

Blackpool Council

The logo graphic consists of two horizontal, wavy lines in a light blue-grey color, positioned below the text 'Blackpool Council'.

Channel Shift Scrutiny Review

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1.0 Foreword

- 1.1 Channel Shift is a complex issue affecting a broad range of Blackpool Council's services. As a scrutiny panel we have attempted to understand the process in Blackpool and the work being undertaken by our partner organisations. We have therefore met with a number of Council Officers and representatives from our partners and undertaken detailed discussions about Channel Shift, what has been achieved and what challenges they face.
- 1.2 While we have looked to cover as many of the Council's services as possible in our review we were unable to consider Channel Shift within the Children's and Adult Services departments due to their workloads during the pandemic coinciding with the review. However going forward it is envisioned that a further review of Channel Shift will potentially consider these areas in detail.
- 1.3 The recommendations that we have made are designed to improve Channel Shift at the Council and at partner organisations, by increasing ease of access to services and engaging the local community in the Channel Shift process.
- 1.3 I would like to extend the thanks of the review panel to all those who have taken part in the review process, including Council officers and witnesses from partners at Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd, Enveco and the NHS in Blackpool. Their insight and knowledge of the issues relating to Channel Shift investigated by the review has been invaluable in developing our final recommendations.
- 1.4 I also want to thank my fellow scrutiny members for giving their time to undertake the review, their input into the discussions and their positive attitude throughout.



Councillor Paul Galley
Chairman, Channel Shift Scrutiny Review
April 2022

2.0 Summary of Recommendations

	Timescale
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>That the Executive give consideration to identifying a brand name for Channel Shift that the public can clearly identify with.</p>	<p>To be completed on discussion with the Cabinet Member following approval by the SLB.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2:</p> <p>Visibility of Services and Community Groups:</p> <p>a) That the Executive give consideration to introducing a list of “approved” community groups, working to recognise operating and governance best practice. This should be accessible via the Council website or partner organisations.</p> <p>b) That the FYI Directory take a pro-active approach to ensuring Groups’ records are up-to-date. It is suggested that to facilitate this a six monthly email confirming the details are correct should be sent out, if three of these emails be ignored then the page be removed.</p>	<p>To be completed on discussion with the Cabinet Member following approval by the SLB.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3:</p> <p>Digital Blackpool:</p> <p>a) That the Review Panel supports the expansion of Digital Blackpool across Blackpool.</p> <p>b) That the Executive investigate how the Council’s libraries can be promoted as a place for individuals who have poor digital skills to be digitally empowered including using Digital Blackpool via the Library App and to train residents to use the libraries to access newspapers and magazines.</p>	<p>To be completed on discussion with the Cabinet Member following approval by the SLB.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4:</p> <p>That the Council’s website be reviewed as follows:</p> <p>a) That links to the Council’s Wholly-Owned Companies be added to the website’s homepage to create a “one-council” ethos, making the relationship between the Council and companies clear.</p> <p>b) That consideration be given to having links next to Council services’ information on the website, e.g. Waste, with "you may be interested in" ways to get involved.</p> <p>c) That an online pathway be developed for residents to suggest ideas on</p>	<p>To be completed on discussion with the Cabinet Member following approval by the SLB.</p>

<p>improving a service.</p> <p>d) That once a brand name has been created, it is recommended that the media strategy under the new brand should regularly showcase the achievements (achievements of what?) with details of before and after of completed projects, to demonstrate the how a project makes a difference to residents.</p> <p>e) A review to overhaul the Blackpool Parks webpage be undertaken to ensure that information is up-to-date and interactive with ways for people to "Get Involved" with an approved Park Community Group being promoted on each Park page where applicable.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 5:</p> <p>That Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd be requested to consider:</p> <p>a) That the online booking of community centres operated by BCH be promoted to improve access for community groups and third sector organisations and that BCH promote the activity at each centre via their website to cross promote and also show clear commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility.</p> <p>b) That BCH staff working with residents with ASB adopt a holistic approach working with the resident to link them into community groups and support organisations, recognising that ASB can be part of a larger picture of frustration/need.</p>	<p>To be completed on discussion with the Cabinet Member following approval by the SLB.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>The staff suggestion box on the intranet Hub be enhanced to allow the sharing of ideas of best practice rather than purely a form to submit ideas. This would also allow for success stories to be promoted and communicated across Council services.</p>	<p>To be completed on discussion with the Cabinet Member following approval by the SLB.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>To explore the potential for integrating the NHS's EMIS system and the Council's systems so that GPs can monitor the progress of individuals referred to the social prescribing programme.</p>	<p>To be completed on discussion with the Cabinet Member following approval by the SLB.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>That the luggage label information service on residents' bins be promoted to council departments as a method of engaging with the community, highlighting that this service can be targeted at certain locations or town wide for a reasonable price.</p>	<p>To be completed on discussion with the Cabinet Member following approval by the SLB.</p>

<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>That the Executive explore the opportunities for residents to get involved, based on the model operated by Vancouver City Council, including the possibility of schemes such as Adopt a Drain, Adopt an alleyway, Become a litter picker and Neighbourhood Clean-up Party.</p>	<p>To be completed on discussion with the Cabinet Member following approval by the SLB.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10:</p> <p>In relation to the Staff and Residents Newsletter, that the Executive give consideration to:</p> <p>a) That the staff newsletter be expanded to include examples of community engagement success stories. This could also be included with a new section on the staff hub.</p> <p>b) That in addition to the staff newsletter a monthly newsletter for residents be developed to promote “Get Involved” activities.</p>	<p>To be completed on discussion with the Cabinet Member following approval by the SLB.</p>

3.0 Background Information

- 3.1 Following a review of the annual governance statement on 17 January 2019 by the Council's Audit Committee, significant progress was identified in delivering the Channel Shift agenda especially in areas such as Leisure services. It was, however, thought appropriate that a scrutiny review be established to see whether Channel Shift could be improved in other areas of the Council.
- 3.2 The review was put on hold during 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and was restarted in March 2021 with the scope being revised to take into account the developments and changes to services during the pandemic.
- 3.3 The Scrutiny Review Panel initially comprised of Councillors Mrs Maxine Callow JP, Paul Galley, Mrs Michelle Scott and Gerard Walsh. Councillor Jim Hobson was also a member until his appointment to the Executive in 2020, at which point he was replaced by Councillor Paula Burdess.
- 3.4 Councillor Paul Galley was elected Chair of the review panel at its first meeting on 29 October 2019 meeting.
- 3.4 A large amount of preparatory work was undertaken to identify the following key areas for consideration in the review:
- Can Channel Shift be expanded to cover more council services?
 - How effective the process of channel shift is.
 - Whether there is enough focus on the user. Has there been any user evaluation testing – is it effective from the public's point of view?
 - Has Channel Shift ensured that getting in touch with the Council is cheaper and more accessible for both residents and the Council?
 - How does it actually save money? How can be evidenced?
 - Does Channel Shift help deal with demand that there is other resource to support?
 - How can we make it as easy as possible to work with the Council whilst not putting residents at a disadvantage?
 - How can we ensure digital inclusion in terms of both access and skills?
 - Can we compare the Blackpool approach to best practice standard?
- 3.5 The review sought to come up with a series of recommendations that would improve the delivery of services, whilst building the resilience of residents. The review therefore looked at the existing methods of channel shift and then considered those departments where Channel Shift had not occurred in the Council and sought to identify recommendations for those areas.
- 3.6 Consideration was also given to how the Council engaged with the community and how engagement had changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The panel sought to reflect on what had been learnt during the pandemic and identify any issues such as digital inclusion (in terms of skills and access) and communication.

This review related to both of the priorities of the Council:

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

4.0 Methodology

- 4.1 The Panel met ten times between 2019 and 2022 to gather evidence and make recommendations.
- 4.2 Members met with a number of Council officers from various services and the representatives of partner organisations such as Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd, Enveco and the NHS.
- 4.3 Details of the meetings are as follows:

Date	Attendees	Purpose
29 October 2019	Councillors Galley, Mrs Callow, Mrs Scott, Walsh Steve Thompson, Director of Resources Louise Jones, Head of Benefits and Customer Services Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager	To consider an update on the progress of Channel Shift at Blackpool Council and to agree the review's scoping document.
21 January 2020	Councillors Galley, Mrs Callow JP, Hobson, Mrs Scott, Walsh Louise Jones, Head of Customer First and Benefits Tracy Greenhalgh, Head of Audit and Risk Mark McCree, Head of Libraries Vikki Piper, Housing Options Manager Chloe Shore, Community Engagement and Partnership Manager Kate Staley, Corporate Marketing and PR Manager Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager Jamie Sweet, Commissioning Project Manager, Fylde Coast CCGs	To discuss Channel Shift in relation to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement • Libraries • the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
10 March 2020	Councillors Galley, Mrs Callow JP, Hobson and Mrs Scott Amanda Bate, CCG Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager Louise Jones, Head of Customer First	To discuss partnership working.
The review was placed on hold between March 2020 and March 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic		
2 March 2021	Councillors Galley, Burdess, Mrs Callow JP, Mrs Scott, Walsh Louise Jones, Head of Customer First and Benefits Chloe Shore, Community Engagement and	To re-scope the review to take account for the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

	<p>Partnership Manager Kate Staley, Corporate Marketing and PR Manager Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager John Greenbank, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser</p>	
13 April 2021	<p>Councillors Galley, Burdess, Mrs Callow JP, Mrs Scott, Walsh</p> <p>Louise Jones, Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Chloe Pieri, Manager, Community Engagement Kate Staley, Corporate Marketing and PR Manager Joceline Greenaway, Head of Life Events Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager John Greenbank, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser</p>	<p>To consider the service responses to the Channel Shift Questionnaire, meet with the Head of Life Events and consider the Communications Pathway Policy.</p>
26 May 2021	<p>Councillors Galley, Burdess, Mrs Callow JP, Mrs Scott, Walsh</p> <p>Louise Jones, Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Chloe Pieri, Manager, Community Engagement Lisa Arnold, Head of Parks, Leisure and Catering Services Kim Wood, Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency Manager Lyndsey Shorrocks, Acting Deputy Head of Communications and Engagement, CCG Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager John Greenbank, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser</p>	<p>To meet with the Head of Parks, Leisure and Catering Services, the officer responsible for the FYI Service and receive an update on the work of the Care Commissioning Group (CCG).</p>
15 July 2021	<p>Councillors Galley, Mrs Callow JP, Mrs Scott, Walsh</p> <p>Louise Jones, Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services John Greenbank, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser</p>	<p>To review the evidence gathered so far, the list of potential recommendation and plan the remaining work needed to complete the review.</p>
20 January 2022	<p>Councillors Galley, Burdess, Mrs Callow JP, Walsh</p> <p>Louise Jones, Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Chloe Pieri, Manager, Community Engagement Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager John Greenbank, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser</p>	<p>To receive an update on work undertaken so far and agree the review's final meetings.</p>

22 February 2022	<p>Councillors Galley, Burdess, Mrs Callow JP, Mrs Scott, Walsh</p> <p>Tony Doyle, Head of IT Services Stephen Dunstan, Head of Resources, Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd John-Paul Lovie, Waste Services Manager Paula Ramsay, Performance and Quality Manager, Enveco Louise Jones, Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Chloe Pieri, Community Engagement Manager John Greenbank, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser</p>	To meet with the Head of ICT and the Council's partners from Blackpool Waste Services Ltd (Enveco) and Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd.
22 March 2022	<p>Councillors Galley, Burdess, Mrs Callow JP, Mrs Scott</p> <p>Louise Jones, Head of Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Chloe Pieri, Community Engagement Manager John Greenbank, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser</p>	To agree the review's final recommendations.

5.0 Detailed Findings and Recommendations

5.1 What is Channel Shift

- 5.1.1 Channel Shift is the process by which organisations seek to encourage service users to access or interact with services via “channels” other than those to which they normally choose, such as in-person. Using new technologies to achieve this, while increasing access and community engagement is a key objective of Channel Shift at Blackpool Council.
- 5.1.2 Significant progress has been made in delivering Channel Shift as a means of managing the demand for Council resources allowing more focus to be placed on the delivery of services. Customer First has led this along with a number of other departments and the establishment of an Channel Shift Officers Group to help coordinate the process at the Council.
- 5.1.3 The Review Panel recognised that Channel Shift must not be confused with being a purely digital strategy, it should also look at the social contract between the Council and Blackpool’s residents, including community engagement, community involvement and partnership and social prescriptions. Therefore not all Channel Shift should be the moving of services to digital platforms but the diversification of means to engage with services to connect with as many people as possible.
- 5.1.4 A crucial part of engaging local people in Channel Shift is clear communication of its purpose and intent. As such the Review Panel agreed that consideration should be given to bringing all this work together under a recognisable brand name.

Recommendation One

That the Executive give consideration to identifying a brand name for Channel Shift that the public can clearly identify with.

5.2 FYI Directory and the visibility of Community Groups

- 5.2.1 The FYI Directory is an online resource bringing together information on Council and Health Care Services, along with links to community and social groups.
- 5.2.2 The directory has between five hundred and six hundred visits a month with Mental Health being the most searched for item. FYI allows those using it to find information on Children’s and Adult Social Services, support for young people, a directory of local trades, access to forms for services such as childcare and links to the Council’s library system. A ‘Browse Aloud’ function also allows those with special needs to access FYI and find services useful to them.
- 5.2.3 In order to ensure that information remained up to date listings are checked every six-months. The Panel recognised that the accuracy of information was important and

therefore recommended that the six-monthly check be undertaken more proactively than at the current time with email contact being made seeking confirmation from a group or services of their details. In the event that three emails were not responded to then the FYI Directory should remove the listing. This would ensure that residents could be confident that the information in the directory was reliable.

- 5.2.4 At its meeting with the officer responsible for the directory, Mr Kim Wood, Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency Manager, the Panel heard that improvements had been made to FYI in order to improve engagement and access. This had included making the directory appear less “corporate” and making it easier to use, including through the development of a mobile-friendly version, which was welcomed by the review panel.
- 5.2.5 For residents willing to get involved in community groups, the Panel noted that an opportunity existed to have a list of community groups working to clearly defined recognised best practice and in turn link them to a Get Involved agenda via the Council website or the directories of recognised partners such as Lancashire Volunteering Partnership and Our Lancs. This would create an “approved” list of groups in the same way the Council recognises “approved” lists of trade companies in the FYI Directory.
- 5.2.6 The Panel also expressed the view that consideration should be given to how to support the approved list of groups, if created, with support and guidance on how to write funding bids and governance. However recognising that there may be legal and resource implications the Panel opted to not make a recommendation to this effect.

Recommendation Two

Visibility of Services and Community Groups:

a) That the Executive give consideration to introducing a list of “approved” community groups, working to recognise operating and governance best practice. This should be accessible via the Council website or partner organisations.

b) That the FYI Directory take a pro-active approach to ensuring Groups’ records are up-to-date. It is suggested that to facilitate this a six monthly email confirming the details are correct should be sent out, if three of these emails be ignored then the page be removed.

5.3 Digital Blackpool

- 5.3.1 Digital Blackpool is a project that has sought to build on Blackpool’s digital infrastructure and deliver positive socio-economic outcomes for businesses and residents. Therefore in light of the positive work undertaken so far the Panel has made a recommendation to show its support for the ongoing work and its expansion across Blackpool.
- 5.3.2 As part of its discussions with Mr Mark McCree, Head of Libraries, the Panel heard of the work being undertaken through libraries to give residents access to online services and improve their digital skills.

- 5.3.3 The Panel expressed the view that the library service should be regularly promoted as a place for individuals who have poor digital skills to be digitally empowered via their pool of volunteers in order to open the digital door and deal with social isolation at the same time with cross marketing of the different social groups that now exist within our library service.
- 5.3.4 Therefore the Panel has made a recommendation asking that the Executive consider how to promote the use of libraries by residents, utilising existing resources such as the Library App, so that they can become digitally empowered. This would in turn allow them to access a wider range of resources available through libraries, such as newspapers and magazines.

Recommendation Three

Digital Blackpool:

- a) That the Review Panel supports the expansion of Digital Blackpool across Blackpool.**
- b) That the Executive investigate how the Council's libraries can be promoted as a place for individuals who have poor digital skills to be digitally empowered including using Digital Blackpool via the Library App and to train residents to use the libraries to access newspapers and magazines.**

5.4 Blackpool Council's Website

- 5.4.1 The Review Panel recognised that the Council's Website is the first point of contact with services for many residents and therefore represents an important forum for engaging with people.
- 5.4.2 In order to ensure that the information provided and the links between services promote engagement the Panel have made a recommendation seeking a review of the website.
- 5.4.3 Blackpool Council has a number of Wholly-Owned Companies (WOC) that assist in delivering policy objectives and services to residents. These include Blackpool Waste Services Ltd (Enveco) which is responsible for waste collection and environmental services in Blackpool and Blackpool Coastal housing Ltd, responsible for Blackpool's social housing stock. Along with the other WOCs, members of the Panel noted that there were few prominent links from the Council website to these companies.
- 5.4.4 As companies over which the council has significant control and which are important providers of services to residents, the Panel expressed the view that the lack of connectivity between the Council's website and the WOCs made this relationship unclear to members of the public. Therefore in the interest of clarity and to promote the concept of a "one-council ethos", where all services and connected bodies are working together to achieve joint aims across Blackpool, that the relationship between WOCs and the Council be made clear and the inclusion of links from the website to WOCs webpages be considered.

- 5.4.5 Opportunities for residents to “Get involved” were also noted to be lacking on the website. The Panel noted in its discussions with various officers, including those from waste and the parks services, that there were numerous schemes that sought to engage residents in activities such as street cleaning and park community groups and that these could be better promoted and reflected more through appropriate use of the website.
- 5.4.6 As part of any review of the website the Panel would also like to ask that consideration be given to how residents can be engaged and their views sought on service improvement. It was considered that it would be beneficial have a part of the website specifically where residents are encouraged to express their views and make suggestions for improvements to services.

Recommendation Four

That the Council’s website be reviewed as follows:

- a) That links to the Council’s Wholly-Owned Companies be added to the website’s homepage to create a “one-council” ethos, making the relationship between the Council and companies clear.**
- b) That consideration be given to having links next to Council services’ information on the website, e.g. Waste, with "you may be interested in" ways to get involved.**
- c) That an online pathway be developed for residents to suggest ideas on improving a service.**
- d) That once a brand name has been created, it is recommended that the media strategy under the new brand should regularly showcase services achievements in respect of Channel Shift with details of before and after of completed projects, to demonstrate the how a project makes a differences to residents.**
- e) A review to overhaul the Blackpool Parks webpage be undertaken to ensure that information is up-to-date and interactive with ways for people to "Get Involved" with an approved Park Community Group being promoted on each Park page where applicable.**

5.5 Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd

- 5.5.1 Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd (BCH) is the operator of the Council’s former social housing stock and one of its WOCs. As such it operates across Blackpool and engages with a wide variety of residents. At its February 2022 meeting the Panel met with Mr Stephen Dunstan, Director of Resources at BCH and discussed the process of Channel Shift underway at the company.
- 5.5.2 The Panel noted that the booking of community centres operated by BCH was undertaken primarily through a single officer. This had meant that it was difficult for groups to access this community resource. The Panel has therefore asked that a booking system for community centres operated by BCH be established. The Panel has recommended that it also be promoted to improve access for community groups and third sector organisations and that BCH promote the activity at each centre via their

- website to cross promote and show clear commitment to the corporate social responsibility.
- 5.5.2 The pathways between BCH and other services were also considered by the Panel. BCH has dedicated staff who work to prevent residents from falling into crisis. This involves working with partner organisations such as the Council, Police and charitable organisations to ensure that there is wrap-around support provided to those in need. Noting that Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) can be an important indicator of those in need, the Panel made a recommendation highlighting the need for a holistic multi-agency approach to assisting individuals linking them to the necessary services.
- 5.5.3 The holistic approach should include a list of all the services and community groups and their support links being provided to BCH's anti-social behaviour service on an ongoing basis giving them opportunities to defuse situations and prevent people falling into crisis by encouraging residents to “get Involved” in community activities where possible. This could be personalised so that staff working with residents displaying ASB take a holistic approach working with the resident to link them in to any suitable community groups and support organisations recognising that ASB can be part of a larger picture of frustration and need in Blackpool.

Recommendation Five

That Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd be requested to consider:

a) That the online booking of community centres operated by BCH be promoted to improve access for community groups and third sector organisations and that BCH promote the activity at each centre via their website to cross promote and also show clear commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility.

b.) That BCH staff working with residents with ASB adopt a holistic approach working with the resident to link them into community groups and support organisations, recognising that ASB can be part of a larger picture of frustration/need.

5.6 Staff Suggestions

- 5.6.1 The views and experiences of staff operating across the Council's services were recognised by the Panel as an important source of ideas for improvements to the way departments operate.
- 5.6.2 Although it was noted that an Ideas Box exists on the Council internet hub, awareness of it and its use among staff was poor. Therefore it is recommended that the Ideas Box be promoted on a regular basis and Council Owned companies be allowed to participate where possible. This should also include promotion by the Officer Channel Shift Group whose advice on new projects could be sought at the design stage to best include channel shift opportunities.

Recommendation Six

The staff suggestion box on the intranet Hub be enhanced to allow the sharing of ideas of best practice rather than purely a form to submit ideas. This would also allow for success stories to be promoted and communicated across Council services.

5.7 The NHS in Blackpool

- 5.7.1 As part of the review the Panel met with members of Blackpool and the Fylde Coast Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to discuss Channel Shift with the NHS in Blackpool and its links to Council Services.
- 5.7.2 Channel shift within the NHS had been regarded as a digital exercise but the Covid-19 pandemic had highlighted issues of digital inclusion which had driven work to develop better ways of engaging with communities. As a result of this the CCG had made important contacts within harder to reach communities during Covid-19 to ensure that their health needs were met. The importance of maintaining these contacts post-Covid, had also been recognised.
- 5.7.3 The Panel also discussed Green Social Prescribing and heard that the Council was looking to expand its social prescribing programme. This included work with community groups such as the Friends of Kincaig Lake who had developed a pond trail to support the programme.
- 5.7.4 Consideration was also being given to the integration of the NHS's EMIS system with the Council's systems, so that GPs could monitor the progress of individuals referred to the social prescribing programme. An integrated system would also allow the sharing of other health information between partners and had been successfully undertaken elsewhere in the UK.
- 5.7.5 A recommendation had therefore been made that the potential of integrating EMIS system and the Council's systems be explored.

Recommendation Seven

To explore the potential for integrating the NHS's EMIS system and the Council's systems so that GPs can monitor the progress of individuals referred to the social prescribing programme.

5.8 ENVECO

- 5.8.1 Enveco is the operating name for the Council's WOC Blackpool Waste Services Ltd. The company is responsible for domestic waste collection and various environmental services within Blackpool. Channel Shift at Enveco has included new technology in waste collection vehicles and improved reporting pathways to highlight areas such as fly-tipping.

- 5.8.2 During its discussions with John-Paul Lovie, Waste Services Manager and Paula Ramsay, Performance and Quality Manager, Enveco, the Panel heard in addition to the Channel Shift work to improve waste collection and environmental services that during the Covid-19 Pandemic luggage labels on residents on bins had been used to share important information.
- 5.8.2 Although no longer used for sharing Covid related information, opportunity existed for the continued utilisation of these labels. The Panel was informed that information could be targeted to a specific area or community in Blackpool or could be applied across the town. This was recognised as a useful and innovative way of communicating with residents that could be used by any Council service for a small fee. Despite this the Panel understood that many services were unaware of the labels or how they could be used.
- 5.8.3 In order that the labels be utilised to their fullest potential the Panel has therefore made a recommendation that they be promoted to all the Council's services, highlighting how they can be used and targeted at residents.

Recommendation Eight

That the luggage label information service on residents' bins be promoted to council departments as a method of engaging with the community, highlighting that this service can be targeted at certain locations or town wide for a reasonable price.

5.9 Community Engagement

- 5.9.1 The Panel as part of its considerations was made aware of a model of community engagement operated by Vancouver City Council in Canada. This model utilises their website to engage and link residents to community projects and opportunities to get involved in activities across the city. The Panel believes that a similar approach could be adopted in Blackpool.
- 5.9.2 Blackpool Council operates a number of schemes that seek to engage residents and get them to take ownership of issues in their community, such as Adopt An Alleyway. A recommendation has therefore been made asking the Executive to explore opportunities for residents to "get involved" based on the Vancouver City Council model.
- 5.9.3 In order that the opportunities to "get involved" be communicated to as many residents as possible the Panel is recommending that a residents' newsletter be developed. This could be used to highlight opportunities to get involved in schemes such as Adopt An Alleyway, and provide information on success achieved by projects and schemes that are underway.
- 5.9.4 A staff newsletter has been developed through the communications team since the review began. This was welcomed by the Panel and noted as a method to positively engage staff and inform them of the work being undertaken elsewhere in the Council. However the Panel felt that there remained potential to expand the newsletters' scope to allow teams to promote their activities and successes as well as requests for help and had therefore made a recommendation to this effect.

Recommendation Nine

That the Executive explore the opportunities for residents to get involved, based on the model operated by Vancouver City Council, including the possibility of schemes such as Adopt a Drain, Adopt an alleyway, Become a litter picker and Neighbourhood Clean-up Party.

Recommendation Ten

In relation to the Staff and Residents Newsletter that the Executive give consideration to:

a) That the staff newsletter be expanded to include examples of community engagement success stories. This could also be included with a new section on the staff hub.

b) That in addition to the staff newsletter a monthly newsletter for residents be developed to promote “Get Involved” activities.

5.10 The future of Channel Shift in Blackpool

5.10.1 Throughout the scrutiny review the Panel has sought to hear from as broad a range of services both within and partners of Blackpool Council. This has led to the recommendations made above to improve the processes already in place and promote channel shift to the community going forward.

5.10.2 Despite this the Panel has been, due to the pressures created by the Covid-19 pandemic, unable to consider the process of Channel Shift in the Children Services and Adult Services departments of the Council.

5.10.3 As departments responsible for the delivery of significant services to residents of Blackpool the Panel has asked that it be emphasised that future scrutiny of Channel Shift in these areas be undertaken as soon as is possible. This will be to ensure that a consistent and holistic approach is taken across the Council to Channel Shift and delivering maximum benefits to Blackpool’s residents.

6.0 Financial and Legal Considerations

6.1 Financial

6.1.1 Existing staffing and digital resources can, in the main, be utilised to deliver many of the recommendations with costs met from existing budgets. However, the delivery of Digital Blackpool (Recommendation 3) will require additional investment to expand the pilot across Blackpool. Delivery may therefore be reliant on external funding bids to meet costs.

6.1.2 Whilst the recommendation is to explore the integration between the NHS EMIS and Council systems (Recommendation 7) if it was ultimately determined that it should proceed then there will be cost implications which would need to be addressed. These could potentially be met through reduced administration costs arising from the integration.

6.2 Legal

6.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations made in this report.

6.2.2 However the Council's statutory obligations, in particular data protection, should be adhered to in the event that the recommendations are adopted.

Channel Shift Scrutiny Action Plan

Recommendation	Cabinet Member's Comments	Rec Accepted by Executive?	Target Date for Action	Lead Officer	Committee Update	Notes
Recommendation One That the Executive give consideration to identifying a brand name for Channel Shift that the public can clearly identify with.						

Recommendation	Cabinet Member's Comments	Rec Accepted by Executive?	Target Date for Action	Lead Officer	Committee Update	Notes
<p>Recommendation Two</p> <p>Visibility of Services and Community Groups:</p> <p>a) That the Executive give consideration to introducing a list of “approved” community groups, working to recognise operating and governance best practice. This should be accessible via the Council website or partner organisations.</p> <p>b) That the FYI Directory take a proactive approach to ensuring Groups’ records are up-to-date. It is suggested that to facilitate this a six monthly email confirming the details are correct should be sent out, if three of these emails be ignored then the page be removed.</p>						

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<p>Recommendation Three</p> <p>Digital Blackpool:</p> <p>a) That the Review Panel supports the expansion of Digital Blackpool across Blackpool.</p> <p>b) That the Executive investigate how the Council's libraries can be promoted as a place for individuals who have poor digital skills to be digitally empowered including using Digital Blackpool via the Library App and to train residents to use the libraries to access newspapers and magazines.</p>						

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<p>Recommendation Four</p> <p>That the Council's website be reviewed as follows:</p> <p>a) That links to the Council's Wholly-Owned Companies be added to the website's homepage to create a "one-council" ethos, making the relationship between the Council and companies clear.</p> <p>b) That consideration be given to having links next to Council services' information on the website, e.g. Waste, with "you may be interested in" ways to get involved.</p> <p>c) That an online pathway be developed for residents to suggest ideas on improving a service.</p>						

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<p>d) That once a brand name has been created, it is recommended that the media strategy under the new brand should regularly showcase services achievements in respect of Channel Shift with details of before and after of completed projects, to demonstrate the how a project makes a differences to residents.</p> <p>e) A review to overhaul the Blackpool Parks webpage be undertaken to ensure that information is up-to-date and interactive with ways for people to "Get Involved" with an approved Park Community Group being promoted on each Park page where applicable.</p>						

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<p>Recommendation Five</p> <p>That Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd be requested to consider:</p> <p>a) That the online booking of community centres operated by BCH be promoted to improve access for community groups and third sector organisations and that BCH promote the activity at each centre via their website to cross promote and also show clear commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility.</p> <p>b.) That BCH staff working with residents with ASB adopt a holistic approach working with the resident to link them into community groups and support organisations, recognising that ASB can be part of a larger picture of frustration/need.</p>						

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<p>Recommendation Six</p> <p>The staff suggestion box on the intranet Hub be enhanced to allow the sharing of ideas of best practice rather than purely a form to submit ideas. This would also allow for success stories to be promoted and communicated across Council services.</p>						
<p>Recommendation Seven</p> <p>To explore the potential for integrating the NHS's EMIS system and the Council's systems so that GPs can monitor the progress of individuals referred to the social prescribing programme.</p>						

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<p>Recommendation Eight</p> <p>That the luggage label information service on residents' bins be promoted to council departments as a method of engaging with the community, highlighting that this service can be targeted at certain locations or town wide for a reasonable price.</p>						
<p>Recommendation Nine</p> <p>That the Executive explore the opportunities for residents to get involved, based on the model operated by Vancouver City Council, including the possibility of schemes such as Adopt a Drain, Adopt an alleyway, Become a litter picker and Neighbourhood Clean-up Party.</p>						

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<p>Recommendation Ten</p> <p>In relation to the Staff and Residents Newsletter that the Executive give consideration to:</p> <p>a) That the staff newsletter be expanded to include examples of community engagement success stories. This could also be included with a new section on the staff hub.</p> <p>b) That in addition to the staff newsletter a monthly newsletter for residents be developed to promote "Get Involved" activities.</p>						