far lesser occurrence of rented properties, especially socially rented ones;
- much higher average house prices; and,
- far less social deprivation.

38. The nationally produced Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 provide ranks for localities across a wide range of social and economic factors. Again, the statistical areas used do not fit exactly within the extent of the Neighbourhood Area but using the data output area that is most centrally located within the Moss, the overall deprivation ranking here is close to the median average for England. Whereas parts of Blackpool town centre have some of the most deprived communities nationally.

39. Looking at the individual factors behind the data, reveal that the Moss fares better than the national average in terms income levels, unemployment rates, frequency of crime and incidence of children in deprived families. Whereas the Neighbourhood Area performs less well in terms of health disability, local environment and education, skills and training. The health disability is probably linked to the older than average population, whereas the low local environment ranking is likely connected with the limited amount of publicly accessible open space.



Jubilee Lane South

² This was likely due to a lack of suitable housing being available locally; a trend that has probably continued in more recent times due to policy restrictions on new residential development.

4. LOCAL PLAN CONTEXT

40. To help appreciate where the Neighbourhood Plan will fit into the overall set of policies that guide new development in the Area it is important to know the scope of the various Plans that make up the statutory development plan for Blackpool as a whole.

41. There are several Local Plans that cover the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Area:

- Blackpool Core Strategy – Part 1 of the Local Plan adopted in January 2016
- Blackpool Site Allocations and Development Management Policies - Part 2 of the Local Plan adopted in February 2023
- Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan – partly being reviewed

42. For minerals and waste matters Blackpool Council works in partnership with Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen Councils. There are various documents that make up the Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan and part of it is currently being reviewed. There are no minerals and waste proposals that apply to the Marton Moss Area. However, small parts of the Moss are covered by Minerals Safeguarding Areas. These apply to land around the junction of Midgeland Road and School Road and the south eastern corner of the Midgeland Farm site.

43. Policy M2 of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan aims to restrict permanent development within the Safeguarding Areas so as to allow the prospect of future extraction of valuable, workable underground minerals. The mineral being safeguarded at Marton Moss is silica sand and the implications for surface development are limited and referred to in more detail in the separate Housing Site Allocation Appraisal document.

44. The other Local Plans that cover the Marton Moss Area are those prepared solely by Blackpool Council. Overall strategic direction is provided by the Core Strategy. The strategic policies relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan are listed in Appendix D. During the preparation of the Core Strategy a strategic development option considered was major growth in the south east of Blackpool including Marton Moss. This option was subsequently scaled back and not pursued within the 'remaining lands' of the Moss which although identified as a 'strategic site' in Policy CS1 were also made subject to Policy CS26. This latter policy and its justification text are reproduced in Appendix A.

45. Policy CS26 applies a very restrictive approach to controlling development at Marton Moss, similar to the approach generally taken in countryside areas. These restrictions are to apply until a Neighbourhood Planning type approach for the Area is brought in to replace them.

46. The Plan period for the Core Strategy is 2012 to 2027. This is particularly significant for deciding what the housing indicator for the Neighbourhood Plan should be, especially as the time period for this Plan is 2020 to 2030. Not surprisingly given the lapse of time, more up to date household projections have been published and the method for calculating housing numbers has also been revised. This matter is explained in more detail in Appendix F.

47. The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies - Part 2 of the Local Plan contains general policies that will apply to development proposals in the Moss but no site-specific ones relating to the Neighbourhood Area. So, some policies in Parts 1 and 2 of the Local Plan are relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan and are referred to in Chapter 5 in relation to each proposed Neighbourhood Plan Policy.

5. POLICIES

48. This is an important Chapter of the Neighbourhood Plan as it sets out the policies for how new development will be managed – i.e. guided and controlled. When this Plan is finalised, the policies will be used to help decide all relevant planning applications on the Moss. Some of the policies will apply across the whole Area, others refer to proposals for individual sites.

49. Each policy is presented in the same way. First the *Background Justification* section explains what the issues are for the topic covered by the policy. The *What the Community Says* section summarises the views given by local people in the Residents' Survey carried out in the autumn of 2019 and the Evidence and Policy Options Engagement in the summer of 2020.

50. The *Sources of Evidence* section lists the main documents and other survey work that have informed the topic covered by each policy. The *National Planning Policy and Advice* section refers to the key relevant aspects of the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance published by the Government that are relevant to the policy. The *Relevant Local Plan Policies* are briefly mentioned in this section citing both the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy policies and the Part 2 of the Local Plan – Site Allocations and Development Management policies.

51. Each proposed policy is shown in **bold blue text**. Where a policy refers to the 'Policies Map' it means the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan's proposed additions to and, in the case of Core Strategy Policy CS26, deletion from the Blackpool Policies Map. This is reproduced as an A4 sized image as the last page of this Plan, it can be viewed at higher magnification on the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum website³ where all the Neighbourhood Plan documents can also be viewed.

52. How the policies will be used and brought into effect is set out in Chapter 6 – Plan Implementation, Monitoring and Review.

53. Whenever relevant, the policies of the Plan need to be read together to help fully establish whether a development proposal is likely to be acceptable or not.



Blowing Sands, Common Edge Road

³ <https://www.martonmossforum.org/>

A. Design and the Local Environment

5.1 Building Design – To require new buildings to be well designed, be in character with the local Area and improve biodiversity

Background Justification

54. Although at first sight Marton Moss appears to have a random mix of architectural styles, there are numerous remaining traditional buildings that provide a cohesive design context. Also, across most of the Area is the legacy of one-acre-plus (half hectare) sized market garden plots which have provided an enduring low building density template. Although nearly all the glasshouses have been removed the boundary features – hedges and dykes – of many of the holdings remain. Of the vernacular buildings, many are former market garden residences – typically individual Victorian villas and short terraces of houses. A few older structures with cobble walls and/or thatched roofs stand out as listed buildings. Numerous residential properties on the Moss are served by minor lanes and stand close to the carriageway edge.

55. Specific Design Code work, which included engagement with local people, has been carried out to inform the Neighbourhood Plan and the essential defining elements of the design for new development so that is in character with the local vernacular styles are summarised below:

- *Cul-de-sac layouts* – not appropriate in the Conservation Area (so here new development should front on to existing roads), elsewhere new access roads should not exceed 60 metres in length, be straight and serve no more than 8 dwellings;
- *Parking* – a minimum of two on-plot spaces to reduce the visual impact from on-street parking;
- *Landscape* – protection of major open land tracts from development;
- *Set-backs, gardens and boundary treatments* – dwelling plots to have front gardens behind a hedge or low brick wall with dwellings set back at least 5 metres from the road;
- *Public rights of way* – retained within new developments and kept clear from encroaching vegetation;
- *Drainage* – to use Sustainable Drainage Systems incorporating retained dykes, with clearance required for any that are blocked; the avoidance of culverting;
- *Materials* – red brick or rendered building elevations under slate or red pantile roofs;
- *Density and housing mix* – except for short terraces, densities shall not exceed 8 dwellings per hectare (dph) in the Conservation Area and 15 dph elsewhere, with dwelling sizes to contribute to a mix of provision in the wider area; and,
- *Traffic calming* – any new streets to be designed to allow only slow vehicle movements.

For full details see the separate document – Marton Moss Design Code 2020.

56. As the Moss is a flat lowland area an extensive drainage dyke system was created when the land became cultivated. This network of water courses was maintained by the market garden proprietors as their businesses depended on well drained soils. Following the decline of horticultural production many of the dykes have fallen into disrepair, some are culverted, and others have been filled in. Localised surface water flooding occurs on occasions and although two large water attenuation basins have been constructed, the likelihood of such events could increase in the future with climate change. For Sustainable Drainage Systems to work they need to be connected to a fully functioning dyke network. Works that would involve raising the level of the ground to create a higher site often cause surface water to back up elsewhere and are also inappropriate in overall design terms.

57. Existing tree cover is limited on the Moss so new building construction should aim to retain existing healthy trees which along with improvements to ponds and watercourses would help achieve a net gain in biodiversity from development proposals. An exemplar way of delivering accredited wildlife-friendly schemes is for developers to sign up to the Building with Nature⁴ initiative.

58. The Marton Moss Biodiversity Strategy 2022, identifies the following opportunities biodiversity improvement measures that can be included in new developments based on wildlife assets of the Area:

- Protecting existing ponds, reedbeds and watercourses along with restoring/creating these as part of Sustainable Drainage Systems.
- Retaining existing hedgerows and trees as well as adding new planting to these features.
- Setting aside parts of sites and gardens for scrub, tall herb and/or long grass.
- Providing log piles of rotting wood.
- Installing bird and bat boxes on buildings.
- Building grassed-over low mounds of brick/stone rubble, branches, and old pipes as hibernacula.
- Creating extensive areas of wildlife meadow.

59. The Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Neighbourhood Plan considers to what extent development proposals on the Moss might adversely affect the integrity of internationally designated (Special Protection Area /Ramsar) wildlife sites located at the nearby Ribble and Alt Estuaries. The Assessment concludes that such an effect is possible and recommends in relation to the aspect of recreational pressure the Neighbourhood Plan:

- should add a caveat that residential development will only be supported if the developer commits to providing homeowner packs to new residents identifying the disturbance sensitivity of the wintering waterfowl using the Ribble Estuary, encouraging responsible dog ownership and identifying other areas of accessible greenspace that could be visited as an alternative. Similarly, improvements to access to existing footpaths and bridlepaths should be contingent on them not exacerbating recreational pressure issues at the SPA/Ramsar site⁵.

60. The Strategic Environmental Assessment Draft Environmental Report for the Neighbourhood Plan makes the following general recommendation relating to development proposals on land associated with ancient enclosure and so having a high potential for the presence of archaeological remains, in such instances:

- that archaeological potential must be explored and appropriate action taken to protect and record features of importance.

What the Community Says

61. Many local people cherish the existing character of the Moss and want to see it retained as much as possible. In the Residents' Survey the Area was commonly described as having a 'peaceful rural aspect'. The natural environment of the Moss was rated as its most important feature. Although there is a common acceptance from many of the Survey respondents that some development should be allowed, a major concern is that this might cause a loss of identity through new buildings being built which are out of character. Several respondents also expressed concerns about the state of repair of the dyke network. Most of the responses received to the Evidence and Policy Options Engagement supported a broadly based policy citing general good design principles that refer to the Design Code. The earlier feedback on the Code itself supported lower density schemes, off-road parking, protection of open land, traditional boundary treatment, useable public rights of way, and well-maintained drainage ditches.

⁴ <https://www.buildingwithnature.org.uk/about>

⁵ See Policy MM10 for this latter matter to be taken account of

Sources of Evidence

Historic Characterisation of Marton Moss, 2009

Marton Moss Conservation Area Appraisal, 2018

Marton Moss Design Code, 2020

Watercourse and flood risk mapping, latest published

Marton Moss Biodiversity Strategy, 2022

Habitats Regulations Assessment: Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan, 2022

Strategic Environmental Assessment: Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan, Environmental Report, 2022

National Planning Policy and Advice

62. Achieving high quality buildings beautiful and sustainable buildings and well-designed places are key features of National Policy. Plans should have a clear design vision and expectations as can be achieved through the production of design codes so as to establish or maintain a strong sense of place, with policies developed along with the local community to reflect residents' aspirations and an area's defining characteristics. National Policy also advocates that development plans should have policies that support appropriate measures to help ensure future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts including with the assistance of Sustainable Drainage Systems. Achieving biodiversity net gain is also a fundamental requirement of new development proposals, an aspect that should be integrated into a scheme's design.

Relevant Local Plan Policies

63. Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy Policy CS1: Strategic Location of Development point 3 refers to recognising the important character of land at Marton Moss. Policy CS6: Green Infrastructure – sets out how high-quality and well-connected networks of green infrastructure in Blackpool will be achieved. Policy CS7: Quality of Design - requires that new development should be well designed and enhances the character and appearance of the local area. In respect of heritage – Policy CS8 - development proposals should respect and draw inspiration from the built, social, and cultural heritage of Blackpool and complement its rich history.

64. Core Strategy Policy CS9: Water Management - requires that all new developments must incorporate appropriate mitigation and resilience measures to minimise the risk and impact of flooding, incorporating appropriate Sustainable Drainage Systems (i.e. that meet approved technical specifications) and avoiding the discharge of surface water into the sewer network.

65. Part 2 of the Local Plan in Policy DM1: Design Requirements for New Build Housing Development - reinforces the importance of designs and layouts responding to a local character. The Policy also sets out a series of minimum expectations on internal and external space requirements, waste management and parking arrangements. It also advocates what energy and carbon saving measures should be built into new homes. Policy DM41: Transport Requirements for New Development – sets out all the factors to be taken account of in terms of accessibility.

66. Local Plan Part 2 Policy DM17: Design Principles – sets out the fundamental aspects of good design and Policy DM27: Conservation Areas – the particular design expectations that apply in these locations. Policy DM21: Landscaping – outlines the design requirements of outdoor areas that developments need to incorporate and Policy DM31: Surface Water Management – underlines the importance of incorporating the most sustainable drainage option available for new development. Policy DM35: Biodiversity - covers all the minimum expectations in relation to wildlife matters, including habitat creation where opportunities exist.

Policy MM1 Building Design

The design of proposals for new development will be supported provided that:

- a. the provisions set out in the Marton Moss Design Code are appropriately reflected in the submitted scheme; and,
- b. consistent with the Code, schemes would minimise their impact on the appearance of the wider area through retaining existing trees and hedgerows, providing appropriate landscaping, and garden layouts; and,
- c. a Sustainable Drainage System compliant with the most up to date requirements of CIRIA * Manual 753, or any future replacement thereof, is to be installed with suitable arrangements to be put in place for its future maintenance and proposals for this system to outfall to a fully functioning and intact local dyke network, subject to advice on sustainable drainage and flood risk in the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#); and
- d. there is a commitment to provide nature conservation information packs to new residential development occupiers, and to wildlife habitat creation within the site as set out in the Marton Moss Biodiversity Strategy; and
- e. in respect of land with high archaeological potential, that aspect has been fully assessed and there is a commitment to take appropriate action to protect and record features of importance.

* Construction Industry Research and Information Association



Primrose Terrace, School Road

5.2 Open Land Character – To safeguard significant open land from being inappropriately developed and secure environmental improvements

Background Justification

67. The defining visual feature of Marton Moss is its open pastoral character. The generally low density of development with numerous areas of open land gives the place a rural feel. The Plan aims to preserve this important characteristic whilst at the same time allowing some appropriate development to take place. The Marton Moss Design Code recognises the importance of four large open tracts of land and the significance of these areas are considered in more depth in the Marton Moss Major Open Land Study. The four tracts are:

- Between Chapel Road and Yeadon Way
- South of Ecclesgate Road
- East of Sandy Lane and Worthington Road
- Midgeland Farm

68. These tracts are well spread across the Moss; they are longstanding areas of open land little used in the past for intensive market gardening and are now more typically fields for cattle and horse grazing. The Midgeland Farm site is the only one bordering the wide, open countryside of the Fylde Plain beyond, but it has specific heritage significance and community re-use potential - matters that are considered separately under Policy MM8.

69. The three other Major Open Land areas represent enclaves of countryside that the strict Core Strategy CS26 Policy has helped keep undeveloped. They serve as 'Green Lungs' and being open to view from nearby roads and/or public rights of way, overtly contribute to the open feel of the Neighbourhood Area. The land at Chapel Road/Yeadon Way also serves as a buffer between the Moss and the more built-up area of Blackpool further north. To the south, the open land tracts at Ecclesgate Road and Sandy Lane/Worthington Road are embedded in the heart of the Moss. All three areas have the potential to offer better public access with path improvements.

70. Furthermore, Blackpool Council's open space and green infrastructure mapping evidence shows how these areas of Major Open Land connect with other open areas on the Moss. As such they serve as a linked network of spaces that not only benefit the human population but also serve as natural habitats and wildlife corridors of ecological importance, albeit with the potential to be more biodiverse. As in many places of human settlement and agricultural use the surviving extents of natural vegetation are remnants of once larger habitats and these tracts of land represent local nature recovery opportunities. It is therefore appropriate that as much as possible of the open land should be retained and appropriately used not just to safeguard the local character but also for recreation, open-air leisure pursuits such as equestrian events and golf, and nature conservation benefits. Any buildings proposed on such land will need to be kept to a minimum and limited to those essential to the intended predominantly open use envisaged. Camping tourist accommodation comprising tent and touring caravan sites would also be acceptable within areas of Major Open Land.

What the Community Says

71. The open pastoral character of the Moss is seen as its attractive defining feature by many local people. The Residents' Survey showed that the greatest concerns were the loss of green space arising from new development and protecting the natural environment.

72. The majority of responses received to the Evidence and Policy Options Engagement supported the safeguarding of specific key larger tracts of open land from development. However, it was also pointed out that as well as the large open tracts there are also areas of significant open land comprising smaller open spaces interspersed within the more built-up areas of the Moss that also contribute to its overall character.

Sources of Evidence

Historic Characterisation of Marton Moss, 2009

Marton Moss Conservation Area Appraisal, 2018

Blackpool's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2019-2029, 2019

Marton Moss Design Code, 2020

Marton Moss Major Open Land Study, 2022 (Further Revised)

Marton Moss Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycle Routes Study, 2022 (Revised)

M55 Hub Extended Phase 1 Ecology Report, 2009 and miscellaneous nature conservation records, various

Marton Moss Biodiversity Strategy, 2022

Habitats Regulations Assessment: Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan, 2022

National Planning Policy and Advice

73. Although making effective use of land (when it is being developed) is a central feature of national planning policy that approach does also recognise the benefits of keeping land undeveloped. Such open land can serve a variety of functions (e.g. for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage, food production) and in terms of maintaining an area's character and setting. Achieving biodiversity net gain is also a fundamental requirement of new development proposals.

Relevant Local Plan Policies

74. Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy Policy CS1: Strategic Location of Development point 3 refers to recognising the important character of land at Marton Moss. Policy CS6: Green Infrastructure - promotes protecting, enhancing, creating and connecting all the facets of the green infrastructure network. Policy CS7: Quality of Design - recognises the importance of green infrastructure in the overall design of places. Policy CS21: Leisure and Business Tourism – aims to focus tourism investment in central parts of Blackpool and at existing outdoor leisure and tourism facilities elsewhere, only exceptionally will new holiday accommodation be allowed in peripheral locations outside these areas. Part 2 of the Local Plan in Policy DM35: Biodiversity - covers all the minimum expectations in relation to wildlife matters, including habitat creation where opportunities exist.

Policy MM2 Open Land Character

To maintain their vital contribution to the overall character of Marton Moss and their green infrastructure significance the following areas, as shown on the Policies Map, are safeguarded as Major Open Land:

- 1. Between Chapel Road and Yeadon Way**
- 2. South of Ecclesgate Road**
- 3. East of Sandy Lane and Worthington Road**

Development proposals on Major Open Land will be supported provided that the open appearance of the site would be substantially retained, and limited to the following:

- a. outdoor recreational, camping or other open-air leisure uses appropriate to a rural area, provided any buildings are demonstrated to be essential and no larger than is necessary to serve the use proposed; or,**
- b. conversion or change of use of existing buildings for agricultural or equestrian purposes; or,**
- c. extensions or replacement dwellings in keeping with the scale and character of the area and not exceeding 33% of the original ground floor footprint of the existing dwelling.**

Where appropriate schemes should provide better public access and encompass local nature recovery measures.

5.3 School Road/Midgeland Road Junction – To improve the roadside appearance and retain the open character of the land here

Background Justification

75. The appearance of an entrance to a place has a significant impact on informing first impressions on users of what that place is like. The School Road/Midgeland Road crossroads serves as a gateway for people arriving at Marton Moss. Unfortunately, the land around this crossroads has a poor appearance. There is an unkempt former bus turnaround/layby, underused and disused land at each quadrant and unsightly, dilapidated fences. There are opportunities to enhance the location in various ways in addition to better maintenance of the public spaces.

76. Despite its poor appearance the land around the junction, given its significant extent and absence of buildings, positively contributes to the open character of the Area therefore any development would need to be in accordance with the provisions of Policy MM2. Any development land use proposals that come forward will need to provide appropriate boundary treatment to the road frontage. Normally a proposal to put up a wall or fence up to 1 metre high would not require planning permission to be applied for and therefore the Council would not be able to control the design and materials to be used. However, it is intended that this 'right' be removed with an Article 4 Direction under the provisions of the General Permitted Development Order.

77. The former bus turnaround/layby is next to the Midgeland Farm site (see Policy MM9) and has the potential to be a point of access thereto for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists. There is also sufficient space here capable of accommodating a sizeable public art installation, such a feature could also serve to signpost the way to the proposed community park at Midgeland Farm.

What the Community says

78. There was very high level of support from respondents to Evidence and Policy Options Engagement for improving the appearance of this road junction.

Sources of Evidence

79. Visual survey of land use and its condition at Marton Moss (no published documents).

National Planning Policy and Advice

80. National Planning Policy urges that plan makers and decisions on planning applications take account of the sense of place, arrangement of streets, spaces, building type and materials to create attractive, welcoming, and distinctive places to live, work and visit.

Relevant Local Plan Policies

81. Local Plan Part 2 Policy DM25: Public Art – outlines the Council's approach to encouraging appropriate public art installations and specifically mentions Marton Moss as a location opportunity.

Policy MM3 School Road/Midgeland Road Junction

The design of any proposal for development on land adjacent to the School Road/Midgeland Road crossroads, as shown on the Policies Map, will be supported provided it:

- a. is in accordance with Policy MM2; and,
- b. includes appropriately designed boundary treatment adjacent to the road frontage.

An appropriately designed and sited art installation will be supported at this location.



Land at School Road/Midgeland Road Junction

B. Housing Development

5.4 Housing Site Allocations – To identify land for new housing and guide the number, sizes, and types of new homes on each site

Background Justification

82. People have changing residential accommodation requirements and abilities to afford housing as they go through their lives. Wherever possible it is clearly important that households occupy accommodation that best suits their current and foreseeable short-term needs. Housing comes in various basic sizes (numbers of bedrooms) and types – houses, bungalows, and apartments. There are also more specialist forms designed to suit less able and/or older persons in terms of their accessibility and care needs. There are also several different forms of tenure – homes to buy, rent, or some combination of the two in terms of shared ownership.

83. Housing specifically intended to be affordable is cheaper to buy or rent than the market rate so in some way it is subsidised (see Appendix G). Generally, most housing is constructed ahead of the future occupiers being known (i.e. it is speculatively built) but many individual homes are provided to the specific requirements of the initial purchaser – i.e. they are custom-built.

84. A Housing Needs Assessment of the population of the Moss has been prepared to inform this Plan. This identifies both the overall quantity of additional housing indicated for the 10-year Plan period (broadly derived from the projected increase in the total number of households), and what different forms of housing would best meet the needs of local people over this time frame. However, the scope to provide everyone in the Area with ideal types of newly built accommodation is limited by the relatively small overall number of additional homes indicated – 28 dwellings to be provided between 2020 and 2030. This is a minimum figure that can be modestly exceeded without detriment to the integrity of the Plan.

85. The theoretical total amount of new housing indicated to meet the needs of Marton Moss over the 10-year Plan period is a complicated calculation (see Appendix H). The Neighbourhood Plan needs to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and as such should aim to meet its share of the overall Blackpool housing requirement figure. That share is approximately 1% based on the size of the population of the Moss. However, the Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy has a plan period of 2012-2027. It therefore finishes three years short of the Neighbourhood Plan's period. However, having said all this as the whole amount of housing required to meet Blackpool's needs can be met in the Borough outside of Marton Moss, the 28 dwelling figure is only an indicator.

86. The Marton Moss Housing Needs Assessment work takes account of both the Core Strategy approach and the Standard Method. So, although the amount of new housing in the Area will be relatively small it needs to be remembered that most people find and move to locally available 'secondhand' housing as their accommodation needs and financial circumstances change. However, people with more specific requirements may not be able to do so through a lack of choice in the existing housing stock.

87. The overall housing indicative figure is less than the estimated total number of homes specially designed for older people ideally needed over the coming 10 years. There is very little existing housing within or near Marton Moss designed for the needs of older people. This is common in many communities but in practice many older people prefer to stay living in accommodation they brought their families up in and manage to cope with health limiting impairments with the assistance of home adaptations and visiting carers. However, a 12- bungalow development is already under construction on the former Baguley's Garden Centre site at Midgeland Road and this could be appropriately extended with a few more bungalows using adjoining land proposed for such in the Plan. Occupation of the permitted bungalows and the additional properties will be restricted to older people for which they are designed to suit.

88. The Housing Needs Assessment also identifies a need for at least 20 affordable (cheaper than market) homes over the coming 10 years. Again, there is very little subsidised existing housing on the Moss and the prospect of funding being available for future provision is limited. Affordable housing is provided in one of two ways – either through cross-subsidy from market housing developments or via grant funded housing association/council schemes. The low number of new market homes envisaged to be built in the Neighbourhood Area means the scope to cross-subsidise affordable housing is very small as is the prospect of grant finance being available with the limited funds available to public sector landlords and the pressing needs for affordable elsewhere in the Borough.

89. However, terraced housing can provide a cheaper form of accommodation than most properties on the market locally and such dwellings are likely to well meet the needs of newly forming younger households. Again, the Plan is bringing forward sites that can be developed for this type of housing. So, by allocating sites for residential development suited to providing a range of different forms of housing and promoting such choices through an appropriate policy a varied selection of new accommodation can be achieved across the Area.

90. The Neighbourhood Plan period started on 1 April 2020 and will run until 31 March 2030. All homes that are completed (built and ready for occupation) during that period will count towards the housing indication figure no matter what source they come from, including:

- Sites already with planning permission with homes remaining to be completed
- New sites identified (i.e. allocated) for housing
- Unidentified (i.e. windfall) sites that come forward and gain planning permission during the Plan period

91. This means that the twelve bungalows being built at the former Baguley's Garden Centre site will, when completed, count towards the housing indication figure. It should be noted that the Local Plan Part 2 is not proposing any housing allocations at Marton Moss.

92. In deciding what land to propose as housing allocations (in Policy MM4 below) account has been taken of the site suggestions made by local people, landowners, and developers in the Call for Sites. These sites have been analysed for their suitability in the Marton Moss Site Options and Assessment and those found 'suitable' or 'potentially suitable' have been considered in more detail in the Marton Moss Housing Site Allocations Appraisal 2022. The potential financial viability of housing development in the Area has also been considered in two documents.

What the Community Says

93. Housing overall was not rated as the most important issue for local people responding to the Residents' Survey. That is probably because most of the local population have their housing needs appropriately met. However, several people commented on the need for new individual houses, and some recognised a requirement for 'starter homes', properties for younger households. However, when asked in the Survey what sizes of new housing developments they would prefer to see built, local people responded as follows:

Large development (more than 30 houses)	1%
Medium development (15-30 houses)	6%
Smaller development (2-14 houses)	31%
Individual houses	35%
None	24%

Note: The above figures do not add to 100% due to rounding

94. At the Evidence and Policy Options Engagement stage the vast majority of people commenting favoured the Plan allocating sites for residential development and most respondents supported a specific policy which would specify in advance the sizes and types of homes that would suit each allocated site rather than leaving this open until the planning application stage.

Sources of Evidence

Marton Moss Housing Needs Assessment, 2020

Marton Moss Site Options and Assessment, 2020⁶

Marton Moss Housing Site Allocations Appraisal, 2022 (Revised)

Marton Moss Housing Site Viability Study, 2022

Marton Moss Housing Viability – a Local Commentary, 2022 (Revised)

⁶ The site reference numbers used by the authors of this report (consultants AECOM) are shown in Policy MM4 overleaf alongside the lettering of the allocation sites.

National Planning Policy and Advice

95. A long-standing Government policy is to significantly boost the overall supply of new homes across the country. Neighbourhood Plans are not required to bring forward land for housing development but are encouraged to do so. National policy advises neighbourhood planning groups should consider the opportunities for allocating suitable small and medium sized sites taking account of local market conditions and viability, availability and capacity of infrastructure and services, maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting, as well as the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places. Where there is a shortage of land to meet housing needs low density development should be avoided – note there is no shortage at Marton Moss but in any event the Neighbourhood Plan makes provision for housing well in excess of the housing indicator.

96. National policy states that Plans should reflect in their policies the different residential accommodation requirements of different groups in the community. Also, the specific need for affordable housing is acknowledged but national policy states this is normally not to be sought on market housing schemes of less than ten dwellings. Above this size at least 10% of homes to be provided on a site should be for affordable home ownership (unless this would prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups). Also at least a quarter of the affordable homes on a site should be 'First Homes' (see Appendix G). The exceptions to this are developments that are solely 'Build for Rent' schemes, specialist accommodation such as for elderly or student accommodation, self or custom-built housing, and schemes exclusively for affordable housing.

Relevant Local Plan Policies

97. Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy Policy CS2: Housing Provision - sets out an overall housing requirement figure for the whole of Blackpool for the 2012-2027 Plan period of 4,200 homes. The following policies also apply to the whole of the Borough including Marton Moss: Policy CS13: Housing Mix, Density and Standards – specifies the sizes of homes on sites so as to achieve a balanced mix of properties and Policy CS14: Affordable Housing – seeks on sites in the 3-14 dwelling size range, the direct provision of such housing, or a financial contribution to be used on another site. On larger sites thirty percent of the total number of units provided are required to be affordable. These provisions are all subject to the financial viability of the overall scheme.

98. The various requirements for new developments to contribute to infrastructure and community facilities are Policy CS11: Planning Obligations, Policy CS12 Sustainable Neighbourhoods and, specifically school places, in Policy CS15: Health and Education. Local Plan Part 2 Policy DM3: Supported Accommodation and Housing for Older People – sets out criteria for the various forms of specialist housing for older people and the acceptable distribution of such developments.

Policy MM4 Housing Site Allocations

The following sites, as shown on the Policies Map, are proposed for housing development:

Site	AECOM	Location	Appropriate forms of development
B	MM19	Adj. to 322, Common Edge Road	4 detached dwellings facing Common Edge Road
C*	MM26 (part)	Land on the Corner of Common Edge Road and School Road	No more than 11 dwellings
D~	MM20	Adj. to Ral Mar, Sandy Lane	2 detached dwellings
E~	MM27	Adj. to Lemmington House, Worthington Road	1 detached dwelling
F	MM21	The Bungalow Nurseries, Worthington Road	1 detached dwelling
G	MM18	Corner of Midgeland Road and Kitty Lane	No more than 8 dwellings
H	MM13	Caradaw Farm, School Road	No more than 6 dwellings
I	MM22	Adj. to Rushy Meade, School Road	1 detached dwelling fronting School Road
J	MM23	Adj. to Larchfield, St. Nicholas Road	2 detached dwellings
L	MM24	Adj. to 9 Fishers Lane	2 detached dwellings
N	MM16	Former Marina Nurs, New Hall Avenue	2 detached dwellings
O	MM17b	Remaining land at former Baguley's Garden Centre, off Midgeland Road	5 detached bungalows, reserved for older people, accessed off new estate road
P~	MM14b	Dean Nurseries, Chapel Road	6 detached dwellings off new estate road
Q~	MM14a	The Hollies, Chapel Road	1 detached dwelling
R^	MM10	Adj. to 1 Runnell Villas, Chapel Road	2 detached dwellings off short private drive fronting Chapel Road
S^	MM5	Off Magnolia Way	10 detached dwellings and 5 terraced houses accessed off Magnolia Way
T	MM31	Adj. to Moss Lodge, Jubilee Lane North	3 detached dwellings fronting Jubilee Lane – avoiding surface water sewer
U	MM30	Adj. to 58 Stockydale Road	2 detached dwellings fronting Jubilee Lane – avoiding surface water sewer
V	-	Grazing Land, Jubilee Lane North	1 detached dwelling
W''	-	41 Stockydale Road	2 detached dwellings - avoiding surface water sewer
X	-	Amarella, School Road	1 detached dwelling fronting School Road and 3 detached dwellings fronting Kitty Lane/Sandy Lane

*Plus subsequent site suggestion. ~Site within the vicinity of a sewer flooding incident – prospective developers advised to engage early with United Utilities. “Subject to demonstrating there would be no amenity impact of the nearby pumping station on any proposed development of the site. ^ Site with high archaeological potential – see Policy MM1

5.5 Windfall Housing – To allow unallocated sites to be developed for housing

Background Justification

99. It is not feasible at the start of the Plan period to identify all suitable sites that may become available for housing in the years up to 2030 and allocate them in advance. Inevitably over time circumstances will change, some long standing uses will cease, and landowners will revise their future intentions. Therefore, it is appropriate to have a policy to cover how unidentified sites will be treated if they come forward as ‘windfall’ opportunities in planning applications for residential development.

100. The key consideration is to ensure that these sites are no less appropriate for development than the sites allocated for housing. The over-riding requirement will be for windfall housing schemes to not significantly undermine the open character of the Area. Large scale development of greenfield land would be unacceptable and contrary to the Marton Moss Design Code. Housing schemes comprising small scale infilling of gaps in built-up street frontages or the redevelopment of previously developed ‘brownfield’ sites are much less likely to have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the Moss.

101. All windfall housing proposals, to be acceptable, must accord with the basic standard construction requirements (as set out in the Local Plan and other relevant documents) that are applicable to all developments and be appropriate in terms of all the relevant policies of this Plan and the Design Code, such as in terms of building densities. Proposals that seek to cram in new dwellings on vacant plots or in existing gardens would therefore not be acceptable. Schemes that aim to meet specific local housing needs (such as to provide cheaper accommodation or specially to suit older persons) will though be favoured provided they are appropriate in all other respects.

What the Community Says

102. A common comment made by respondents to the Residents’ Survey was that local people should be allowed to build an additional home on their land. This opportunity has been denied under Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy Policy CS26 and this probably means there is a pent-up demand for such developments.

103. At the Evidence and Policy Options engagement stage of the Neighbourhood Plan a substantial majority of respondents favoured a policy that would limit windfall housing schemes to small infill and/or brownfield sites, rather than a policy that would cover a greater variety of types and sizes of site.

Sources of Evidence

Visual survey of land use on the Moss

Marton Moss Major Open Land Study, 2022 (Further Revised)

National Planning Policy and Advice

104. National policy recognises the contribution windfall sites can make to help meet housing requirements but cautions that there should be compelling evidence that this will be a reliable source of supply in the future if there is reliance on this source of provision to help meet the housing requirement figure. National policy also says that Plans should consider the case for policies that would resist development of residential gardens, such as where schemes would cause harm to the local area.

Relevant Local Plan Policies

105. Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy Policy CS2: Housing Provision - recognises the contribution to overall housing provision that can be made by windfall sites.

106. Local Plan Part 2 Policy DM2: Residential Annexes refers to ancillary living accommodation proposed as additional to the main dwelling, such proposals will be restricted in accordance with their occupancy and whether the development would create a separate dwelling.

Policy MM5 Windfall Housing

Housing development proposed on land not allocated for such purposes will be supported provided the site comprises either:

- a. a small gap in an otherwise built-up street frontage; or,**
- b. land currently or recently occupied by buildings,**

and the scheme would not significantly reduce the open character of the immediate locality or undermine the intentions of Policy MM2.

Subject to these provisions, proposals that would help meet a specific locally identified housing need will be favoured.



Fishers Lane

C. Horticultural and Equestrian Uses

5.6 Market Gardening Businesses – To support where possible horticultural businesses and guide future alternative uses

Background Justification

107. Widespread market gardening across much of the Moss has left an important legacy in terms of the vernacular architecture of the older houses and the scale and form of many land plots. These aspects are picked up by Policy MM1. Unfortunately looking forward, the prospects for continued market gardening locally look slim with only one such use known to be currently in operation (producing bedding plants) and there is limited scope for the diversification of these enterprises. Many glasshouses have been removed over the last 60 years, some of those that remain are in a derelict condition and others stand intact but unused. However, given the rising concerns about climate change and the benefits of local food sourcing, the demand for and viability of greenhouse cultivation on the Moss may become more positive in the future.

108. Given the historic contribution market gardening has made to the character of the area and to local employment, efforts to support the remaining businesses are justified. Glasshouses though have limited alternative uses and various activities ancillary to horticulture such as farm shops or pick-your-own outlets would not require planning permission to be applied for. However, novel proposals may arise that would constitute a change of use of a glasshouse or necessitate minor building works that would require planning approval.

109. Such proposals will be supported provided they are acceptable in all other respects including in terms of traffic generation and disturbance to neighbouring property, as would similarly appropriate redevelopment schemes where the scale and form of the horticultural plot is respected and the design requirements of Policy MM1 are met.

110. Strategic Environmental Assessment Draft Environmental Report for the Neighbourhood Plan makes the following specific recommendation relevant to proposals on former horticultural sites that have been left to go ‘wild’ for several years:

- that Policy MM6 include a requirement for an ecological survey of the site(s) considered for re-development to avoid potential harm to established biodiversity on such sites.

What the Community Says

111. Market gardening uses, and their employment benefits, were not specifically referred to in responses to the Residents’ Survey, probably because very few people are now directly employed in these businesses.

112. At the Evidence and Policy Options engagement stage a substantial majority of respondents favoured a policy that would encourage other suitable uses to help support the main enterprise.

Sources of Evidence

Visual survey of land use and its condition

Specific engagement with local market gardeners

Strategic Environmental Assessment: Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan, Environmental Report, 2022

National Planning Policy and Advice

113. National policies recognise that the diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses should be enabled but also that the role of town centres should be supported.

Relevant Local Plan Policies

114. Part 2 of the Local Plan does not have a specific policy concerning market garden uses although Policy DM34: Development in the Countryside - does recognise horticulture as being appropriate to a rural area. However, both Parts of the Local Plan (Policies CS4 and DM15 respectively) are relevant in terms of town centre uses.

Policy MM6 Market Gardening Businesses

Proposals for development involving the re-use of an existing glasshouse and/or the diversification of an operating horticultural business will be supported providing that the proposed use:

- a. can be appropriately accessed by delivery vehicles; and,**
- b. has sufficient vehicle parking provision within the site; and,**
- c. would not unduly disturb neighbouring residential occupiers.**

Proposals to re-develop land previously used for market gardening will be required to respect the scale and form of the horticultural plot, accord with the design requirements of Policy MM1 and, where the land has been left to go wild, include an ecological survey of the site. Where the proposal is for a town centre use, it will need to comply with Blackpool Local Plan Policies CS4: Retail and Other Town Centre Uses; and DM15: Threshold for Impact Assessment.



Amatiello Nursery, New Hall Avenue

5.7 Horse Stabling and Riding Activities – To support equestrian development

Background Justification

115. The keeping and riding of horses is both an important local business sector and a popular hobby across the Moss. Many former market gardening plots are now used for the grazing, exercising, and stabling of horses. The use of land here for those activities has significantly helped retain the open and pastoral character of the Area. Some of these activities do not require planning permission to be applied for. However, others involve buildings of a significant scale that require consent. Policy MM2 recognises that equestrian development would be appropriate on the major tracts of open land as long as any buildings proposed (such as stables) here are essential, no larger than is necessary and are acceptable in terms of detailed siting considerations. Elsewhere across the Moss more substantial structures (such as for indoor riding) will be supported under Policy MM7 provided these are sited close to existing buildings. The Policy also points promoters of such schemes to the good practice produced by the British Horse Society⁷ in respect of their recommended standards for structures and ground surfaces.

What the Community Says

116. Horse riding is clearly a popular local activity and is seen as contributing to the appearance of the area but there is a concern at the loss of bridleway paths as mentioned in responses to the Residents' Survey.

117. At the Evidence and Policy Options engagement stage a substantial majority of respondents favoured a policy to openly support equestrian development.

Sources of Evidence

118. Visual survey of land use and its condition at Marton Moss (no published documents).

National Planning Policy and Advice

119. Equestrian uses are essentially rural in character, whether they be run as businesses or are personal leisure activities. National policies support the sustainable growth and expansion of such rural enterprises provided they respect the character of the area.

Relevant Local Plan Policies

120. There are no Local Plan policies directly relevant to this topic.

Policy MM7 Horse Stabling and Riding Activities

Proposals for development involving equestrian use will be supported provided the buildings and any other installations proposed accord with:

- a. British Horse Society good practice; and,**
- b. Policy MM2 where they relate to designated major open land; or elsewhere,**
- c. any substantial structures (such as indoor riding centres) are appropriately located adjacent to existing buildings.**

⁷ <https://www.bhs.org.uk/our-work>

D. Heritage and Community

5.8 Midgeland Farm – To enable restoration and community use

Background Justification

121. There has been a 'Midgeland Farm' since at least the 16th century. The oldest buildings that remain today on the site, the farmhouse, stable, barn and two shippens date back to at least the early 19th century. These buildings have been disused for many years and are now in a very poor state of repair. However, the farmhouse is largely unaltered in plan form. The barn is almost entirely cobble built. These buildings are locally listed; later constructed farm buildings on the site are of little or no architectural merit, they are also in a poor state of repair.

122. After several private owners, Midgeland Farm (the buildings and associated fields) was bought by the former Blackpool Corporation in 1968 and the bulk of the land was used as a landfill site. Subsequently all the land and buildings became owned by Lancashire County Council.

123. Today the site remains closed to the public. All the buildings have recently been structurally surveyed and are now considered by the owners to be beyond economic repair, a high safety risk and should be demolished. Clearance of the buildings would release the potential of the northern field of the site at the south east corner of Midgeland Road and School Road (which has never been landfilled) for open space and tree planting uses at minimal cost.

124. The remaining land overlies the former landfill and is capped with a clay layer. This part of the site is interspersed with boreholes used for gas monitoring and water sampling. Gas wells and a flare are used to burn off methane gas emissions. Leachate (water that has percolated through a solid and leached out some of the constituents) is collected and pumped to the treatment plant where it is treated before being discharged in to the sewer. A recently completed risk assessment undertaken by the owners concludes that the landfill is still actively producing emissions and should remain closed to public access for the time being. United Utilities point out that there is a modelled flood risk for the site and ask to be consulted as more detailed re-use proposals are drawn up.

125. The land associated with the farmstead mainly comprises open fields with a few hedgerows. There are, however, substantial belts of trees on the south western and south eastern boundaries of the site. There is a good standard of vehicular access to the land directly from a full width stretch of Midgeland Road and an internal, surfaced roadway dating from the landfill operations. This access could feasibly be adapted to allow public access to the northern field. In recent times plans to plant more trees on the site were only partially implemented.

126. The area that has been land-filled at Midgeland Farm extends eastwards beyond the Blackpool Borough boundary (into Fylde) and hence outside the Neighbourhood Area. The extent of land within the Area is about 11 hectares (27 acres). The northern field equates to about half that area, so still a substantial size that could accommodate the first phase of a community park with sufficient space for a range of paths for various users - walkers, joggers, cyclists and horse riders and room for significant landscape planting. At present there are no public parks within the Neighbourhood Area and limited public rights of way paths in good condition. There is particularly a shortage of bridleways and off-road cycle paths.

127. The principle of opening-up the site for community use is supported by Lancashire County Council, provided the land is made safe for public access. Blackpool Civic Trust is particularly keen to save from loss and help restore the traditional farm buildings. Blackpool Council is considering taking a long lease on the land and the authority also supports community use. Progress can best be achieved by the two Councils, the Civic Trust and the Forum working together.

What the Community Says

128. The future of Midgeland Farm is considered a high priority by many local people who responded to the Residents' Survey and were supportive of safeguarding heritage features and providing more leisure/recreation amenities in the area.

129. At the Evidence and Policy Options engagement stage all but one respondent agreed with the aim to save the main traditional buildings from being lost and to then pursue their restoration and re-use, including the creation of a community park on the surrounding land.

Sources of Evidence

Midgeland Farm Historic Building Assessment, 2009

Historic Characterisation of Marton Moss, 2009

Marton Moss Conservation Area Appraisal, 2018

National Planning Policy and Advice

130. National policies state that plans should be positive about the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment including heritage assets most at risk of loss through neglect, decay and other threats. National policies encourage plan makers to provide for social, recreational, and cultural facilities. Access to high quality open spaces is recognised as providing opportunities for physical activity that is important for the health and well-being of communities.

Relevant Local Plan Policies

131. Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy Policy CS8: Heritage – supports proposals to retain, reuse or convert heritage assets whilst conserving or enhancing their significance. Design Policy CS7 promotes new pedestrian and cycle routes as well as the provision of green infrastructure. The latter is also supported by Policy CS6: Green Infrastructure. Policy CS15: Health and Education - advocates developments that encourage healthy and active lifestyles.

132. In Part 2 of the Local Plan Policy DM28: Non-Designated Heritage Assets – supports a presumption in favour of repairing and appropriate re-use of structures such as locally listed buildings. Policy DM36: Controlling Pollution and Contamination – stresses the importance of development proposals relating to contaminated land properly dealing with any risks through appropriate management and remediation measures.

Policy MM8 Midgeland Farm

- a. The Midgeland Farm site, as shown on the Policies Map, is safeguarded for future use as a community park complete with paths for people to use on foot, cycle, or horse as well as appropriate tree planting and other landscaping; and,**
- b. measures to retain, as far as reasonably practical, the structure of the farmhouse, stable, barn and early shippens will be supported. Any loss will be mitigated by measures to preserve any remaining structures and/or programme of archaeological recording.**

5.9 Local Green Space – To protect land that is used for recreational purposes

Background Justification

133. There is little land in the Neighbourhood Area that is freely open to public recreational use. The formal sports pitches off School Road, used by two local football clubs, provide good facilities to their members as does the South Shore Lawn Tennis Club on Midgeland Road. However, these sites are already protected from inappropriate development proposals by national policies and the Local Plan so do not require any further safeguarding in the Neighbourhood Plan.

134. The Marton Moss Local Green Space Study assesses all the potential candidate sites for designation as Local Green Space. There are some local ‘amenity greens’ mainly associated with housing developments that serve as landscape and drainage features rather than recreational spaces. The one recreational exception is a well-used area of informal open space popular with local people to the north of St Nicholas Primary School. A through public footpath links the land with School Road and Ecclesgate Road. There is also an informal path through to The Shovels public house carpark which provides access to Common Edge Road and as such this space is well located to serve local residents. The land is owned by Blackpool Council but is not formally designated in any way. It fully meets the criteria for being designated as Local Green Space.

What the Community Says

135. Many people responding to the Residents’ Survey had concerns about the lack of open recreational facilities on the Moss. Some respondents specifically referred to the need to protect the open space land from development between School Road and Ecclesgate Road.

136. At the Evidence and Policy Options engagement stage there was over whelming support to have a Local Green Space policy. This was envisaged to apply to the sports grounds as well but following representations from Sport England it is accepted that these do not need such protection in the Neighbourhood Plan and are in any event shown as existing Green Infrastructure on the Local Plan Policies Map.

Sources of Evidence

Blackpool’s Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2019-2029, 2019

Marton Moss Local Green Space Study, 2022 (Revised)

National Planning Policy and Advice

137. Designating Local Green Space is a task that national policy specifies for Neighbourhood Plans but states the designation should only be used where the green space is:

“

- a) *in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves*
- b) *demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife;*
and
- c) *local in character and is not an extensive tract.*

Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.”

Relevant Local Plan Policies

138. Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy Policy CS6: Green Infrastructure - refers to the wide-ranging benefits of protecting and improving open green space. However, there is no specific mention in any part of the Local Plan to the School Road /Ecclesgate Road land (which includes that North of St Nicholas School).

Policy MM9 Local Green Space

Open land used for informal recreation immediately to the North of St Nicholas School, as shown on the Policies Map is designated as Local Green Space where development will be managed in accordance with national policy for Green Belts.



Open land immediately adjoining the northern boundary of St Nicholas School

E. Movement

5.10 Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycle Routes – To improve local opportunities for walking, horse riding and cycling

Background Justification

139. Marton Moss has a quite extensive network of designated public rights of way. However, most of these are only classed as footpaths and several of them are difficult to use due to being blocked by overgrown vegetation or in some cases buildings. There are few paths purpose-designed for horse riding use (bridleways) and no dedicated cycleways or signed cycle routes.

140. Resolving the issue of blocked paths is first and foremost an enforcement matter for the Council, as Highway Authority. Creating new paths other than on land set aside for community use (such as those proposed at Midgeland Farm – Policy MM8) is difficult as it requires willing landowners. However, where there are related development proposals that could improve accessibility, developers will be expected to either improve existing paths or provide routes for new paths in places identified as missing gaps in the network – see Map 3 in Appendix I. Providing better and additional paths within the Moss would encourage more localised activity away from land linked with the sensitive and internationally important wildlife habitats associated with the Ribble Estuary. The land made available should be at least 2 metres wide so that a multi-use path can be provided.

141. Creating a network of cycle routes is beyond the scope of this Neighbourhood Plan as it requires the use of solely Highways Act powers. This matter is however covered in the Marton Moss Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycle Routes Study 2022 as revised, which includes a map (see Map 4 in Appendix I) showing a suggested route network that could be signed for cyclists; it uses less trafficked roads and existing bridleways. However, requiring relevant developments to provide cycle use connections to roads and bridleways is a legitimate use of planning powers.

What the Community Says

142. The Residents' Survey shows that many in the community are concerned at the condition and loss of public rights of way as well as the safety of using roadside pavement footways. Numerous people suggested there should be more off-road paths provided.

143. At the Evidence and Policy Options engagement stage there was over whelming support to enable more opportunities for walking, horse riding and cycling.

Sources of Evidence

Mapping records of the public rights of way network.

Marton Moss Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycle Routes Study 2022 (Revised)

Habitats Regulations Assessment: Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan, 2022

National Planning Policy and Advice

144. National policy urges plan makers to identify opportunities to promote walking and cycling with policies that provide for high quality path networks. Planning policies and decisions on planning applications should protect and enhance public rights of way and be added to where appropriate.

Relevant Local Plan Policies

145. Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy Policy CS5: Connectivity - puts emphasis on the need for a safe, enhanced, and extended network of well signed routes for pedestrians and cyclists to increase the number of these types of journeys. Policy CS27 reaffirms this in South Blackpool and Policy CS15 stresses the importance new development helping to enable the leading of healthy and active lifestyles. Policy CS6: Green Infrastructure - recognises the value of public rights of way in connecting-up open spaces.

Policy MM10 Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycle Routes

Development proposals will, wherever feasible, be required to:

- a. incorporate measures to improve accessibility to/off nearby existing off-road paths (including where these are currently blocked or obstructed); and,**
- b. take opportunities to create new multi-mode paths along routes that represent missing links provided they would not lead to increased access to land associated with internationally designated wildlife habitats.**



Bridleway from Midgeland Road to Division Lane

6. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Implementation

146. For the Neighbourhood Plan to be effective in managing development proposals coming forward for the Moss the policies need to achieve what they set out to do. Except for minor schemes classed as ‘permitted development’ such as small house extensions, most other development proposals will need planning permission. When finalised, the policies in the Plan will be used by Blackpool Council, and Planning Inspectors in appeals, to help decide whether planning permission should be granted or refused. However, for the policies to be truly effective they need to either lead to the approved schemes being built or the protected features fully safeguarded from harm. In other words, the policies are in those cases being properly implemented.

147. Most of the development proposals that the policies relate to in the Plan will be put forward by private developers or private individuals and be dependent on the schemes being financially viable. For private developers this means that the money to be made from selling the completed development needs to exceed the costs of provision (land and construction) and enable a reasonable profit to be made. For individuals building properties for their own use, they need to be able to afford all the costs involved.

148. Some of the policies in the Plan are, however, at least partially dependent on additional funding, to ensure they are implemented. The following policies fall into this category:

- *MM3 School Road/Midgeland Road Junction* – providing the public art here is likely to require grant funding.
- *MM8 Midgeland Farm* – the traditional buildings are now considered beyond economic repair and because they are unsafe, may need to be demolished. However that could represent an opportunity to retain at least part of the structure and greatly reduces the remaining finance needed to create a community park. The National Lottery Community Fund is a potential source of monies. Likewise, the Lancashire Environmental Fund (especially given the former landfill status of the site) and Government bodies such as Sport England may also be eligible sources of grant aid to help fund the community park proposal.

Monitoring

149. As time goes on it is important to check at regular intervals whether each policy in the Plan is being implemented as intended. The Forum is committed to annually monitoring how planning application decisions are being made in terms of conforming to the provisions of the policies and whether approved developments are being built. These checks will particularly apply to the progress being made on new housing provision. An annual monitoring report will be produced and published.

Plan Review

150. The Plan has an expected ‘life’ of 10 years, the period it plans for being 2020 to 2030. Before the end of that period the Forum will consider whether to review the Plan and replace it with a new one. However annual monitoring work may reveal that the Plan’s policies are not proving effective far sooner than that. Early in the Plan period this may be a short-term blip and as time goes on the policies may come to achieve their intentions. If after around 5 years into the Plan period monitoring shows consistent under-performance of at least some of the policies, the Forum will decide whether to carry out a review and proceed to alter the Plan at that stage.

Appendices

Appendix A - Core Strategy Policy CS26, Justification and Key Diagram Extract

Policy CS26: Marton Moss

1. The character of the remaining lands at Marton Moss is integral to the local distinctiveness of Blackpool and as such is valued by the local community. A neighbourhood planning approach will be promoted for this area to develop neighbourhood policy which supports the retention and enhancement of the distinctive character, whilst identifying in what circumstances development including residential may be acceptable.
2. Prior to developing a local policy framework through the neighbourhood planning process development on the remaining lands of the Moss will be limited to:
 - a. Conversion or change of use of existing buildings for agricultural or horticultural purposes;
 - b. Outdoor recreational uses appropriate to a rural area;
 - c. New homes that meet the requirements of NPPF paragraph 55;
 - d. Extensions or replacement dwellings in keeping with the scale and character of the area and not exceeding 35% of the original ground floor footprint of the existing dwelling.

The justification text from the Core Strategy that further explains this Policy reads:

8.23 The distinctive character of the Moss reflects its historic past and its importance in more recent times as a market gardening area. Alongside remaining glasshouses, the lands are now used for a mix of horse grazing, other animal welfare, garden centres and dwellings set in large gardens, with other land in need of enhancement. The Moss lands are criss-crossed by lanes and tracks with scattered dwellings and small businesses. While more development exists along the main highway frontages, the lands behind these frontages retain an essentially rural character, although very different from typical more open countryside.

8.24 Whilst there is support to safeguard the essentially green open nature of the Moss, at the same time there is the view that the Countryside Policy in the current Blackpool Local Plan (2006) is overly restrictive. Proposing a neighbourhood planning approach therefore provides the community with the opportunity to directly determine the future for their area improving the interest and value of the Moss lands. Policy CS26 does not propose any housing development on the remaining lands on the Moss unless this emerges through the neighbourhood planning process from the community, in which case it will be set out in a Neighbourhood Plan or a Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

8.25 In advance of the neighbourhood planning process, no development will be permitted in the area unless it accords with the criteria set out in part 2 of the policy. The provisions of part 2 essentially restrict development to agricultural or horticultural purposes or outdoor recreational uses appropriate to a rural area; and extension and replacement proposals to no greater than 35% of the original ground floor footprint of the existing dwelling. This restriction is proposed so as not to undermine the outcome of the neighbourhood planning process for the enhancement of the Moss.

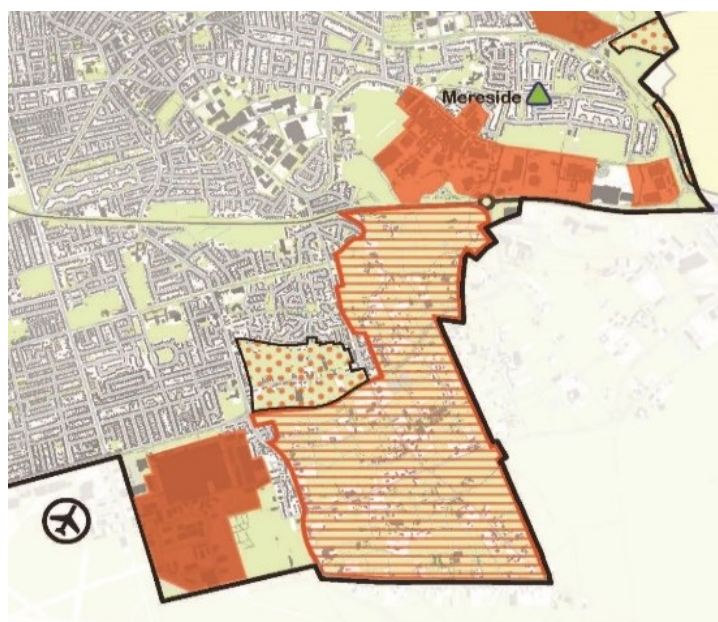
8.26 A comprehensive characterisation study and a Phase 1 Habitats Survey have been undertaken to inform the future approach on Marton Moss and the built and natural environment characteristics and features of the area that need to be considered in planning its future.

8.27 The survey highlights that while much of the area is a mix of residential/smallholdings use, particular areas of interest identified include marshy grassland and the dyke system, as well as the network of gardens, hedgerows, verges and associated habitats. There are some original buildings typical of the historic origins of the Moss, with a wide variety of building types and ages. Although there is no defining architectural style, it is this variety together with the hedgerows, trees and lanes which defines much of the Moss land character. Allotments and community gardens provide continuing opportunities to grow fruit and vegetables locally, as well as having clear benefits in terms of community cohesion, health, heritage and the environment.

8.28 The neighbourhood planning process will need to conserve and enhance the existing natural features and habitats. In particular, any future development must not have a significant impact upon the foraging/roosting habitat of any of the "Annex 1" listed bird species that visit 'Natura 2000' sites (Morecambe Bay and Ribble and Alt estuaries). A biodiversity strategy for Marton Moss will be required to ensure that consideration is given to biodiversity throughout the development process, including appropriate ecological surveys and mitigation measures. In addition, any proposals may require licensed mitigation in accordance with existing best practice and legislative requirements to protect wildlife.



8.29 Access to existing leisure facilities, such as the South Shore Lawn Tennis Club, Squires Gate and Blackpool Wren Rovers Football Clubs and the range of equestrian uses, remain important to the area. The enhancement of the Moss could provide improved local leisure and recreational opportunities whilst retaining the rural character in parts of the area. Beyond the existing lanes and tracks, public access into the open lands is currently limited and some development may also enhance recreational access and potentially improve the ecological value of the Moss.'

Key Diagram extract:



Legend Extract:

South Blackpool Growth & Enhancement

-  Marton Moss Strategic Site (Neighbourhood Planning Approach)
-  Employment Growth
-  Housing Growth

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Appendix B - Purpose, Aims and Ambitions of the Forum

These were all set out in the Forum designation application:

Purpose

The main purpose of the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum is to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for the Area. Ancillary to this is to establish an influential voice with the Council and other key agencies involved in providing local services and infrastructure.

Aims

1. Plan for and enable appropriate development
2. Ensure such development is properly serviced with suitable infrastructure
3. Safeguard the character of the area, avoid significant harm to the local environment and where possible achieve improvements
4. Work with Blackpool Council to establish a Conservation Area
5. Improve local opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding
6. Help provide needed community infrastructure and other amenities
7. Work with Blackpool Council to promote a high standard of greenspace maintenance
8. Work with Blackpool Council and the Police to help reduce the adverse impacts of road traffic on local routes
9. Work with United Utilities, Blackpool Council and landowners to secure drainage improvements and avoid any further deterioration

Ambitions

1. Produce clear policies for managing new development that are understood and supported by local people
2. Deliver a community centre at Midgeland Farm working with other local groups
3. Provide public access to attractive green space at Midgeland Farm
4. Enable a convenient and safe off-road route through the Area for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders
5. Ensure that the character of the Area remains unharmed and the Moss is an attractive place to live

Appendix C - The Basic Conditions

(For details as to how this Plan meets these please refer to the separately produced Basic Conditions Statement)

All Neighbourhood Development Plans are required to meet the following Basic Conditions:

- a. **have regard to** national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State – this means the relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework⁸ and the pertinent advice contained in the Planning Practice Guidance⁹, also produced by the Government.
- b. **contribute to** the achievement of sustainable development - this is consistent with the planning principle that all plan-making and decision-making will either help achieve improvements in environmental, economic and social conditions or that consideration has been given to how any potential adverse effects arising from the proposals may be prevented, reduced or offset (referred to as mitigation measures).
- c. **be in general conformity with** the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area) – for this Neighbourhood Plan this essentially means relevant policies in the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1 (Core Strategy). To assist neighbourhood planning groups with Plan preparation local planning authorities are obliged to identify which Local Plan policies are strategic. Those identified by Blackpool Council are set out on the following page in Appendix D.
- d. **does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with**, specific obligations and meets prescribed conditions – those relevant to a Neighbourhood Plan are those relating to Human Rights law, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna (including wild birds) and flora (all considered in the Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) process) plus any aspects pertaining to the Waste Framework, Air Quality and Water Framework Directives. This Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to both a SEA and HRA.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

Appendix D - Relevant Strategic Local Plan Policies

At the outset of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan Blackpool Council identified a list (see below) of Local Plan Part 1 - Core Strategy Policies – that may, dependent on the subsequently decided scope of the Neighbourhood Plan be relevant for it to be in general conformity with. Those policies which are considered by the Neighbourhood Forum to be relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan as now produced are shown in **bold type**. The separately published Basic Conditions Statement considers how the draft Neighbourhood Plan produced for the Regulation 16 stage meets the general conformity requirement.

CS1: Strategic Location of Development (point 3)

CS2: Housing

CS3: Economic Development and Employment

CS4: Retail and Other Town Centre (point 3 a-e)

CS5: Connectivity

CS6: Green Infrastructure

CS7: Design

CS8: Heritage

CS9: Water Management

CS10: Sustainable Design and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

CS11: Planning Obligations

CS12: Sustainable Neighbourhoods (point 1 a-f)

CS13: Housing Mix, Density and Standards

CS14: Affordable Housing

CS15: Health and Education

CS16: Traveller Sites

CS21: Leisure and Business Tourism (point 2)

CS23: Managing Holiday Bed Spaces (point 2)

CS24: South Blackpool Employment Growth

CS26: Marton Moss (will be superseded by the Neighbourhood Plan once adopted)

CS27: South Blackpool Transport and Connectivity

Appendix E - List of Evidence Documents

The following documents (in order of first citation) have been used to help inform the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Census of Population, 2011, Office for National Statistics
- Indices of Deprivation, 2019, Office for National Statistics
- Historic Characterisation of Marton Moss, 2009, Archaeo-Environment
- Marton Moss Conservation Area Appraisal, 2018, Blackpool Council
- Marton Moss Design Code, 2020, AECOM
- Watercourse and flood risk mapping, latest published, Environment Agency/Gov.uk
- Blackpool's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy 2019-2029, 2019, Blackpool Council
- Marton Moss Major Open Land Study, 2022 (Further Revised), Envisionuk
- Marton Moss Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycle Routes Study, 2022 (Revised), Envisionuk
- M55 Hub Extended Phase 1 Ecology Report, 2009, Bowland Ecology
- Nature conservation records, various
- Marton Moss Housing Needs Assessment, 2020, AECOM
- Marton Moss Site Options and Assessment, 2020, AECOM
- Marton Moss Housing Site Allocations Appraisal, 2022 (Revised), Envisionuk
- Midgeland Farm Historic Building Assessment, 2009, Stephen Haigh
- Marton Moss Local Green Space Study, 2022 (Revised), Envisionuk
- Marton Moss Biodiversity Strategy, 2022, Envisionuk
- Habitats Regulations Assessment: Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan, 2022, AECOM
- Strategic Environmental Assessment: Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan, Environmental Report, 2022, AECOM
- Marton Moss Housing Site Viability Study, 2022, AECOM
- Marton Moss Housing Viability – a Local Commentary, 2022, (Revised) Envisionuk

Appendix F - Statutory and Locally Listed Buildings

Statutory

- Blowing Sands and attached wall, 166 Common Edge Road – Grade II
- 1 & 2 Fishers Lane – Grade II

Local

- Runnell Farm, East Gate Avenue
- Runnell Cottage, Barn and associated cobble wall, Chapel Road
- Boundary Stone, near Trebarrons Garden Centre, Common Edge Road
- Werneth House, off Division Lane
- Butcher's Farm Cottage, Worthington Road
- Midgeland Farm (farmhouse, stable, barn and shippons), Midgeland Road
- St Nicholas School (original building), School Lane
- Railway Building, Lilac Farm, Whalley Lane
- Whalley Farm, Whalley Lane

Appendix G – National Policy Definitions of Affordable Housing

Taken from the National Planning Policy Framework

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government’s rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household’s eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.¹⁰

d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

¹⁰ A further evolution of this category is ‘**First Homes**’ – discounted market sale units that are discounted a minimum of 30% against market value (and on their first sale priced no higher than £250,000 (£420,000 in Greater London) after discount), sold to first time buyers with a combined annual income not exceeding £80,000 (or £90,000 in Greater London), with restrictions on resales to maintain the discount proportion of the price of the property. First Homes are the government’s preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations.

Appendix H - Housing Indicator Calculation

The following was provided to the Forum by Blackpool Council and is included in AECOM's Housing Needs Assessment report. **However please note since the below calculation was done the Forum has been informed by the Council that as there is no reliance on housing development in the Neighbourhood Area towards meeting Blackpool's overall housing requirements the housing number for Marton Moss is only an indicator and not a requirement.**

Core Strategy Housing Requirement

The Core Strategy requirement for the borough over the period 2020 – 2027 is 2,110 dwellings (280 dwellings per annum from 2020 – 2022 and 310 dwellings per annum from 2022 – 2027).

*Assuming Marton Moss forms 1.16% of the population (borough population: 139,300, Marton Moss population 1,616) this would equate to **24 dwellings over the period 2020 – 2027.***

Notwithstanding the above and as an observation. Applying the methodology to the whole of the plan period (2012 to 2027) the dwellings for Marton Moss would equate to approx. 49 dwellings. It should be noted that this does not take account of any completions that have already taken place at Marton Moss. There have been 83 completions at Runnell Farm, which is located in the Moss, as well as a small number of other completions elsewhere. This equates to more than 1.16% of the borough requirement over the entire Core Strategy period, so the Marton Moss area has already delivered more dwellings than would be required under a strict proportional approach.

Standard Methodology (calculated as set out in PPG)

*The Core Strategy requirement only runs for 7 years from 2020, which is three years short of a 10 year requirement. Therefore, the outstanding requirement has been calculated using the standard methodology. This provides **the minimum** number of dwellings needed for the 3 years 2027 to 2030.*

Under the standard methodology the minimum local housing need figure for the borough per annum for the period 2020 – 2030 is calculated to be: 122 dwellings. Therefore, the minimum local housing need figure for the borough for 2027 – 2030 would be $3 \times 122 = 366$ dwellings.

*Assuming Marton Moss forms 1.16% of the population (borough population: 139,300, Marton Moss population 1,616) this would equate to **4** dwellings over the period 2027 – 2030.*

*Therefore, based upon the adopted Core Strategy requirement for the period 2020 – 2027 and the standard methodology minimum local housing need figure for the period 2027 – 2030 the housing requirement¹¹ for Marton Moss would be **28** dwellings (24 + 4) over the 10 year period 2020 – 2030.*

The calculation used for the standard methodology is set out below:

Step 1: Setting the baseline

Baseline calculated using 2014 based household projections:

- 64,165 households in 2020
- 65,338 households in 2030

*This is a total of 1,173 new households over the 10 year period, equivalent to an average household growth of **117** dwellings per year.*

¹¹ It is considered more appropriate to refer to this as an 'indicator' as there is no requirement for Neighbourhood Plan to provide any housing contribution to meet the overall requirement for Blackpool.

Step 2: An adjustment to take account of affordability

The average annual projected household growth figure is then adjusted based on the affordability of the area.

The most recent ONS published median workplace-based affordability ratio for Blackpool is **4.62** (2018)

No adjustment is applied where the ratio is 4 or below, but Blackpool's affordability ratio is higher than 4, so an adjustment is made using the formula in PPG.

Local affordability ratio minus 4 : $4.62 - 4 = 0.62$

This answer is divided by 4: $0.62/4 = 0.155$

This answer is multiplied by 0.25: $0.155 \times 0.25 = 0.039$

1 is then added to this answer: $0.039 + 1 = 1.039$

The adjustment factor is therefore 1.039 and is used as:

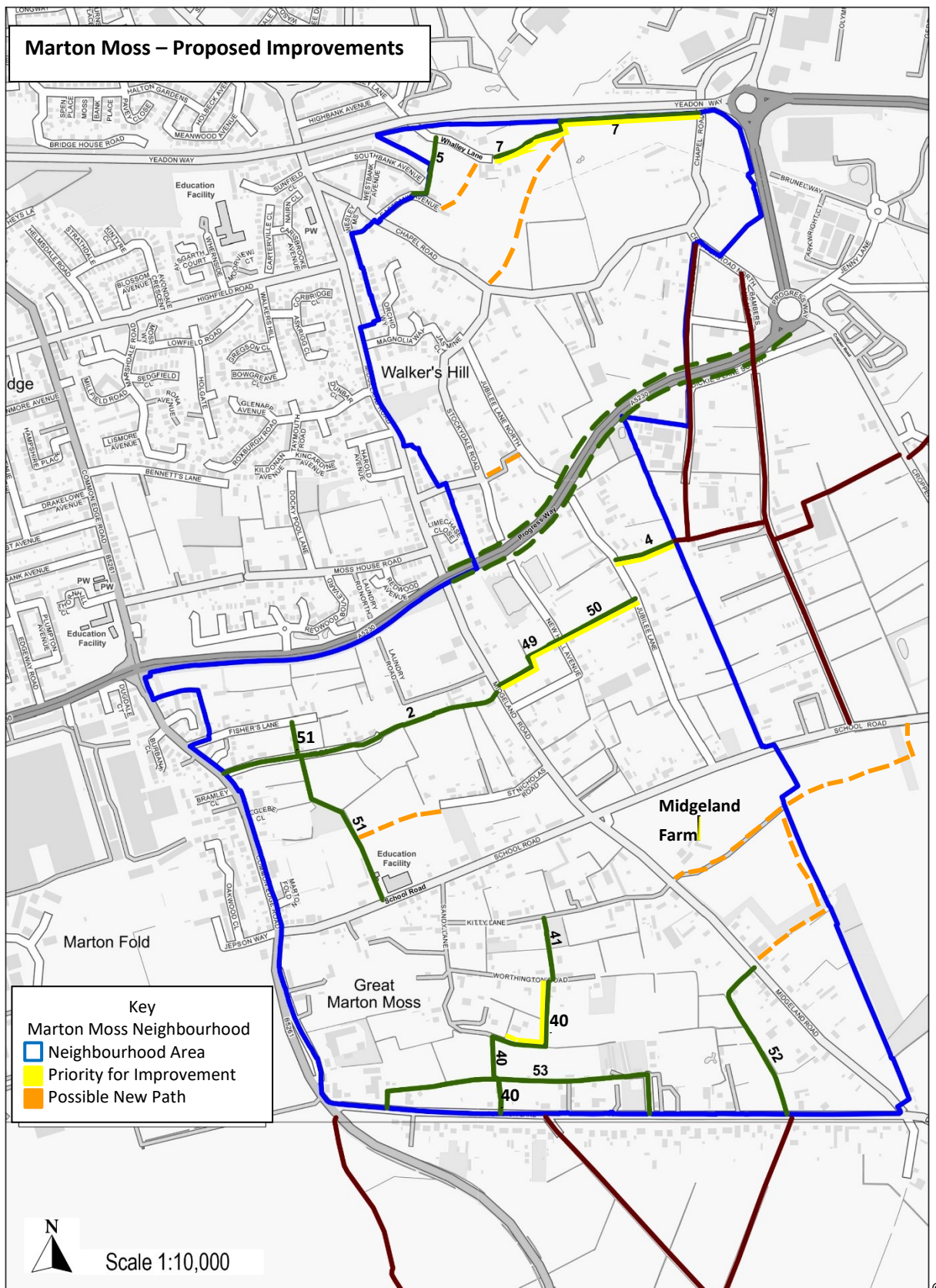
- Minimum annual local housing need figure = (adjustment factor) x projected household growth
- Minimum annual local housing need figure = 1.039×117
- The resulting minimum local housing need figure is **122 dwellings per year**

Step 3: Capping the level of any increase

A cap is then applied which limits the increases an individual local authority can face. How this is calculated depends on the current status of relevant strategic policies for housing. Where these policies were adopted within the last 5 years (at the point of making the calculation), the local housing need figure is capped at 40% above the average annual housing requirement figure.

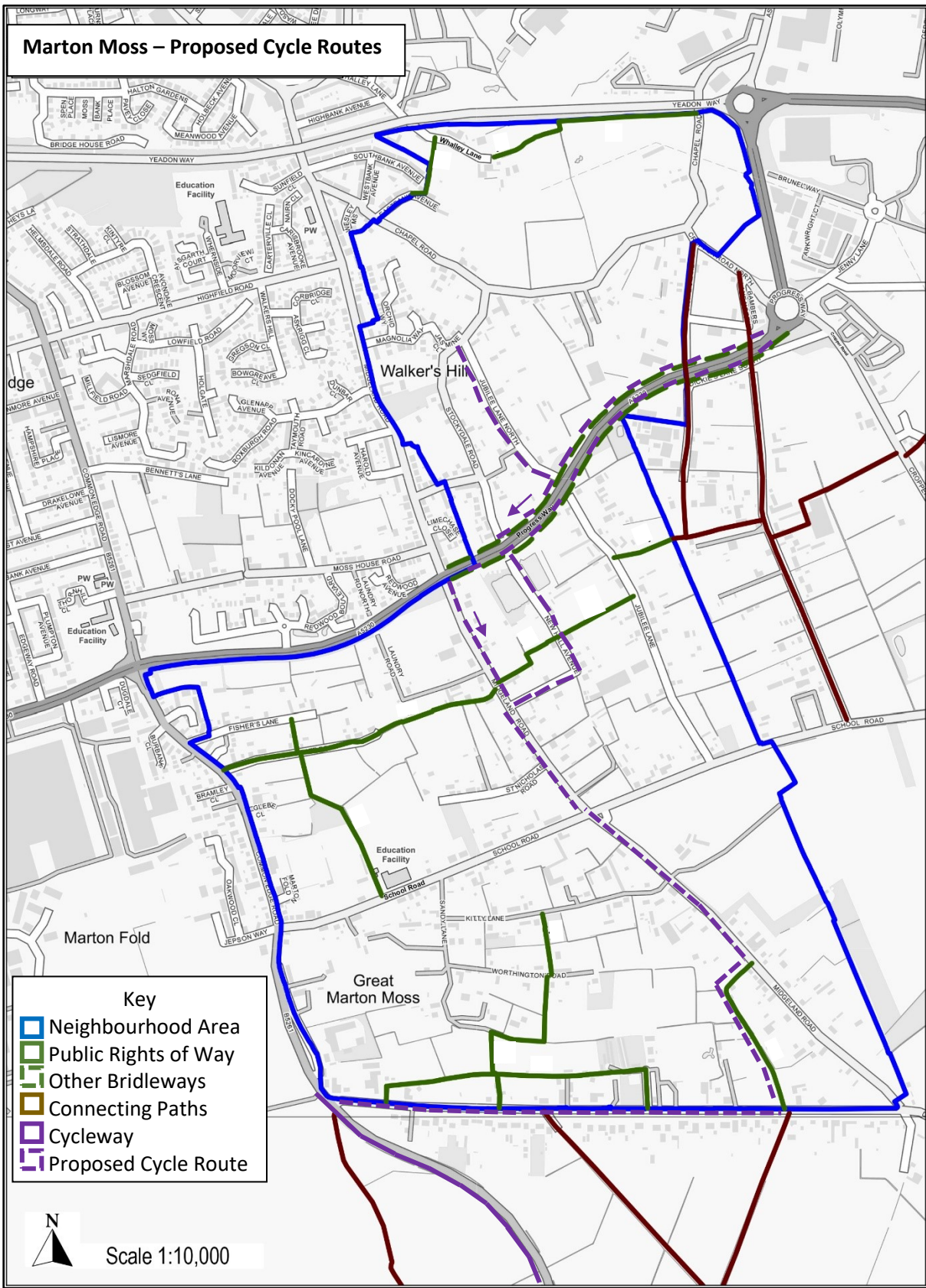
Blackpool strategic policies were adopted within the last 5 years (January 2016), but the minimum local housing need figure (**122 dwellings per year**) is **below** the Core Strategy average annual housing requirement figure, so **therefore the cap is not applicable.**

Appendix I - Maps 3-4 of Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycle Routes Study Report



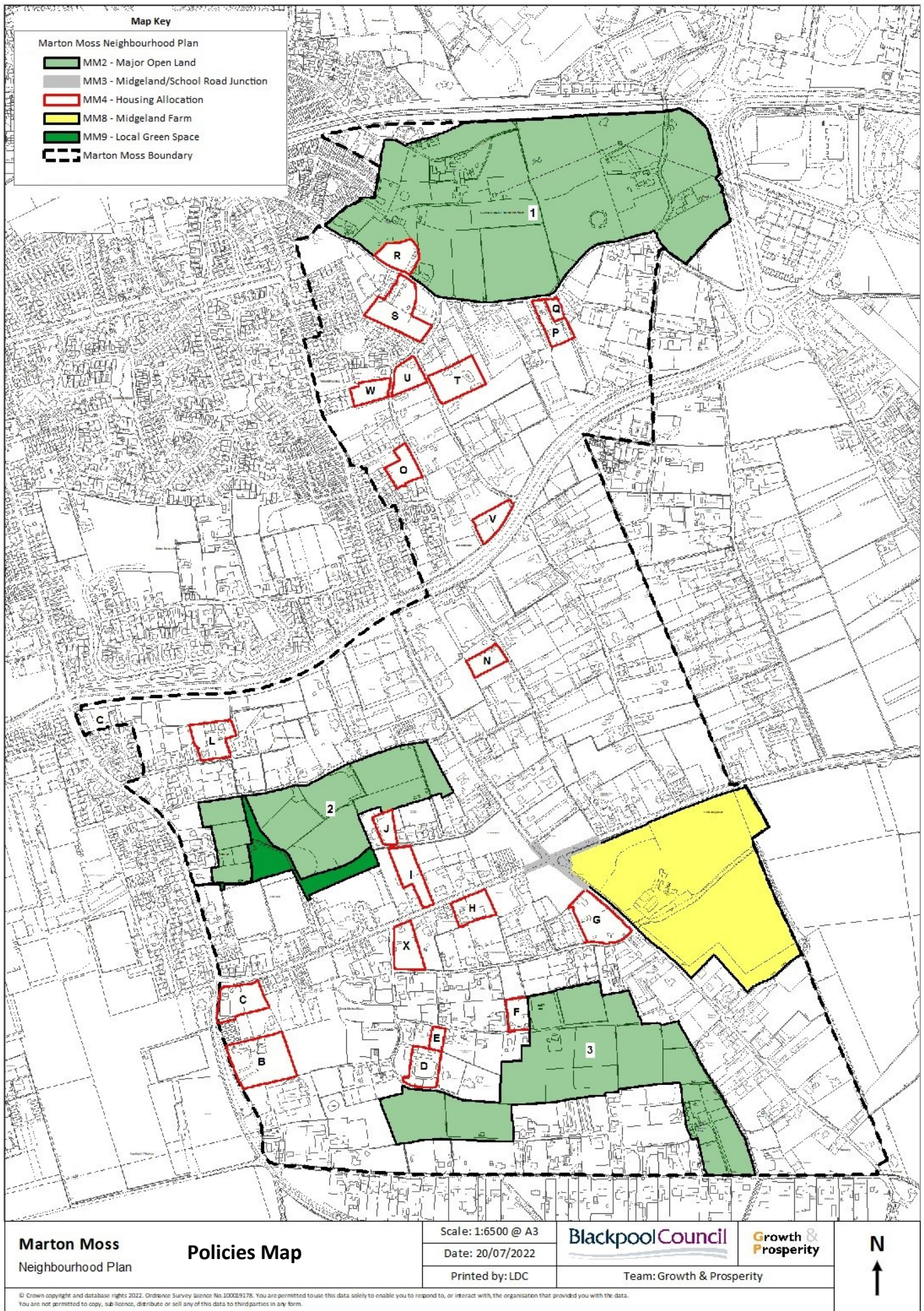
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Map 3: Public Rights of Way proposed improvements and possible new paths



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Map 4: Proposed Cycle Routes





Report on the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan 2020 - 2030

**An Examination undertaken for Blackpool Council with the support of
Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum on the August 2022 submission
version of the Plan.**

Independent Examiner: Andrew Mead BSc (Hons) MRTPI MIQ

Date of Report: 29 March 2023

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Main Findings - Executive Summary

From my examination of the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan (MMNP/the Plan) and its supporting documentation including the representations made, I have concluded that subject to the policy modifications set out in this report, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

I have also concluded that:

- The Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body – the designated Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum;
- The Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Area as shown on page 7 of the Plan;
- The Plan specifies the period during which it is to take effect: 2020 - 2030; and
- The policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements.

I have considered whether the referendum area should extend beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates and have concluded that it should not.

1. Introduction and Background

Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan 2020–2030

- 1.1 The formal process to prepare a neighbourhood plan for Marton Moss began following the adoption of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (BLP) in 2016. Policy CS26 of the BLP promotes a neighbourhood planning approach for Marton Moss in order to develop neighbourhood policy which supports the retention and enhancement of its distinctive character, whilst identifying in what circumstances development, including residential, may be acceptable. In March 2019, Blackpool Council (BC) designated the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Area (MMNA) and the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum (MMNF). The boundaries of the Plan area are identical to the spatial extent of Policy CS26 of the BLP.
- 1.2 The MMNA, extending over about two square kilometres, does not coincide with a statistical area of the 2011 Census, but a best estimate of its population would appear to be between 1,249 and 1,616.¹ The MMNA lies in the eastern part of Blackpool adjoining the western boundary of Fylde Borough, with Blackpool Airport nearby to the west. The flat landscape was previously the site of numerous market gardens. Redundant greenhouses are an occasional feature within the area, together with the patchwork of former gardens and detached houses. Following the

¹ MMNP: paragraph 21.

preparation of the Plan by the MMNF, it was finally submitted to BC in August 2022.

The Independent Examiner

- 1.3 As the Plan has now reached the examination stage, I have been appointed as the examiner of the MMNP by BC with the agreement of the MMNF.
- 1.4 I am a chartered town planner and former government Planning Inspector and have experience of examining neighbourhood plans. I am an independent examiner, and do not have an interest in any of the land that may be affected by the Plan.

The Scope of the Examination

- 1.5 As the independent examiner, I am required to produce this report and recommend either:
- (a) that the neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum without changes; or
 - (b) that modifications are made and that the modified neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum; or
 - (c) that the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to a referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.
- 1.6 The scope of the examination is set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) ('the 1990 Act'). The examiner must consider:
- Whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions.
 - Whether the plan complies with provisions under s.38A and s.38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ('the 2004 Act'). These are:
 - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, for an area that has been properly designated by the local planning authority;
 - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;
 - it specifies the period during which it has effect;
 - it does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'; and

- it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area.
 - Whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the plan proceed to referendum.
 - Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ('the 2012 Regulations').
- 1.7 I have considered only matters that fall within Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act, with one exception. That is the requirement that the Plan is compatible with the Human Rights Convention.

The Basic Conditions

- 1.8 The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:
- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
 - contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
 - be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
 - be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations (under retained EU law)²; and
 - meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.
- 1.9 Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further Basic Condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the making of the Plan does not breach the requirement of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.³

² The existing body of environmental regulation is retained in UK law.

³ This revised Basic Condition came into force on 28 December 2018 through the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018.

2. Approach to the Examination

Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 The current Development Plan for the MMNA, excluding policies relating to minerals and waste development, includes the Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2012 – 2027 (BLP Part 1) which was adopted in January 2016 and the Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (BLP Part 2) which was adopted in February 2023.
- 2.2 The planning policy for England is set out principally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) offers guidance on how this policy should be implemented. A revised NPPF was published in July 2021 and all references in this report are to the July 2021 NPPF and its accompanying PPG.

Submitted Documents

- 2.3 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, as well as those submitted which include:
- the draft Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan 2020–2030, dated August 2022;
 - the map on page 7 of the Plan which identifies the area to which the proposed Neighbourhood Plan relates;
 - the Consultation Statement, dated August 2022;
 - the Basic Conditions Statement, dated August 2022;
 - the Strategic Environmental Assessment, dated July 2022;
 - the Habitats Regulations Assessment, dated July 2022;
 - the Housing Site Allocations Appraisal, dated August 2022;
 - the Housing Viability Commentary, dated August 2022;
 - the Biodiversity Strategy, dated August 2022;
 - the Major Open Land Study, dated August 2022;
 - the Local Green Space Study, dated August 2022;
 - the Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycle Routes Study, dated August 2022;
 - all the representations that have been made in accordance with the Regulation 16 consultation;⁴ and
 - the request for additional clarification sought in my letter of 8 February 2023 to BC and the MMNF and their responses dated 15 February and 22 February 2023 respectively.⁵

⁴ View at: <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Planning-environment-and-community/Planning/Planning-policy/Blackpool-local-plan/Marton-Moss-Neighbourhood-Plan-%E2%80%93-Background-information-and-previous-consultation.aspx>

⁵ View at: <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Planning-environment-and-community/Planning/Planning-policy/Blackpool-local-plan/Marton-Moss-neighbourhood-plan.aspx>

Site Visit

- 2.4 I made an unaccompanied site inspection to the MMNP Area on 16 February 2023 to familiarise myself with it and visit relevant locations referenced in the Plan and evidential documents.

Written Representations with or without Public Hearing

- 2.5 This examination has been dealt with by written representations. I considered hearing sessions to be unnecessary as the consultation responses clearly articulated the objections to the Plan and presented arguments for and against the Plan's suitability to proceed to a referendum. No requests for a hearing session were received.

Modifications

- 2.6 Where necessary, I have recommended modifications to the Plan (**PMs**) in this report in order that it meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. For ease of reference, I have listed these modifications separately in the Appendix to this report.

3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights

Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 3.1 The Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by the MMNF, which is a qualifying body. The MMNP extends over all the area designated by BC in March 2019.

Plan Period

- 3.2 In paragraph 4 of the Introduction, the period of the Plan is described as from 2020 to 2030. I recommend that, in order to be clear for all users of the Plan, the period should be stated on the front cover. **(PM1)**

Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation

- 3.3 The comprehensive Consultation Statement (CS) describes the thorough preparation of the Plan with involvement of the public and various stakeholders at many stages of the process. Public drop in events were held prior to the formation of the MMNF. A call for sites had been established as part of the preparation for the Local Plan Part 2 (see paragraph 2.1 above) and these were assessed as part of the MMNP with other sites included as identified in the neighbourhood planning process. A Facebook page was created. A residents survey was carried out and a Design Code drafted. An informal consultation was carried out for six

weeks from 21 July 2020 with local and statutory stakeholders through an online comments form and emails. A meeting was also held in 2020 with local horticulturalists.

- 3.4 The Pre-Submission Plan was published for consultation under Regulation 14 of the 2012 Regulations from 7 March 2022 for a period of six weeks until 19 April 2022. The list of consultees is recorded in Appendix G of the CS together with the comments made, the replies by the MMNF and any resulting changes to the Plan. These are described on pages 76 – 92 of the CS.
- 3.5 The Plan was submitted to BC in August 2022. Consultation in accordance with Regulation 16 was carried out for six weeks from 17 October until 28 November 2022. 31 representations were received. I am satisfied that a transparent, fair and inclusive consultation process has been followed for the MMNP, that has had regard to advice in the PPG on plan preparation and engagement and is procedurally compliant in accordance with the legal requirements.

Development and Use of Land

- 3.6 The Plan sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in accordance with s.38A of the 2004 Act.

Excluded Development

- 3.7 The Plan does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'.

Human Rights

- 3.8 The Basic Conditions Statement (BCS) advises that the MMNP is fully compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, transported into law by the Human Rights Act 1998. The MMNP has been prepared within the existing framework of statute, national planning policy and guidance, local level strategic policies, which are compatible with the Convention. I am aware from the Consultation Statement that considerable emphasis was placed throughout the consultation process to ensure that no sections of the community were isolated or excluded. I have considered this matter independently and I have found no reason to disagree with the statements in the BCS and I am satisfied that the policies will not have a discriminatory impact on any particular group of individuals.

4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions

EU Obligations

- 4.1 The report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) concluded that the Plan is likely to lead to significant positive effects (population and housing) and minor positive effects (biodiversity, climate change, historic environment and landscape). The three statutory consultees were notified of the report at the Regulation 16 consultation and made no adverse comments.
- 4.2 So far as Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is concerned, the Ribble and Alt Estuaries (Ramsar and Special Protection Area (SPA)), are located about 3km from the Plan area. The HRA report concluded that likely significant effects from the housing allocations and windfall housing policies, and from the footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes policy on the Ramsar and SPA could not be screened out, mostly due to recreational pressure and the loss of functionally linked land.
- 4.3 Following Appropriate Assessment, it was concluded that, provided the recommended changes outlined in the HRA are included in the Plan, the MMNP will contain a sufficient policy framework to ensure no adverse effects on the integrity of international designated sites will occur in isolation or in combination with other projects and plans. The recommendations were that for recreational pressure, the Plan should add a caveat that residential development will only be supported if the developer commits to providing homeowner packs to new residents identifying the disturbance sensitivity of the wintering waterfowl using the Ribble Estuary, encouraging responsible dog ownership and identifying other areas of accessible greenspace that could be visited as an alternative. Similarly, improvements to access to existing footpaths and bridlepaths should be contingent on them not exacerbating recreational pressure issues at the SPA and Ramsar sites. Having considered that assessment, Natural England concurred with the conclusions.⁶
- 4.4 I have read the SEA and HRA and the other information provided, and having considered the matter independently, I also agree with the conclusions. Therefore, I am satisfied that the MMNP is compatible with EU obligations.

Main Issues

- 4.5 Having considered whether the Plan complies with various procedural and legal requirements, it is now necessary to deal with whether it complies with the remaining Basic Conditions, particularly the regard it pays to national policy and guidance, the contribution it makes to the achievement of sustainable development and whether it is in general conformity with strategic development plan policies. I test the Plan

⁶ Reply from Natural England, dated 6 October 2021.

against the Basic Conditions by considering specific issues of compliance of all the Plan's policies.

- 4.6 As part of that assessment, I consider whether the policies are sufficiently clear and unambiguous, having regard to advice in the PPG. A neighbourhood plan policy should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence.⁷
- 4.7 Accordingly, having regard to the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan, the consultation responses, other evidence⁸ and the site visit, I consider that the main issues in this examination are whether the MMNP policies: (i) have regard to national policy and guidance; (ii) are in general conformity with the adopted strategic planning policies; and (iii) would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development? I shall assess these issues by considering the policies within the themes in the sequence in which they appear in the Plan.

Vision and Objectives

- 4.8 The overall vision for the MMNP is described in paragraphs 14 and 15 on page 9 of the Plan. The vision is then used to develop 10 objectives which are tabulated according to how each objective will be achieved, other benefits which would accrue and which policy will deliver what objective. These set the context for the subsequent land use policies.

Policy MM1 Building Design

- 4.9 Policy MM1 supports the design of proposals for new development subject to criteria a. to e. Criterion a. requires that the provisions set out in the Marton Moss Design Code are reflected in the submitted scheme. Criterion c. considers drainage requirements about which United Utilities suggested including a long separate policy and raised detailed concerns about the stipulation in the policy that there should be no site level raising. For those reasons, I consider that the site level raising phrase should be deleted but with the addition of a reference to PPG advice on drainage and flood risk. **(PM2)** Subject to those modifications, I consider that the policy would have regard to national guidance⁹, would generally conform with Policies CS1, CS7, CS8 & CS9 of the BLP Part 1 and would meet the Basic Conditions.

⁷ PPG Reference ID: 41-041-20140306.

⁸ The other evidence includes the responses from BC and the MMNF received on 15 February and 22 February 2023 respectively, to the questions in my letter of 8 February 2023.

⁹ NPPF: paragraphs 126 – 130, 153 & 174.

Policy MM2 Open Land Character

- 4.10 Policy MM2 defines three areas of Major Open Land which are to be safeguarded in order to maintain their contribution to the overall character of Marton Moss and the green infrastructure. The policy seeks to restrict development not only on Major Open Land, but also on significant open land elsewhere, and I consider that the latter category is too uncertain and lacking in clarity for development management to be effective. Therefore, I shall recommend the deletion of the phrase. **(PM3)** Subject to that modification, the policy will have regard to national guidance¹⁰, generally conforms with Policies CS1, CS6, CS7 & CS21 of the BLP Part 1 and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy MM3 School Road/Midgeland Road Junction

- 4.11 Policy MM3 seeks to improve the appearance of the land around the junction of School Road and Midgeland Road. I consider that the policy has regard to national guidance¹¹, generally conforms with Policy CS7 of the BCLP Part 1 and meet the Basic Conditions.

Policy MM4 Housing Site Allocations

- 4.12 Policy MM4 allocates 21 mostly small sites for housing in the Plan area which would accommodate overall between 71 and 81 dwellings.¹² Some allocations within the policy show alternatives as appropriate forms of development. For example, Site C states that development could be at least 6 terraced houses fronting Common Edge Road and 1 detached dwelling or 5 terraced houses fronting School Lane. In my questions seeking clarification, I queried whether expressing the appropriate forms of development as alternatives would offer sufficient clarity for effective development management.
- 4.13 Although the MMNF would prefer no changes made to the descriptions, I agree with BC that the wording I canvassed in my question no. 6 b. would provide flexibility to guide the development of the site allocation, together with an upper limit to help guard against inappropriate and excessive development within whole plots, and would assist in protecting the distinctive character of Marton Moss. Therefore, I shall recommend modifications to the descriptions of appropriate development in Sites C, G and H. **(PM4)**
- 4.14 I agree with the responses from the MNNF about the exclusion of Sites A, K and M and Sites MM1, MM2 and MM3 (based on the AECOM schedule) from the Plan. I also agree with the reasoning of the MMNF for the reduction from 3 detached dwellings to 2 at Site N and the reason from

¹⁰ NPPF: paragraphs 120 & 174.

¹¹ NPPF: paragraph 130.

¹² See response to question 9 from MMNF, dated 22 February 2023.

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BC for the altered description at Site I, which I shall recommend as a modification. **(PM4)**

Policy MM5 Windfall Housing

4.15 Policy MM5 supports housing development on land not allocated for that purpose, subject to five criteria. The policy would have regard to national guidance¹³, would generally conform with Policy CS2 of the BLP Part 1 and would meet the Basic Conditions.

Policy MM6 Market Gardening Businesses

4.16 Policy MM6 supports development involving the re-use of an existing glasshouse and/or the diversification of an operating horticultural business with certain provisos. In order to enable the policy to generally conform with Policy CS4 of the BLP Part 1, BC has suggested an amendment to clause c., the deletion of clause d. and the addition of a final sentence. The MMNF has agreed with the suggestions and so do I for the same reasons as advanced by BC, other than the requirement to comply with the NPPF which is taken as read. Therefore, I shall recommend them as a modification to the policy which would then also have regard to national guidance¹⁴ and meet the Basic Conditions. **(PM5)**

Policy MM7 Horse Stabling and Riding Activities

4.17 Policy MM7 supports proposals for development involving equestrian use. The policy has regard to national guidance, generally conforms with key objective 11 of the BLP Part 1 and meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy MM8 Midgeland Farm

4.18 Midgeland Farm, bought by Blackpool Corporation in 1968 and now owned by Lancashire County Council, is a locally listed farm, where associated land has been used as landfill which is now restored. Policy MM8 seeks to safeguard it for community use and to retain at least part of the remains of the buildings. BC has suggested amendments to the policy based on the structural condition and the future of the buildings at the farm to which the MMNF agree. I also agree with the suggestions and shall recommend them as modifications. **(PM6)** The policy would then have regard to national guidance¹⁵, would generally conform with key objective 5 of the BLP Part 1 and would meet the Basic Conditions.

Policy MM9 Local Green Space

4.19 Policy MM9 designates one Local Green Space (LGS) immediately to the north of St Nicholas School. As explained in the NPPF, LGS designation

¹³ NPPF: paragraph 71.

¹⁴ NPPF: paragraph 84 and 86.

¹⁵ NPPF: paragraphs 92, 93 & 190.

should only be used where the green space is: a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.¹⁶ LGS should also be capable of enduring beyond the end of the Plan period.¹⁷ I consider that the LGS meets the criteria for designation outlined in the NPPF and I also note that the land is owned by BC and is a well-used area of informal recreational open space.

- 4.20 However, the policy states that only minor buildings or similar structures ancillary to and essential for the open recreational enjoyment of this land will be permitted. This does not have due regard to national guidance¹⁸, (albeit it is correctly stated in paragraph 137 of the Plan which immediately precedes Policy MM9), so I shall recommend an appropriate modification to address this. **(PM7)** Therefore, subject to the modification, I consider that Policy MM9 would have regard to national guidance, would generally conform with Policy CS6 of the BLP Part 1 and would meet the Basic Conditions.

Policy MM10 Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycle Routes

- 4.21 Policy MM10 requires development proposals to improve accessibility, where feasible, and to take opportunities to create new multi modal paths along routes where links are missing. The improvements will assist in diverting recreational pressure from the Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA and Ramsar. The policy has regard to national guidance¹⁹, generally conforms with Policy CS6 of the BLP Part 1 and meets the Basic Conditions.

Overview

- 4.22 Therefore, on the evidence before me, with the recommended modifications, I consider that the policies within the MMNP are in general conformity with the strategic policies of the BLP Part 1, have regard to national guidance, would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and so would meet the Basic Conditions.
- 4.23 A consequence of the acceptance of the recommended modifications would be that amendments would have to be made to the explanation within the Plan in order to make it logical and suitable for the referendum. These might also include incorporating factual updates, correcting minor inaccuracies, and simple text improvements such as those suggested helpfully by BC in the Regulation 16 Consultation responses, by the MMNF in the response of 22 February 2023 to my questions of clarification, and

¹⁶ NPPF: paragraph 102.

¹⁷ NPPF: paragraph 101.

¹⁸ NPPF: paragraphs 103, 147 - 151.

¹⁹ NPPF: paragraph 100 & 104.

in other Regulation 16 representations. None of these alterations would affect the ability of the Plan to meet the Basic Conditions and could be undertaken as minor, non-material changes.²⁰

5. Conclusions

Summary

- 5.1 The Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan has been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements. My examination has investigated whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements for neighbourhood plans. I have had regard to all the responses made following consultation on the MMNP, and the evidence documents submitted with it.
- 5.2 I have made recommendations to modify a number of policies to ensure the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum.

The Referendum and its Area

- 5.3 I have considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates. The MMNP, as modified, has no policy or proposal which I consider significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary, requiring the referendum to extend to areas beyond the Plan boundary. I recommend that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the Plan should be the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Concluding Comments

- 5.4 The MMNF and other voluntary contributors are to be commended for their efforts in producing a Plan which has the merits of being concise and comprehensive. The Plan is logical, very informative and well-illustrated. I enjoyed examining it and visiting the area. I agree with the comment by the Chairman of the MMNF in the Foreword to the Plan that it has been pitched "about right." The Consultation Statement and the Basic Conditions Statement were extremely useful, as were the constructive responses from the MMNF and BC to my questions of clarification.
- 5.5 Subject to the recommended modifications, the MMNP will make a positive contribution to the Development Plan for the area and should enable the attractive character and appearance of Marton Moss to be maintained whilst enabling sustainable development to proceed.

²⁰ PPG Reference ID: 41-106-20190509.

Andrew Mead

Examiner

Appendix: Modifications

Proposed modification no. (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification
PM1	Front cover	Include within the title: "2020 – 2030" .
PM2	Policy MM1	c. Delete: "... with no site level raising ...". Substitute: "... local dyke network, subject to advice on sustainable drainage and flood risk in the PPG. "
PM3	Policy MM2	Delete: "... and significant open land elsewhere ...".
PM4	Policy MM4	Amend the "Appropriate forms of development" to: Site C: "No more than 11 dwellings." Site G: "No more than 8 dwellings." Site H: "No more than 6 dwellings." Site I: "1 detached dwelling fronting School Road."
PM5	Policy MM6	Amend c. to: "would not unduly disturb neighbouring residential occupiers." Delete d. Add a final sentence: "Where the proposal is for a town centre use, it will need to comply with Blackpool Local Plan Policies CS4: Retail and Other Town Centre Uses; and DM15: Threshold for Impact Assessment."
PM6	Policy MM8	Amend b. to: "measures to retain, as far as reasonably practicable, the structure of the farmhouse, stable, barn and early shippens will be supported. Any loss will be mitigated by measures to preserve any remaining structures and/or programme of archaeological recording."
PM7	Policy MM9	Amend the policy to:

		“Open land used for informal recreation immediately to the North of St Nicholas School, as shown on the Policies Map is designated as Local Green Space where development will be managed in accordance with national policy for Green Belts.”
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Blackpool Council

Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan

Regulation 19 (Final) Decision Statement

This Statement was published on xx December 2023, pursuant to Section 38A(9) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012/637.

Blackpool Council has 'made' the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan under Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan now forms part of the Development Plan for Blackpool.

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This document is the Decision Statement required to be prepared under Section 38A(9) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). It sets out the Council's considerations and formal decision in bringing the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan into legal force.
- 1.2 Following an independent examination and positive referendum result, held on 5th October 2023, Blackpool Council decided to make the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan under Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Council formally designated the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Area and Neighbourhood Forum on 26th March 2019 in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan (General) Regulations (as amended) 2012 - Regulations 7 and 10. This established the process for the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Forum (MMNF) as the qualifying body to produce a neighbourhood plan for the designated area.

- 2.2 The Forum submitted their draft plan, which covers the period 2020 to 2030, to the Council (Regulation 15) in August 2022. The Council published the draft plan for consultation in accordance with Regulation 16 in October 2022.
- 2.3 The Council appointed an independent examiner in February 2023, in agreement with the MMNF, in accordance with Regulation 17 and the examiner published his report, which the Council received on 29th March 2023.
- 2.4 The Council published their decision in accordance with Regulation 17a and accepted the examiner's recommendations and proposed modifications to allow the Referendum Plan to progress towards becoming a 'made' plan and part of Blackpool's development plan, subject to a 'yes' vote in a referendum.
- 2.5 A local referendum was held in Marton Moss on 5th October 2023 to decide whether the local community were in favour of the Plan. Of the votes received, 246 (90.44%) voted 'yes' in response to the referendum question. The turnout of electors was 32.19%.

3.0 Decisions and Reasons

- 3.1 Blackpool Council decided by resolution of Full Council on 29th November 2023 to 'make' (adopt) the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.2 Blackpool Council as the local authority 'makes' the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan as part of the Development Plan in accordance with Section 38A (4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan now forms part of the Development Plan for Blackpool. Planning applications in the Neighbourhood Plan Area must be considered against the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan, as well as existing national planning policy and the Blackpool Local Plan.
- 3.3 On 5th October 2023 the Plan was subject to a referendum which returned a vote in favour of the Plan being used to help decide planning applications. Section 38A (4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires that the Council must 'make' the Plan if more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the plan.
- 3.4 The Council has assessed the Plan and concluded that the Plan, including its preparation, is compatible with EU obligation and the Convention Rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998) and complies with the relevant provisions within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).
- 3.5 The adopted version of the Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan (as approved by Full Council) was published on the Council's website, alongside this Marton Moss Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement, on xxxxxx 2023.

E Jane Saleh, Head of Planning (Strategy) – Growing Places Division

Report to:	COUNCIL
Relevant Officer:	Neil Jack, Chief Executive
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting:	29 November 2023

LANCASHIRE DEVOLUTION

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 This covering report provides a short context of the current discussions relating to the setting up of a Lancashire County Combined Authority and an accompanying devolution deal with Central Government.

1.2 To note that a more detailed report will be circulated to all members in due course as this information is not available at the time of publication of this agenda.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 That Council considers the recommendations in the report due to be circulated under separate cover.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To be set out in the report due to be circulated under separate cover.

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

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

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None – covered in para 3.1

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council priorities are both:

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

5.0 Background Information

- 5.1 In February 2022, the Government published its White Paper on Levelling Up, a significant set of proposals which look to address geographical disparities in funding, productivity and growth across England. The resulting legislation, the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act, allows for the creation of new Combined County Authorities that require the agreement of upper-tier Local Authorities.
- 5.2 Securing a devolution deal has been a long-standing ambition for leaders across Lancashire. Following the publication of the White Paper, the three upper tier councils agreed to cooperate at pace on the creation of a new devolution deal that would cover the Lancashire area by establishing a Combined County Authority.
- 5.3 The Leader of the Council has reported on progress so far at the last Council meeting through her Executive Report to Council and the attached report (to be circulated) provides a further update and recommendations.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

List of Appendices:

To be circulated under separate cover following the publication of the agenda.

6.0 Legal considerations:

- 6.1 The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, allows for the creation of new Combined County Authorities that require the agreement of upper-tier Local Authorities.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

- 7.1 There are no Human Resource considerations.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

- 8.1 There will be a separate Equality Impact Assessment referred to in the Appendices to be circulated.

9.0 Financial considerations:

- 9.1 An agreement has been signed between the three Councils which states that where possible funds already held jointly will be identified to cover costs incurred in developing a devolution deal. Where this is not possible the three Councils shall

make financial contributions to the pooled funds to cover external costs.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 These will be set out in the report to be circulated under separate cover.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 These will be set out in the report to be circulated under separate cover.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 The Leader of the Council together with the Chief Executive and relevant Directors have been involved in discussions with counterparts from Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire County Councils and representatives from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Department for Transport.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.

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Report to:	COUNCIL
Relevant Officer:	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
Relevant Member:	Councillor Paul Galley, Lead Scrutiny Member
Date of Meeting:	29 November 2023

SCRUTINY UPDATE REPORT 2023/2024

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the Scrutiny Update Report for 2023/2024.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To receive the Scrutiny Update Report 2023/2024 and to ask the Scrutiny Lead Member or other members of the Scrutiny Leadership Board questions relating to the report and the scrutiny function.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The Scrutiny Update Report sets out the achievements to date of scrutiny at the Council during the 2023/2024 Municipal Year.

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 priorities are:

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

6.0 Background information

6.1 The Scrutiny Lead Member and Chair of the Scrutiny Leadership Board, Councillor Paul Galley will present the Scrutiny report to Council. The report highlights the work undertaken during the Municipal Year 2023/2024 to date.

6.2 The report builds on the previous reports provided to Council and forms part of the reporting arrangements identified and agreed by Council.

6.3 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 8(a): Scrutiny Update Report 2023/2024.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None associated with this report.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 There is no legal requirement to have an annual report, although it is considered best practice in the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None associated with this report.

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people:

11.1 None associated with this report.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None associated with this report.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

**Chair of the Scrutiny Leadership Board's Report to Council
November 2023**

**CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD'S REPORT TO COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR
PAUL GALLEY**

New Scrutiny Structure

I was appointed as Chair of the Scrutiny Leadership Board at Annual Council in May 2023 and at the same a new Scrutiny Committee structure was adopted by the Council increasing the number of Committees to four – Adult Social Care and Health, Children and Young People's, Levelling Up and Climate Change and Environment – all sitting underneath the Scrutiny Leadership Board, which is again comprised of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs in addition to the Chair of the Audit Committee.

The new Committees have all now met between two and three times and have all held work planning sessions and commenced on a busy workload of strategy input reviews, training and development opportunities and briefings outside of the formal committee meetings. This report provides a summary of the key work to date this Municipal Year.

Scrutiny Leadership Board

We are keen to ensure that the Scrutiny Leadership Board takes on more of the role of a management board and delegates any duties that might be considered a scrutiny committee role to the committees themselves. As such the Council complaints information and performance against Council Plan delivery will be considered by the individual committees going forward.

Following the most recent North West Employer's review of scrutiny, an action plan has been developed to implement the suggestions made through the review and progress is being monitored by the Scrutiny Leadership Board. Key actions include the development of public engagement within scrutiny and we have set up a working group to consider aspects of communications and public involvement in scrutiny which we hope to conclude and enact in the New Year.

As always, we are coming up to the time of year in which scrutiny engages in the budget process and two meetings are being held in December and January to allow Member input. At a recent meeting of the Board, Members posed a question regarding what potential input could be made and were advised that a focus on the assumptions being made in the budget would be helpful with any ideas for budget savings welcomed and this is what the Board will focus on in the upcoming meetings.

Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee

The Committee has been focusing on building and renewing relationships with NHS colleagues and has received a briefing on the Integrated Care Board with the Chair and Vice-Chair recommending regular relationship meetings.

Committee meetings have considered items including an update on maternity services progress following the Care Quality Commission inspection, the performance of the North West Ambulance Service in Blackpool and their work to prevent falls and it has received the Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Annual Report. Outside of the Committee meeting a briefing on the work of Adult Services has been received and joint meetings with the Levelling-Up Scrutiny Committee have been held to input into the development of the Sexual Health Strategy and the Healthy Weight Strategy.

Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee

The pre-Committee briefing sessions for the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee have been trialing a new 15 minute briefing, whereby Members receive a short and sharp overview of a key topic. To date these have focused on legislation in education and the role of the LADO. The trial has proved a success and similar briefings will now be rolled out to the other Committees where appropriate.

Members have had the opportunity to feed into the development of the new Children, Young People and Families Plan and have held or have upcoming special informal meetings to consider the development of the new place-based safeguarding arrangements and the Preparing for Adulthood Strategy when young people and parents who have contributed to the Strategy to date will be in attendance to talk about their input. Site visits are also being held during November to the new family hubs to give the Committee a real life view of their work in the community.

Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee

The work of the Committee has been wide ranging to date. A review panel has focused on Beach Management and Sea Water Defences considering the plans for the use of £150m in investment funding by the Environment Agency to improve Blackpool's beaches through the retention of sand and the building of new sea water defences.

A tour of the new CCTV Control Centre was also undertaken by the Committee on 12 October, as part of its CCTV Infrastructure Review Panel work. After viewing the new facilities and receiving a presentation on plans for the second stage of improved CCTV infrastructure, Members considered the proposals for identifying where new cameras will be installed, including a pro-forma for Councillors and Community Groups to use.

Going forward, there is a briefing on the Climate Adaption Plan scheduled in December and a review panel meeting on the Community Safety Partnership's Serious Violence Duty.

Levelling Up Scrutiny Committee

Committee meetings have received regular updates on Levelling Up, considered tourism performance and looked at housing and town centre regeneration as well as consideration of the Blackpool Tobacco Addiction Service.

Due to the cross-cutting nature of this Committee a lot of work has been undertaken jointly with both the Adult Social Care and Healthy Scrutiny Committee on public health strategy in addition to a joint meeting that was held with the Climate Change and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 13 July 2023 to discuss Sea Water Quality. Members received a briefing on the impact of recent discharges in to the sea near Blackpool and heard that the impact on sea water quality had been minimal. It was agreed that further work would be considered following the outcome of the EA investigation into the discharges later in 2023.

Upcoming is a meeting to feed into the development of the Alcohol Strategy.

Conclusion

The Committees have hit the ground running and are all contributing to new policy and strategy and making an impact through their questioning, challenge and identification of areas of work to pursue through meetings. The challenge has been fitting in all the meetings, with demands on Members' time higher than ever which is why I would like to thank everyone for their dedication and contribution so far. Without your time and input scrutiny would not be able to add the same level of value as it currently does.

I look forward to working with all the Chairs, Vice Chairs and Committee Members on their journey throughout the next few years, supporting them and identifying appropriate training and development opportunities as well as seeing the innovative and inspiring ideas they come up with to help improve Council service delivery and performance.

A key priority for me is to raise the profile of scrutiny both inside and outside of the authority and highlight to everyone the value added. We will also be seeking to engage the public more, reflect on lived experiences and offer different perspectives to our Scrutiny Members, with examples of this already happening through the site visits being undertaken and the invitation of young people and their parents to an upcoming meeting.

I look forward to presenting the Annual Report to Council in June 2024 and highlighting the achievements of this Municipal Year.

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Report to:	COUNCIL
Relevant Officer:	Tracy Greenhalgh, Head of Audit and Risk
Relevant Member:	Councillor Jason Roberts, Chair of Audit Committee
Date of Meeting:	29 November 2023

AUDIT COMMITTEE HALF YEARLY REPORT 2023/2024

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the Audit Committee Half Yearly Report for 2023/2024.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To receive the Audit Committee Half Yearly Report 2023/2024 and to ask the Chair of the Committee questions relating to the report and the audit function.

2.2 To note the update on compliance with the Chartered Institute for Public Finance Position Statement and agree the Council's performance against the core functions in the Position Statement as set out in Appendix 9a.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The Audit Committee Annual Report sets out the work undertaken so far by the Committee during the 2023/2024 Municipal Year and seeks confirmation of the recommendation regarding compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement on Audit Committees.

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 priorities are:

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

6.0 Background information

- 6.1 The Chair of Audit Committee, Councillor Jason Roberts, will present the half-yearly Report to Council. The report highlights the work undertaken during the Municipal Year 2023/2024 so far.
- 6.2 The report builds on the annual report provided to Council at the June 2023 meeting and forms part of the reporting arrangements identified and agreed by Council.
- 6.3 A key part of the report also provides details of the Councils compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement on Audit Committees. This was considered at the 19 October 2023 meeting of the Committee and it was agreed that an update on the work undertaken would be provided to full Council, together with a recommendation that the work of the Committee complies with the Position Statement.
- 6.4 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

- 7.1 Appendix 9(a): Audit Committee Half-Yearly Report 2023/2024.

8.0 Financial considerations:

- 8.1 The Audit Committee remains responsible for approval of the Statement of Accounts. Details of this work are provided as part of the update at Appendix 9(a).

9.0 Legal considerations:

- 9.1 There is no legal requirement to have an a half-yearly report, although it is considered best practice. The CIPFA Position Statement is a set of criteria which has been designed to identify best practice in the operation of local government Audit Committees.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

- 10.1 The Half-Yearly update (Appendix 9a) provides detail of the ongoing risk management work undertaken by the Audit Committee so far in 2023/2024.

11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people:

- 11.1 None associated with this report.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

- 12.1 None associated with this report.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

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**Chairman of the Audit Committee's Report to Council
29 November 2023**

**CHAIRMAN OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE'S REPORT TO COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR
JASON ROBERTS**

Overview

I am pleased to provide this update to the Council on the work of the Audit Committee during the first half of the 2023/2024 Municipal Year.

During 2023/24 so far the Audit Committee has held five meetings to undertaken its role in monitoring risk and governance performance at the Council.

This report summarises the work that has been undertaken by the Committee over the course of the first half of the 2023/2024 Municipal Year and builds on the Annual Report 2023 provided to Council at its June 2023 meeting.

Training and support has continued to be provided via the Audit Academy, which aims to ensure that the Committee maintains its high quality of member questioning and levels of engagement, whilst also developing a greater breadth of knowledge of the wide range of issues falling within the remit of the Audit Committee.

Work Undertaken

**The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Position Statement on
Audit Committees**

The CIPFA Position Statement sets out the purpose, model, core functions and membership of the Audit Committee and represents CIPFA's view on the audit committee practice and principles that local government bodies in the UK should adopt.

CIPFA expects that the Council make the best efforts to adopt the principles, aiming for effective Audit Committee arrangements. Doing so enables The Council to meet its statutory responsibilities for governance and internal control arrangements, financial management, financial reporting and internal audit.

A requirement of the Position Statement is that Council's report annually on how the Audit Committee has complied with the Position Statement, discharged its responsibilities, and include an assessment of its performance. The report should be available to the public. This work was undertaken at the 19 October 2023 meeting of the Committee and it was agreed that details of the compliance with the statement would be presented to full Council.

The Position Statement sets out the purpose of an Audit Committee which is:

“Audit Committees are a key component of an authority’s governance framework. Their purpose is to provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements.

The committee’s role in ensuring that there is sufficient assurance over governance, risk and control gives greater confidence to all those charged with governance that those arrangements are effective. In a local authority the Full Council is the body charged with governance.

The Audit Committee may be delegated some governance responsibilities but will be accountable to Full Council. The committee has oversight of both internal and external audit together with the financial and governance reports, helping to ensure that there are adequate arrangements in place for both internal challenge and public accountability”

In order to deliver its purpose CIPFA set out a number of criteria which Audit Committees should deliver. The assessment of Blackpool Council’s Audit Committee performance against the core functions in the Position Statement is set out in the following table:

CIPFA Position Statement	Blackpool Council Position
Maintenance of governance, risk and control arrangements:	
Support a comprehensive understanding of governance across the organisation and among all those charged with governance, fulfilling the principles of good governance.	Complies The Committee receives relevant governance policies such as the Governance Framework and Partnership Governance Framework and recommends these to Full Council for adoption.
Consider the effectiveness of the authority’s risk management arrangements. It should understand the risk profile of the organisation and seek assurances that active arrangements are in place on risk-related issues, for both the body and its collaborative arrangements.	Complies The Committee receives and approves the Council’s Risk Management Framework. In addition, it considers the Strategic Risk Register on an annual basis and undertakes a deep dive of individual risk categories at each meeting.
Monitor the effectiveness of the system of internal control, including arrangements for financial management, ensuring value for money, supporting standards and ethics and managing the authority’s exposure to the risks of fraud and corruption.	Complies The Committee receives the Audit and Risk Quarterly Report and considers the assurance statements for internal audit work completed each quarter. A sample of audit reports are also presented to Committee so that the

	<p>relevant Heads of Service can provide an update in terms of the completion of audit recommendations.</p> <p>The Head of Audit and Risk's Annual Opinion on the control environment is considered by the Committee.</p> <p>In addition, updates are provided in relation to proactive and reactive fraud and error activity. The Committee also approves the annual Fraud and Error Prevention Charter which sets out the Council's zero tolerance approach to fraud, bribery and corruption.</p>
Financial and governance reporting	
Be satisfied that the authority's accountability statements, including the annual governance statement, properly reflect the risk environment, and any actions required to improve it, and demonstrate how governance supports the achievement of the authority's objectives.	<p>Complies</p> <p>The Committee receives and approves the Annual Governance Statement each year. In addition it receives a mid-term progress update providing assurances that the actions identified in the Annual Governance Statement are being addressed.</p>
Support the maintenance of effective arrangements for financial reporting and review the statutory statements of account and any reports that accompany them.	<p>Complies</p> <p>The Statement of Accounts and the associated external auditors report are considered by the Committee.</p> <p>Management's response to the ISA260 is also reported to the Committee for consideration.</p>
Establishing appropriate and effective arrangements for audit and assurance	
Consider the arrangements in place to secure adequate assurance across the body's full range of operations and collaborations with other entities.	<p>Complies</p> <p>The Annual Internal Audit Plan is presented to the Audit Committee for approval. Further assurance can be taken from other review bodies such as Ofsted and the CQC as required.</p>
<p>In relation to the authority's internal audit functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee its independence, objectivity, performance and 	<p>Complies</p> <p>The Audit Committee approve the Internal Audit Charter and the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme on an</p>

<p>conformance to professional standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support effective arrangements for internal audit. • Promote the effective use of internal audit within the assurance framework. 	<p>annual basis.</p>
<p>Consider the opinion, reports and recommendations of external audit and inspection agencies and their implications for governance, risk management or control, and monitor management action in response to the issues raised by external audit.</p>	<p>Complies All reports of the external auditor and management response to these are considered by the Committee. External audit attend every Audit Committee meeting to enable verbal updates or respond to questions from the Audit Committee.</p>
<p>Contribute to the operation of efficient and effective external audit arrangements, supporting the independence of auditors and promoting audit quality.</p>	<p>Complies Full Council are consulted on whether the Council should participate in the national scheme for the procurement and appointment of external auditors (which Blackpool Council does).</p> <p>There have been occasions where members of the Audit Committee have been involved with external audit and finance outside of committee meetings in order to address relationship and performance issues.</p>
<p>Support effective relationships between all providers of assurance, audits and inspections, and the organisation, encouraging openness to challenge, review and accountability.</p>	<p>Complies This can be evidenced through the minutes of the Audit Committee which demonstrate the breadth of discussion and engagement by committee members and officers.</p>
Audit Committee Membership	
<p>A membership that is trained to fulfil their role so that members are objective, have an inquiring and independent approach, and are knowledgeable.</p>	<p>Complies An Audit Training Academy is in place which delivers modular training prior to each Audit Committee meeting. The training programme is developed each year, dependent on requests from Audit Committee members and is approved by the Committee for each Municipal Year.</p>

<p>A membership that promotes good governance principles, identifying ways that better governance arrangement can help achieve the organisation's objectives.</p>	<p>Complies This can be evidenced through the minutes of the Audit Committee which demonstrate the breadth of discussion and engagement by Committee members and officers.</p>
<p>A strong, independently minded chair, displaying a depth of knowledge, skills, and interest. There are many personal skills needed to be an effective chair, but key to these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting apolitical open discussion. • Managing meetings to cover all business and encouraging a candid approach from all participants. • Maintaining the focus of the committee on matters of greatest priority. 	<p>Complies Whilst the Chair of the Audit Committee is a new chair for this Municipal Year they have considerable experience of serving on the Audit Committee. The Chair holds a pre-meeting before each Audit Committee to discuss the agenda and help shape discussions and challenge.</p>
<p>Willingness to operate in an apolitical manner.</p>	<p>Complies This can be evidenced by the minutes of the Audit Committee.</p>
<p>Unbiased attitudes – treating auditors, the executive and management fairly.</p>	<p>Complies Good working relationships are in place between the Audit Committee, officers and external audit.</p>
<p>The ability to challenge the executive and senior managers when required.</p>	<p>Complies This can be evidence in the minutes of the Audit Committee which highlight the level of discussion and challenge.</p>
<p>Knowledge, expertise and interest in the work of the committee.</p>	<p>Complies For this Municipal Year it is a new Committee with many newly elected members. Training is in place to support the Committee to develop their knowledge and skills to make effective contributions to the meetings. Continuity is in place through the new Chair of Audit Committee and the co-opted independent member.</p>
<p>Engagement and Outputs</p>	
<p>Meet regularly, at least four times a year,</p>	<p>Complies</p>

<p>and have a clear policy on those items to be considered in private and those to be considered in public.</p>	<p>The Committee meet 6 to 7 times each Municipal Year. Where possible items are discussed in public but where this would not be appropriate arrangements are in place for a private meeting.</p>
<p>Be able to meet privately and separately with the external auditor and with the head of internal audit.</p>	<p>Complies External audit are invited to all Committee pre-meets so that they can have a discussion with the Audit Committee outside of the presence of officers.</p> <p>The Chair and Vice Chair of Audit Committee have regular meetings with the Head of Audit and Risk approximately before each Committee meeting to set the agenda.</p>
<p>Include, as regular attendees, the chief finance officer(s), the chief executive, the head of internal audit and the appointed external auditor; other attendees may include the monitoring officer and the head of resources (where such a post exists). These officers should also be able to access the committee members, or the chair, as required.</p>	<p>Complies The Director of Resources (Statutory Finance Officer), external audit and Head of Audit and Risk attend all Audit Committee meetings. The Director of Governance and Partnerships (Monitoring Officer) and Chief Executive also attend as required. All officers and external audit are able to contact the Chair of Audit Committee outside of formal meetings should this be required.</p>
<p>Have the right to call on any other officers or agencies of the authority as required.</p>	<p>Complies Officers are regularly invited to Audit Committee to provide updates on the implementation of internal audit recommendations and the strategic risk register. The Committee can also request officers to attend for any other risk, control or governance issue and such actions are included on the audit tracker which helps inform the work programme for the Committee.</p>
<p>Support transparency, reporting regularly on its work to those charged with governance.</p>	<p>Complies The Chair of Audit Committee presents an annual report to Full Council summarising the work that the committee has undertaken and aspirations for the future focus of the committee.</p>

<p>Report annually on how the committee has complied with the position statement, discharged its responsibilities, and include an assessment of its performance. The report should be available to the public.</p>	<p>Complies This was done for the first time in November 2022 is done annually going forward.</p>
<p>Impact</p>	
<p>As a non-executive body, the influence of the audit committee depends not only on the effective performance of its role, but also on its engagement with the leadership team and those charged with governance. The committee should evaluate its impact and identify areas for improvement.</p>	<p>Complies On an annual basis the Audit Committee undertakes a self-assessment of its effectiveness. This also includes seeking feedback from key stakeholders such as Chief Officers, internal and external audit. The findings of this exercise are reported to the Audit Committee and also inform the Audit Academy training programme for each Municipal Year.</p>

<p>Overall Strengths</p>	
<p>As part of the assessment the Committee felt that it exhibits a number of strengths which feed into all element of the Position Statement and these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall the Committee recognised the work that it does reflected in the Position Statement with all core functions complied with. • The Committee feels that engagement with officers is good with a wide range of officers being invited to Committee to provide input and assurance. • The Committee feels that it receives useful and meaningful information which enables it to effectively interrogate and ask questions. • The Committee feels that it has a strong sense of challenge, asks probing questions and asks follow-up questions to ensure that they are satisfied with the response. • The Committee strives to continually improve through its Audit Academy. 	

<p>Areas for Development</p>	
<p>The Committee recognised that it wanted to continue to develop and as part of the process identified a number of actions in order to continue to evolve and these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the vacant independent member post is recruited to. • Consider the development of a plan setting out the expectations of the new external auditor in terms of working relationships. • Ensure that Audit Committee members receive Fraud Awareness Training. • Consider the benefits of wider engagement of the Executive at Audit Committee meetings when appropriate to do so. 	

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that officers presenting at meetings provide a more detailed overview of their reports. |
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Strategic Risk Register

The Committee has continued to focus upon the Strategic Risk Register and has received regular attendance from risk owners in order to provide challenge on the work undertaken to mitigate risk. Over the course of this year the Committee has undertaken deep dives into the following strategic risk areas:

- Technology
- Operations
- Property
- Project/Programme Management
- Information

Internal Audit Reviews

During the 2023/2024 municipal year the Committee has continued to receive follow-up reports on the implementation of Internal Audit Recommendations that allow members to monitor progress and provide challenge where there has been delays. Updates have been provided by the officers responsible for implementing recommendations, which has allowed detailed questioning of the issues arising from reports.

The reports considered so far this year are;

- Children's Services Financial Systems
- Driving at Work
- Energy Management
- Event Management

At its June 2023 meeting the Committee also approved the Internal Audit Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme 2022/2023. This provided reassurance that Internal Audit continued to provide a robust service in an effective and efficient manner, in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

External Audit and Accounts 2020/2021

As outlined in the Committee's Annual Report approval of the Annual Year End Accounts for 2020/2021 was delayed due to the emergence of a national issue around the historical accounting of local authority infrastructure assets. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy established a task force to investigate the issue and to formulate a workable

solution. A solution was developed in 2022 and this enabled the external auditor Deloitte to complete work the 2020/2021 accounts.

At its meeting on 27 July 2023 Deloitte presented the Statement of Accounts 2020/2021 to the Committee where they were approved.

The accounting issue had also delayed the completion of the audit of the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 year end accounts. However since the resolution of the Accounts 2020/2021, Deloitte has now commenced work on the Accounts 2021/2022. It is planned that these will be approved by the end of the 2023/2024 municipal, and the Committee will therefore be closely monitoring the situation over the situation into 2023/24 with a view to ensuring that all the outstanding accounts are approved in a timely fashion.

In addition to the Accounts, representatives from Deloitte has continued to attend meetings of the Committee in person and virtually. This attendance has allow members to receive external audit advice at meetings and at its pre-Committee briefings and has continued to enhance the quality of discussions that have taken place.

Other reports provided by Deloitte have been;

- External Auditors Report to those charged with Governance (ISA 260) – Considered and noted at the 14 September 2023 meeting.
- External Audit Plan 2021/2022- Considered and noted at the 14 September 2023 meeting.

Further Work Undertaken

- Annual Audit Opinion 2022/2023 – Received and approved at the 15 June 2023 meeting.
- Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023 - Received and approved at the 15 June 2023 meeting.
- Covert Surveillance Policy – The Committee received and recommended for approval to Council the updated Policy at its 19 October 2023 meeting.

The Audit Academy

High quality training and development has continued to be a focus for the Committee, delivered through the Audit Academy. Informative training sessions have been held regularly, where full participation from Committee members has been encouraged. In order to make the sessions as accessible as possible, these have been undertaken remotely.

At its 15 June 2023 meeting the Committee approved the Audit Academy Training Programme 2023/2024. The training scheduled for 2023/2024 will cover areas within the CIPFA Guidance

for Audit Committee Members as well as any additional areas which members identified as requiring improvement in their skills or knowledge.

Going Forward

The Committee will continue to receive and review key information including the Risk Services Quarterly Reports and, when appropriate, invite Chief Officers and operational officers to attend to provide explanations where inadequate assurance has been provided or where key controls have not been implemented. The Strategic Risk Register will continue to be reviewed and the information within it improved as necessary. Chief Officers will continue to be required to update the Committee with regards to the controls that are being implemented in order to manage the Council's risks especially when audit follow-up action is requested.

As the municipal year progresses the Committee will continue to work towards the following over the remainder of the Municipal Year:

- Maintaining and strengthening the relationship with Scrutiny.
- Support and help manage the high risk areas.
- Ensure that the Audit Committee remains an active player in identifying emerging risks and general horizon scanning.
- Support the Council to tackle fraud by raising awareness of successful prosecutions.
- Communicate high interest items in Audit Committee meetings to the public.

Members, I am pleased to present this report to Council and will be happy to answer any questions.