

Blackpool Council

9 October 2023

To: Councillors Cartmell, Critchley, Ellison, Flanagan, Galley, B Mitchell, C Mitchell, Roberts, Mrs Scott and S Smith

The above members are requested to attend the:

SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD

Tuesday, 17 October 2023 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room A, Town Hall, Blackpool FY1 1GB

A G E N D A

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

(1) the type of interest concerned either a

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

and

(2) the nature of the interest concerned

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

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 11 JULY 2023 (Pages 1 - 6)

To agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 11 July 2023 as a true and correct record.

3 CHANNEL SHIFT SCRUTINY REVIEW - UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS (Pages 7 - 40)

To consider the updated Channel Shift Scrutiny Review action tracker, identifying areas of good progress and actions still requiring focus.

4 ANNUAL CUSTOMER FEEDBACK REPORT (Pages 41 - 68)

For Scrutiny to consider the Annual Customer Feedback Report covering the period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023.

5 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING AS AT MONTH 4 2023/24 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/25 - 2026/27 (Pages 69 - 140)

To report the level of spending and exposure against the Council's Revenue budgets and reserves and balances for the first 4 months to 31 July 2023. The report also includes an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 – 2026/27.

6 SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD WORKPLAN (Pages 141 - 148)

To confirm the workplan for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year and consider the update to previous Committee recommendations.

7 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To note the date of the next informal Scrutiny Leadership Board as 6 December 2023, commencing at 6.00pm.

Venue information:

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

Other information:

For queries regarding this agenda please contact Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager, Tel: 01253 477213, e-mail sharon.davis@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.

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD MEETING - TUESDAY, 11 JULY 2023

Present:

Councillor Galley (in the Chair)

Councillors

Cartmell
Critchley

Flanagan
B Mitchell

C Mitchell
Scott

S Smith

In Attendance:

Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager

Mark Golden, Head of Accountancy

Ruth Henshaw, Performance Improvement and Project Delivery Lead

Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 8 MARCH 2023

The Board agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2023 be signed by the Chair as a true and correct record.

3 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2022/23

Mr Mark Golden, Head of Accountancy presented the provisional outturn 2022/2023 to the Board. He outlined the key points from the report which had been considered by the Executive on 12 June 2023 noting that the total overspend for 2022/2023 had been £9.754 million with the largest overspends stemming from Growth and Prosperity and Children's Social Care. Further demands had been experienced by Adult Social Care adding to the overspend with an underspend in Treasury Management.

It was noted that collection of Council Tax had grown year on year as had the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, with collection of business rates also improved on the previous year. Mr Golden also referred to the re-instatement of working balances and the issues relating to the signing of the statement of accounts. In relation to single person discount on Council Tax, Members queried the potential for fraud and it was reported that the Council had commenced an exercise to encourage residents to ensure the information they had provided was accurate prior to further action potentially being taken against identified instances of fraud. The issue had already been raised through the Audit Committee.

In relation to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, the Board requested further information with regards to the take-up of the scheme and data regarding the bands utilising it most which Mr Golden agreed to provide following the meeting.

The Board noted the underspend relating to vacant posts in Early Help querying if these

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD MEETING - TUESDAY, 11 JULY 2023

remained vacant and the impact on service provision. In response, Mr Golden advised that the saving was a one-off saving and that posts would be filled and had been filled when possible. It was expected that vacancies would have a short term impact on service provision, however, it was noted that as a percentage of the overall staffing budget, the underspend was not significant. It was agreed that this issue would be raised through the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee.

Members referred to the £812k bad debt provision within the Adult Services budget. Mr Golden noted that the budget must contain a certain percentage of bad debt provision as a contingency for those not paying fees, he advised that the Council did pursue debts to collect.

In relation to the lower than expected parking income, Mr Golden advised that as a percentage of the total budget the amount discussed was not a significant amount. It was noted that the service did benchmark charges against other authorities and that further parking concerns could be explored directly with the Head of Service.

The Board raised concern in relation to the issue of grant payback and the potential implications on the budget for 2023/2024. Mr Golden advised that grants often had conditions attached to how they could be spent and therefore on occasion it was necessary for the Council to payback part or all of a grant should it not meet those conditions. In the previous few years, this issue had been exacerbated by the grants provided during the Covid pandemic.

Members went on to note that it had been agreed that underspends and overspends from the previous financial year had been written off rather than carried forward. This had been agreed due to the current level of risk and volatility and would allow services to be more flexible. Mr Golden advised that some budgets, notably the Children's Services budget had been increased due to increased cost pressures and it would therefore be unachievable for that service and others to balance their budget whilst also incorporating an overspend from the previous year. The risk that writing off overspends in this year would potentially cause services to believe they could continue to overspend in future years without consequence was also raised. Mr Golden advised that it was crucial that overspends were managed down and recurrent underspends were offered up as savings via an embedded one-council culture to ensure value for money and efficient use of resources.

The current high interest rates were noted and the known impact on the budget and mitigations put in place queried. In response, Mr Golden advised that the increased interest rates would increase pressures on the 2023/2024 budget and that the Council did have both short term and long term loans. In a move to mitigate the interest rate increases, a number of short term loans had been fixed and changed to long term borrowing with monthly Treasury Management meetings held to monitor the situation.

The impact of factors such as interest rates outside of the Council's control were noted including increases to staff wages, inflation and a need to deliver statutory services and protect vulnerable people. The upcoming piece of work on asset disposal was also noted.

The Chair requested Mr Golden and the Director of Resources give some consideration to the areas in which scrutiny could add in the most value in regards to finance and ensure

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD MEETING - TUESDAY, 11 JULY 2023

effective consideration and challenge going forward.

The Board agreed to:

Receive further information with regards to the take-up of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and data regarding the bands utilising it most.

4 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY OUTTURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Mr Mark Golden, Head of Accountancy presented the Treasury Management Strategy Outturn for the year ended 31 March 2023 to the Board. He advised that current interest rates were higher than forecast in the budget and that in the previous year there had been an underspend in Treasury Management.

The Board discussed the level of interest currently paid by the Council in each financial year and it was agreed that Mr Golden would provide an overview of the different levels of debt and interest paid over the previous five to 10 years to the Board following the meeting.

In response to questions, Mr Golden advised that the majority of the loans that the Council awarded were on a variable interest basis, that borrowing costs had increased and that the Treasury Management Panel met on a monthly basis in order to monitor concerns relating to loans and interest.

The Board agreed to:

Receive an overview of the different levels of debt and interest paid over the previous five to 10 years to the Board following the meeting.

The Board agreed to note the report.

5 COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT (END OF YEAR 2022/23)

Ms Ruth Henshaw, Performance Improvement and Project Delivery Lead presented the Council Plan Performance Report (End of Year 2022/23) to the Board. It was noted that when the Council Plan was refreshed, the details in the Plan were mapped against potential performance figures and areas to measure. The identified indicators were then considered by the Corporate Leadership Team, Leadership Board and the Scrutiny Leadership Board. During the pandemic a number of indicators had been suspended and changed due to data being collected in different ways and a number of indicators still related to Covid. It was intended that the indicators would be reviewed in the near future and amended accordingly.

She highlighted a number of issues relating to Priority 1: The Economy including the difficulty in collecting data relating to car park usage and jobs created/safeguarded from regeneration projects. In relation to Priority 2: data recorded in relation to the number of looked after children, education plans and health outcomes were highlighted. It was reported that the number of indicators relating to Adult Services was currently low due to those suspended during the pandemic and not yet re-introduced and a key aim of the refresh would be to strengthen indicators in this area.

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD MEETING - TUESDAY, 11 JULY 2023

Members raised youth justice as a key area not included within the current indicators and requested it be considered going forward. Also discussed was the reduction in the number of looked after children and the sustainability of the reduction with the high cost of residential placements of key concern.

Further information was requested relating to the reduction in referrals to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services and the Child and Adolescent Support and Help Enhanced Response Team and it was agreed this would be provided following the meeting.

The Board discussed the way in which the Council Plan Performance Data was presented and agreed that in future it be subdivided into the remits of the four scrutiny committees for consideration by those Committees. It was noted that this would ensure service managers were present to answer questions on performance and that data could be cross-checked with the narrative being presented to the Committees.

6 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - VISION FOR SCRUTINY

The Leader of the Council provided an overview of her vision for Scrutiny at the invitation of the Scrutiny Lead Member. She highlighted the improvements that had been made to date and key areas of potential focus such as increased public engagement and the potential to seek input from experts on subject areas.

7 MEETING FEEDBACK FROM CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS

The Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees were invited to provide an overview of the first cycle of Committee meetings held in June and July 2023. Each Chair/Vice Chair provided detail of the items presented to the Committee meetings, the types of questions asked and their perceived areas of improvement from the initial meetings. It was noted that each Committee had an upcoming workshop to consider its workplan for the remainder of the Municipal Year. The Scrutiny Lead Member queried the input of senior officers into the workplan for each Committee and requested thought be given by all to the content.

It was noted that each Committee had varied with different strengths and weaknesses identified for future focus.

8 SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD WORKPLAN

The Scrutiny Leadership Board considered and noted its workplan for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

9 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Board noted the date and time of the next meeting as the informal meeting on Tuesday 12 September 2023, commencing at 6.00pm.

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD MEETING - TUESDAY, 11 JULY 2023

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.00 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager

Tel: 01253 477213

E-mail: sharon.davis@blackpool.gov.uk

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| Report to: | SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD |
| Relevant Officer: | Philip Welsh, Head of Tourism and Communications |
| Date of Meeting: | 17 October 2023 |

CHANNEL SHIFT SCRUTINY REVIEW - UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To consider the updated Channel Shift Scrutiny Review action tracker, identifying areas of good progress or actions still requiring focus.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To challenge progress made on the recommendations and identify any areas of concern.
- 2.2 To consider if any of the recommendations can be signed off as completed.
- 2.3 To determine when next to review progress on the remaining outstanding recommendations.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 To ensure the recommendations of the review are implemented.
- 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:

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 Channel Shift Scrutiny Review was approved by the Executive and it was agreed that a deadline for the implementation of the recommendations would be September 2023. This report to demonstrates the progress that has been made to date to allow the Board to identify any areas of concern and sign off any actions as completed.

6.2 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

Appendix 3(a): Channel Shift Action Tracker
 Appendix 3(b): Digital Blackpool final report August 2023
 Appendix 3(c): Digital Blackpool Single User Case Study
 Appendix 3(d): Digital Blackpool Family Case Study
 Appendix 3(e): Help Getting on Line

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None associated with report.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None associated with report.

11.0 Equalities and Children and Young People's considerations:

11.1 None associated with report.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None directly from this report.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

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Channel Shift Scrutiny Action Plan

| Recommendation | Cabinet Member's Comments | Rec Accepted by Executive? | Target Date for Action | Lead Officer | Committee Update | Update on implementation of recommendation – 8 March 2023 | Most recent updates – provided September/October 2023 |
|---|--|----------------------------|--|---|------------------|---|---|
| <p>Recommendation One</p> <p>That the Executive give consideration to identifying a brand name for Channel Shift that the public can clearly identify with.</p> | <p>The importance of Channel Shift has been recognised and presents a real opportunity for all Council services going forward. The identification of an over-arching name for the process should also reflect that Channel Shift should be about making services more accessible and not just how they are accessed.</p> | Yes | September 2023 Update to Scrutiny Leadership Board | Philip Welsh | September 2023 | <p>For some time, we have promoted channel shift campaigns using the strapline “Don’t waste time, report it online”, “Don’t waste time, do it online” and “Don’t waste time, sign up online” This is to encourage residents to carry out tasks such as paying Council Tax and reporting fly-tipping online.</p> <p>A single sign-on enabling users to access an account through which to conduct Council tasks is being developed by ICT. This would be supported by an over-arching brand and strategy.</p> | No further update. |
| <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 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>Consideration should also be given to how we make groups accessible to residents. As well as how we ensure work is community led.</p> | Yes | September 2023 Update to Scrutiny Leadership Board | <p>Chloe Pieri (Kate Aldridge)</p> <p>Kim Wood (2b)</p> | September 2023 | <p>a/ There is an active community group which has developed and has participants from small medium and large community and third sector partners. Work is ongoing with this group to share key information, developments, funding and delivery opportunities and best practice. Consideration for a “group led” approach to endorsing and promoting the good work of groups is part of this work. All groups have been encouraged to be transparent about their status – i.e. whether they are a formally constituted group, a registered charity, key members and contact details.</p> <p>b/ FYI directory and it’s support/ management is subject to regular review, participants are contacted for updated information and as resource allows, more work will be done with the community group on the use of FYI.</p> | <p>Through the Shared Prosperity Fund fund there has been some capacity generating work undertaken led by the Volunteer Centre. This includes “meet the funder”, a training offer and some community grants.</p> <p>2(b) is in place, actioned and ongoing.</p> |

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| | | | | | | <p>A recent example of this working well is the #blackpooltogether campaign which highlights the vast array of support available for residents from the range of community providers working across Blackpool to support them with cost of living pressures. We have 35 “warm hubs” with information on FYIs dedicated Cost of Living area offering various activities and opportunities across the town from a huge variety of community and third sector providers. A Freephone helpline is also supported by a partnership of third sector providers to support people who might not be able to access information online.</p> | |
| <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> | <p>Although this recommendation is welcome consideration needs to be given to how we link people to libraries, especially those in areas not physically close to one.</p> <p>Opportunities to achieve this by linking access to libraries with public transport also exist.</p> | Yes | September 2023 Update to Scrutiny Leadership Board | Chloe Pieri (Kate Aldridge) Peter Legg | September 2023 | <p>See attached report on digital Blackpool.</p> <p>Groundwork managing Digital Blackpool Project – laptops/routers are loaned via the library since late 2021. 65 laptops/20 routers available. At the moment these are being distributed to residents by Groundwork according to the project eligibility criteria (18+ Blackpool resident.) Performance report available via Groundwork. Contract has been extended to Aug 2023.</p> <p>Library Service currently has 99 public access computer terminals and BYOD Wifi at all library sites and digital drop in advice sessions/’one off’ taster courses with ACFL.</p> <p>Library staff have completed Libraries Connected Digital Skills e-</p> | <p>See attached report on digital Blackpool dated August 2023.</p> <p>The contract with Groundwork came to an end on 31st Aug 23. Devices and connectivity can still be accessed via the library system however collection and drop off is no longer provided which was part of the projects ability to reach those most excluded.</p> <p>There is a need for longer term funding in order to maintain the service. There is an ongoing conversation surrounding partnering with the NHS to expand the service with plans to apply for some external funding to cover the project in the short term. There are also conversations about reinstating digital volunteers within the library service to provide more 121 help previously covered by Groundworks.</p> |

| Recommendation | Cabinet Member's Comments | Rec Accepted by Executive? | Target Date for Action | Lead Officer | Committee Update | Update on implementation of recommendation – 8 March 2023 | Most recent updates – provided September/October 2023 |
|--|--|----------------------------|--|---|------------------|--|--|
| | | | | | | <p>learning course to increase their own skills to support residents' digital skills/promotion of e-books and e-audio.</p> <p>Recent Library Management System/Server upgrades will enable access to Library Management System off site (eg. being able to join new library users at events.) When comparing January 2022 with January 2023 there has been a 6% increase in the number of eBook issues and a 17% increase in eMagazine issues.</p> | |
| <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> | <p>Conversations with officers have already begun on creating a webpage for the Council's Wholly-Owned Companies, and the work they undertaken in fulfilling the council's priorities is considered vital to future prosperity.</p> <p>The development of a Communications Plan is also underway and it is foreseen that this will address some of the issues raised.</p> <p>It is also accepted that more can be done to highlight the good work being undertaken in Blackpool's Parks.</p> | Yes | September 2023 Update to Scrutiny Leadership Board | Philip Welsh (5d) and Lisa Arnold (5e). | September 2023 | <p>a) A webpage has been developed with details of all the Council's Wholly-Owned Companies including links to their websites. A review is currently under way of the existing homepage which, once implemented, would see the companies listed.</p> <p>b) On relevant pages there is an "additional information" panel where links can be added to community groups.</p> <p>c) In the header and footer of every webpage there is a link to the Contact Us page This has details of how to give compliments, comments and complaints.</p> | a) During the summer a new-look blackpool.gov home page was launched with a link to the companies. |

| Recommendation | Cabinet Member's Comments | Rec Accepted by Executive? | Target Date for Action | Lead Officer | Committee Update | Update on implementation of recommendation – 8 March 2023 | Most recent updates – provided September/October 2023 |
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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> | | Yes | | | | <p>d) Work on engaging residents and encouraging them to interact online is continuing in parallel to the development of any potential new brand concept. We will continue to develop this work stream pointing out the benefits of accessing services in this way. We will continue to monitor results.</p> <p>e) A review has taken place and a new design developed for the Parks webpages. New content is currently being added and it is expected that the new web pages will go live in March 2023.</p> | <p>e) The new Blackpool Parks webpages are now live and information updated by the service.</p> |

| Recommendation | Cabinet Member's Comments | Rec Accepted by Executive? | Target Date for Action | Lead Officer | Committee Update | Update on implementation of recommendation – 8 March 2023 | Most recent updates – provided September/October 2023 |
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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> | Agreed | Yes | September 2023 Update to Scrutiny Leadership Board | John Donnellon (BCH) | September 2023 | <p>a) An online booking system is being developed which will increase the convenience and ease of booking for groups using community centres, and is expected to be ready for use in the summer. This will be promoted on our website and on our social media channels when it goes live.</p> <p>b) Cases of ASB need to be dealt with in line with best practice and recommendations from the Regulator and the Ombudsman. Where appropriate we do signpost to support organisations, and offer mediation if it will help. Other services in BCH, in particular the Activities Co-ordinator, promote opportunities for involvement including at our community centres. This role which was time limited has been made permanent because of the clear benefits it has demonstrated in reducing social isolation, increasing customer wellbeing and promoting cohesive communities.</p> | <p>a) The online booking system has been developed and is being tested to ensure it works correctly. We envisage it will be live by the end of October.</p> |

| Recommendation | Cabinet Member's Comments | Rec Accepted by Executive? | Target Date for Action | Lead Officer | Committee Update | Update on implementation of recommendation – 8 March 2023 | Most recent updates – provided September/October 2023 |
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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> | Agreed | Yes | September 2023 Update to Scrutiny Leadership Board | Philip Welsh | September 2023 | <p>While the scrutiny was being undertaken a new intranet was designed and implemented. This allows staff to comment and “like” posts. This has led to more engagement and a result an increased amount of staff submitting good news stories.</p> <p>Stories highlighting staff success are the most popular. Each month a list of corporate compliments is posted along with any positive comments made by members at full council.</p> <p>An online Q&A is held with the Chief Executive and Leader on an annual basis where questions, suggestions and issues are raised. It is expected that the annual staff conference will return in 2023 which gives a wide range of services the opportunity to share best practice.</p> | The next staff conference is being planned for the first half of 2024 (date to be confirmed). |
| <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> | Agreed | Yes | September 2023 Update to Scrutiny Leadership Board | Kate Aldridge | September 2023 | | |

| Recommendation | Cabinet Member's Comments | Rec Accepted by Executive? | Target Date for Action | Lead Officer | Committee Update | Update on implementation of recommendation – 8 March 2023 | Most recent updates – provided September/October 2023 |
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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>Agreed</p> | <p>Yes</p> | <p>September 2023 Update to Scrutiny Leadership Board</p> | <p>John-Paul Lovie</p> | <p>September 2023</p> | <p>Feb 23 – Liaised with Comms regarding this. We are trying to look at sourcing a more cost effective supplier as the cost of tags can be quite prohibitive. Once this is resolved we will look to publish on the Hub and promote inter-departmentally.</p> | <p>There is no further progress on this unfortunately. The 'luggage style' bin tag is a specialist print job and still coming in prohibitively expensive which is why we only tend to use them for communicating changes to Christmas collections (if required). We did do a blanket roll out of bin tags during the pandemic to communicate the Corona Kindness Campaign but that was fully funded.</p> <p>It is something that the Council, ENVECO and our Comms Team are acutely aware of in terms of sourcing a sustainable supplier and will make this accessible to council departments if/when this comes to fruition.</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> | <p>A pilot of a project on improving alleyways is planned for later in 2022 which will focus on enforcement and street cleansing in problem areas and look at how they can be improved.</p> <p>Helping people to have pride in their local area is also recognised as important.</p> | <p>Yes</p> | <p>September 2023 Update to Scrutiny Leadership Board</p> | <p>Chloe Pieri (Kate Aldridge)</p> | <p>September 2023</p> | | <p>Adopt an Alleyway had been progressing however was on pause due to Covid-19. This hasn't been revisited since due to reduced capacity. It remains an active idea.</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> | Getting residents more involved is positive for Blackpool. | Yes | September 2023 Update to Scrutiny Leadership Board | Philip Welsh | September 2023 | <p>a) Community initiatives are regularly included within the Employee newsletter and on the intranet including success stories and social value impacts.</p> <p>b) An e-newsletter goes out each month to 33,000 residents with news of Council initiatives and, where applicable, promotes ways in which residents can get involved</p> | No further update. |

Digital Blackpool

Final Service Use and Impact Report – **August 2023**

Adam Beardow – Digital Inclusion Officer

Service use and access statistics

From 17/11/2021 to 30/08/2023

Total number of six week loans: **345** (*Includes extensions*)

Number of unique users: **98 users**

(Unique individuals accessing service regardless of loan length)

Extension requests: **78 users**

(Unique individuals requesting extensions past the initial 6 week period)

Number of six week extensions: **268**

Number of completed service uses: **69** (*Number of loans completed*)

Number of active loans: **33** (*on 30/08/23*)

Area distribution

FY1 – 45 users

- FY1 1 – 1 users
- FY1 2 – 11 users
- FY1 3 – 4 users
- FY1 4 – 12 users
- FY1 5 – 7 users
- FY1 6 – 10 users

FY2 – 12 users

- FY2 0 – 7 users
- FY2 9 – 5 users

FY3 – 20 users

- FY3 7 – 15 users
- FY3 8 – 3 users
- FY3 9 – 2 user

FY4 – 21 users

- FY4 1 – 2 user
- FY4 2 – 3 user
- FY4 3 – 3 users
- FY4 4 – 12 users
- FY4 5 – 1 user

Equipment and digital connectivity

Number of mobile router requests: **40**

Number of users with existing internet access: **58**

Number of users with mobile phone numbers: **92**

Number of users with pre-existing email accounts: **90**

Number of users with pre-existing Google accounts: **70**

Referral pathways

Most successful referral pathways: Libraries, Groundwork

Impact on wellbeing and mental health

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) is a scale of positively worded items for assessing a population's mental wellbeing.

Two WEMWBS forms are completed per service user – one is completed on delivery, and a second at the end of the loan. The initial WEMWBS is scored to a total of 35 points over 7 questions. The second WEMWBS is scored to a total of 70 points over 14 questions. In the below statistics, the figures have been compared on a 7 question basis.

To date we've had **39** completed pairs of questionnaires.

76.32% of users have reported an increase in wellbeing after accessing the service. We've seen a mean increase of **6.17** points out of a total of 35.

The questions on the WEMWBS and the mean point improvement reported:

“I've been feeling optimistic about the future”

22 users reported an increase / mean improvement of **1.182** points

“I've been feeling useful”

20 users reported an increase / mean improvement of **1.4** points

“I’ve been feeling relaxed”

27 users reported an increase / mean improvement of **1.519** points

“I’ve been dealing with problems well”

19 users reported an increase / mean improvement of **1.632** points

“I’ve been thinking clearly”

16 users reported an increase / mean improvement of **1.813** points

“I’ve been feeling close to other people”

21 users reported an increase / mean improvement of **1.429** points

“I’ve been able to make up my own mind about things”

13 users reported an increase / mean improvement of **1.462** points

Use of equipment

The most common use of the equipment includes:

- Online courses
- Job searching
- Entertainment
- Skill development

User feedback

“We both now have full time work starting at the end of the month thanks to the use of the laptops”

“I really appreciate you helping us out like this, it means a lot to myself and my family. You really are a superstar”

“I’ve been keen to start my mental health course but unfortunately isn’t doable on my phone only a laptop so this would be a fantastic support for me.”

“I’m applying as my daughter is home with a broken elbow and she needs access to her homework and what a brilliant service you provide for the community.”

“Laptop is great and I am so grateful to have something to use. I was wondering what is the chance of extending the loan? I had my phone stolen and smashed and the laptop is my only life line. I have a meeting with social services online in the next few weeks and no other way of attending.”

“I use a computer but my feet are swelling up. My doctor says I must put my feet up so I am wondering if I can borrow a laptop for a while to see if I can use it from my armchair with my feet elevated.”

“I currently use Revue Library on a daily basis to do my job search, keep in contact with family and check my emails. I’ve seen a flyer for this scheme and really would like to be considered as I spend a lot of time at the local library and the days it’s shut I have to travel, so would really benefit from it.”

“This would really help me as I am currently living in supported accommodation and I have started up my own artwork page, so I would like a more practical way of working on that, instead of just trying to do it all on my phone.”

Post-access progression

After completion of the loan, 3 users have confirmed the purchase of their own digital equipment. 2 users have signed up for home internet packages. 5 further users have stated that they will be purchasing a Chromebook in the future.

18 users have commented that access to the equipment had improved the ease of job searching.

15 further users have commented that access to the equipment had improved the ease of attending online courses. 12 users stated that it wasn’t possible for them to complete their online course without access to a laptop or PC.

Marketing

The Digital Blackpool project has been marketed both digitally and in print format. Digitally, the project has been promoted via email newsletters, on Facebook, on both Blackpool Council and Groundwork websites, and through referral partners.

The project has had two printed flyer designs; an initial design advertising the 3 week loan period, and an updated design advertising the 6 week loan period. These were distributed in local libraries, community hubs, medical centres, job centres and leisure facilities.

Since then, Pride of Place have worked with the project to create additional flyers which advertise the Digital Blackpool project, as well as the Lloyds TSB digital helpline which is now available.

Print marketing seems to be the most effective strategy at reaching the target audience, and an uptake in referrals has been noticed since the distribution of the updated flyers.

Training and skill development

Adam Beardow (Digital Blackpool) and Chantelle Barrot (Pride of Place) attended the Blackpool Community Housing and Blackpool Football Club warm hubs to deliver in-person digital training and support over a six week period from February 2023 – March 2023.

Summary of performance

The Digital Blackpool project had a slow initial uptake in late 2021, early 2022. The extension of the loan period to six weeks has drastically improved the uptake, with promotion of the project in April having a noticeable impact on numbers.

Evaluation of the figures suggests that, initially, the scope of the project was too narrow, with eligibility being limited to Covid 19 isolation referrals. Uptake improved with the expansion to include low-level mental health referrals, though only slightly.

As the scope of the project has expanded to include all residents, and the loan period increased to 6 weeks, the number of users has been steadily increasing.

The library system has seen an increased number of new users, due to previously unregistered residents accessing the program. Several residents who were previously unaware of the digital services available at the library are now aware and using these services.

Connections and rapport between local services and both Groundwork and Blackpool Council has improved as a result of the project.

At the end of May 2022, March 2023 and June 2023, mobile routers were out of stock due to demand.

Of the 60 completed loans, 11 users did not return their equipment.

Changes to the service

Groundwork's involvement in the Digital Blackpool project will cease on 31st August 2023. This will change how the service is delivered:

- Delivery and collection will no longer be available.
- Users will be required to return equipment to Blackpool libraries.
- Setup, cleaning and maintenance of equipment will be handled by Council IT department.
- Troubleshooting of faulty equipment will be managed by Blackpool libraries and Council IT staff.
- Relationship management will be handled by stakeholders.
- User management will be handled by Blackpool libraries.

Opportunities to improve

- Due to the repurposed nature of the equipment, it's important to regularly assess the health of the devices. Many of the batteries are end-of-life and struggle to hold a charge. This results in unpredictable battery life and issues with charging. I would recommend a battery health test every 18 weeks to ensure that equipment is functional and in acceptable condition.
- We do not currently provide project documentation in accessible formats or alternative languages. We also do not provide documentation in large print format. If possible, a library of documentation should be created in accessible formats.
- We do not offer the option to purchase equipment after loan periods. While digital inclusion is improved for the loan period, many users require long-term access to equipment. Existing and new partnerships should be explored to offer permanent solutions to digital exclusion.
- Training in IT skills and basic troubleshooting is currently in low availability in the area. Relationships should be built with training providers to ensure that basic IT courses are available frequently for service users, and that the training providers are able to work with the Chromium OS that is utilised by Digital Blackpool.

Notes for future delivery

- It is paramount that marketing of the service continues in the library service, as this is the highest source of referrals. Flyers will have to be redesigned with new contact details and information, printed, and distributed throughout the libraries. Roller banners are recommended.
- It will be necessary to accept return of equipment in all Blackpool libraries. Systems should be put in place to ensure that all equipment is returned to stock on a regular basis.
- It may be necessary to offer the equipment loans from all Blackpool library locations. Stock will have to be distributed to all libraries with sufficient, safe storage.

- Equipment continues to default to a US keyboard layout. This has to be changed manually prior to delivery. Users logging in to their own Google account may also default to a US keyboard layout. This must be addressed before delivery via the libraries, as users are often not able to change this themselves without instruction.
- The renewal of equipment loans is likely to require amendment. Currently, users are permitted to renew equipment indefinitely, stock permitting. This may have to be limited to a total of 18 weeks.
- Equipment being returned must be inspected to ensure all parts are present, e.g. laptop, charger, mobile WiFi equipment with charger and plug.
- Demand for equipment is currently on par with stock, though it is expected to exceed stock. I would suggest a further 20 laptops are added to stock to allow for demand, with a further 10 laptops made available as replacement units for damage/faults. In addition to the above, at least 10 chargers should also be made available, as these have proven to be unreliable.
- Considerations must be made for users who are house-bound and will not be able to access the library. Existing partnerships should be explored to act as a referral and delivery route for these individuals.
- Library staff will need to be trained in basic use and troubleshooting of the Digital Blackpool equipment.
- Existing referral pathways will need to be notified in the change of service delivery.
- Laptops should leave Council IT bundled with chargers. The laptops should be **thoroughly** cleaned before being added into stock. Libraries may need suitable cleaning equipment (e.g. isopropyl alcohol) and PPE to clean returned equipment.
- The relationship with the Council and Ian Clough at 6Gi should be strengthened, ensuring that they support in delivery of the “Internet for Everyone” service. This will benefit Digital Blackpool by reducing the cost of supplying mobile routers.

- Blackpool library staff must receive two up-to-date contact methods from service users to ensure that they are contactable.
- Library staff will be responsible for monitoring return dates for equipment, and must contact Council IT to request deactivation of non-returns. It may be necessary to catalogue equipment serial numbers, IMEI numbers etc.
- It may be necessary to explore direct-to-equipment notification or messaging, including warnings of loan expiry.
- The Digital Blackpool project has an opportunity to set a Minimum Digital Living Standard in Lancashire.

Final Notes (30/08/23)

The available stock in Central Library consists of:

7 Laptops

7 Tablets

4 Mobile Routers

There are **33** ongoing loans.

21 users have been in touch to confirm that they will return equipment to the library.

12 users have not responded to contact (call, text and email). These users have been passed to the IT team for deactivation of equipment.

Faulty devices have been returned to Bickerstaff, C/O Lucy Warburton.

The total stock (active loans and available) stands at:

47 Laptops

19 Mobile Routers

Digital Blackpool Case Study

We would like to capture and share participant's stories as case studies to help us reach and support more people, and to share with the programme's stakeholders. Please give as much detail as possible.

| | | |
|--|--------------|----------------------------|
| Participant name | Single User | Photo (if possible) |
| Participant age | 90 | |
| District of Blackpool participant lives in | Layton | |
| Staff name | Adam Beardow | |
| Background: (Brief history of participant before engaging with the project. How long out of work? Other barriers, e.g. ill health, caring responsibilities, learning difficulties, homelessness, redundancy, cultural/social issues?) | | |
| <p>I have use of a computer but my feet are swelling up. My doctor says I must put my feet up so I contacted Adam to see if I could borrow a laptop for a while to see if I could use it from my armchair with my feet elevated.</p> <p>As I have arthritic fingers, I also needed a keyboard that has prominent keys, not the flat, black, hard-to-see kind.</p> | | |
| Engagement: (How participant found out about the project?) | | |
| My daughter found a flyer in the GP surgery and told me about the project. | | |
| Testimonial: (What does participant think about project? How has it made a difference to them?) | | |
| <p>It's absolutely fantastic. It took me a while to get used to the laptop, but Adam kindly extended my loan and now I'm feeling more confident with it.</p> <p>I don't do much online, but I check my emails and browse the internet. I have family and friends across the pond and it means that I can stay in touch with them.</p> <p>Adam is a really friendly and helpful chap. He helped my daughter and I get set up with the new laptop arrangement and I can now sit in my chair with my feet up and still use the computer.</p> <p>My poor, very old computer has been taken away now to try and be revived and the laptop is the only thing that saves my sanity. I'd be lost without it.</p> | | |

Groundwork produces a range of communications resources to promote our programmes. We like to share the experiences of real people who are using our services in our communications as it helps to demonstrate the difference our work is making. By completing this form, you give us and our partners permission to use your story in our communications. Thank you for your help.

I consent to my story used for:

(Please tick to agree)

Presentations: Internal and external presentations

Online media: websites and social media pages and news sites (e.g. Twitter, Facebook)

Publications: leaflets, posters, newsletters, reports and other marketing materials;
National, regional and local papers; magazines

Television and radio: National and regional television; national, regional and local radio

Can I remain anonymous?

You can choose to have your real name published with your story or remain anonymous (in which case, we will use a false name). Please tick one of the following options:

I AM happy for my real first name to be used OR I do NOT want my real name to be used

Please tick this box if you do NOT want to be featured in imagery or video footage
Please let us know if there are any ways in which you do NOT wish to be represented or described:

I am happy to give my permission

Please sign this form to show you are happy to give permission for your story to be used to promote the Digital Blackpool programme.

Signature

Page 30

Date 08/12/22

If you are under 18, we need written permission from a parent, guardian or responsible adult:

**Signature of
Parent/guardi
an**

Date

Data protection: The information that you provide here will only be used to contact you about sharing your story in our communications work. We will not pass the details recorded on this form on to any other organisation without your permission.

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Digital Blackpool Case Study

We would like to capture and share participant's stories as case studies to help us reach and support more people, and to share with the programme's stakeholders. Please give as much detail as possible.

| | | |
|--|--------------|----------------------------|
| Participant name | Family | Photo (if possible) |
| Participant age | | |
| District of Blackpool participant lives in | Blackpool | |
| Staff name | Adam Beardow | |
| Background: (Brief history of participant before engaging with the project. How long out of work? Other barriers, e.g. ill health, caring responsibilities, learning difficulties, homelessness, redundancy, cultural/social issues?) | | |
| We have two children and don't currently own a laptop or have an internet contract. We have smartphones but were struggling to do everything we need on them like applying for jobs and using government websites. | | |
| Engagement: (How participant found out about the project?) | | |
| At the library. | | |
| Testimonial: (What does participant think about project? How has it made a difference to them?) | | |
| The gentleman that runs the scheme was very helpful and friendly and provides an amazing opportunity for people that are in need of internet access at home. | | |
| It benefited not just me but my children with doing their revision/homework from home. My eldest daughter is sitting her mock exams at the minute and it has really helped. | | |
| We're using the internet a lot more as a household as it's so much easier now. We've been searching for jobs, online banking and using council services without having to go to the library where there's no privacy. | | |
| I really appreciate you helping us out like this, it means a lot to myself and my family. | | |

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Signature Page 34

Date 12/12/22

If you are under 18, we need written permission from a parent, guardian or responsible adult:

**Signature of
Parent/guardi
an**

Date

Data protection: The information that you provide here will only be used to contact you about sharing your story in our communications work. We will not pass the details recorded on this form on to any other organisation without your permission.

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HELP GETTING ONLINE?

We'll help you get the tech and the digital skills – for free!

**LOAN
A LAPTOP!**



LAPTOP

If you're a Blackpool resident aged 18+ you could borrow a laptop from our Digital Blackpool program for up to 6 weeks! Whether you're job hunting or doing an online course, you can borrow the equipment needed to get online at home.

INTERNET

Got a device but no internet? We can help with that too, by providing an internet router for the 6 week loan period.

DIGITAL SKILLS

Just want a bit of support? We have written guides in place and a member of staff available to answer any questions. Blackpool Adult, Community & Family learning also offer a range of courses to improve digital skills.

To find out more pop into your local library

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To find out more pop into your local library

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| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Report to: | SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD |
| Relevant Officer: | Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships |
| Date of Meeting | 17 October 2023 |

ANNUAL CUSTOMER FEEDBACK REPORT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 For Scrutiny to consider the Annual Customer Feedback Report covering the period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 Scrutinise the content of the report and highlight any areas for further consideration.

To consider the performance of the Council in dealing with customer feedback and suggest areas for further discussion or scrutiny.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure constructive and robust scrutiny of the report.

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? No

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 N/A

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

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

6.0 Background information

6.1 Information on recorded customer feedback received by the Council is reported to CLT and the Scrutiny Leadership Board on an annual basis.

6.2 The report includes a breakdown of the comments, compliments and complaints received by the Council between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. It summarises the Council's performance in dealing with complaints, explores the themes within customer feedback, and includes an overview of complaints made to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

6.3 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 4(a): Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022/23

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None

11.0 Equalities and Children and Young People's considerations:

11.1 None

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 N/A

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None

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Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

Blackpool Council



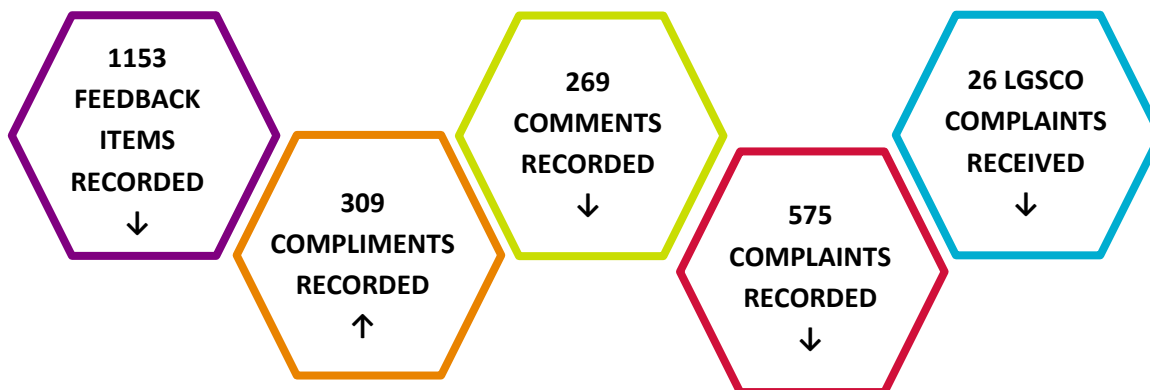
Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022/23

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. KEY HEADLINES 2022-23..... | 3 |
| 2. COMPLIMENTS..... | 4 |
| 3. COMMENTS | 6 |
| 4. COMPLAINTS..... | 9 |
| 4.1 Types of Complaint | 9 |
| 4.2 Directorates and Service Areas | 10 |
| 4.3 Complaint Themes | 11 |
| 4.4 Response Timescales | 12 |
| 4.5 Outcomes | 13 |
| 4.6 Lessons Learned | 14 |
| 5. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) | 15 |
| 5.1 Complaints Received by the LGSCO | 15 |
| 5.2 Decisions made by the LGSCO | 16 |
| 5.3 Compliance and Remedy | 17 |
| 5.4 Public Reports | 17 |
| 6. Looking Forward | 18 |
| APPENDIX A – BREAKDOWN OF COMPLAINTS RECORDED* BY SERVICE AREA | 20 |
| APPENDIX B – LGSCO Further Exploration..... | 22 |
| APPENDIX C – LGSCO Service Improvements | 23 |
| Document Control | 24 |
| Approved By: | 24 |

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

1. KEY HEADLINES 2022-23



There has been a 6% increase in compliments recorded compared with 2021/22

The directorate with the highest proportion of compliments recorded is Adult Services (44%)

There has been a 26% decrease in complaints recorded compared with 2021/22*

The directorate with the highest proportion of complaints is Community and Environmental Services (25%)

56% of the complaints, which have been fully considered, have met the allocated timescale

39% of complaints, which have been fully considered, were upheld or partially upheld in some element

72% of the complaints investigated relate four key themes: Lack of Action (20%); Staff Conduct / Treatment of Customer (19%); Council Action (17%); Quality of Service (16%)

The number of complaints received by the LGSCO has decreased compared with 2021/22. 6 of the 26 complaints received progressed to the Ombudsman's formal investigation stage (21%) All 6 complaints formally investigated by the LGSCO were upheld (100%)

*Prior to this year, annual feedback figures included Blackpool Waste Services (Alley Gates, Street Cleansing, Waster Services and Parks and Open Spaces) – this should be considered when comparing the 2022/23 figures to the previous years.

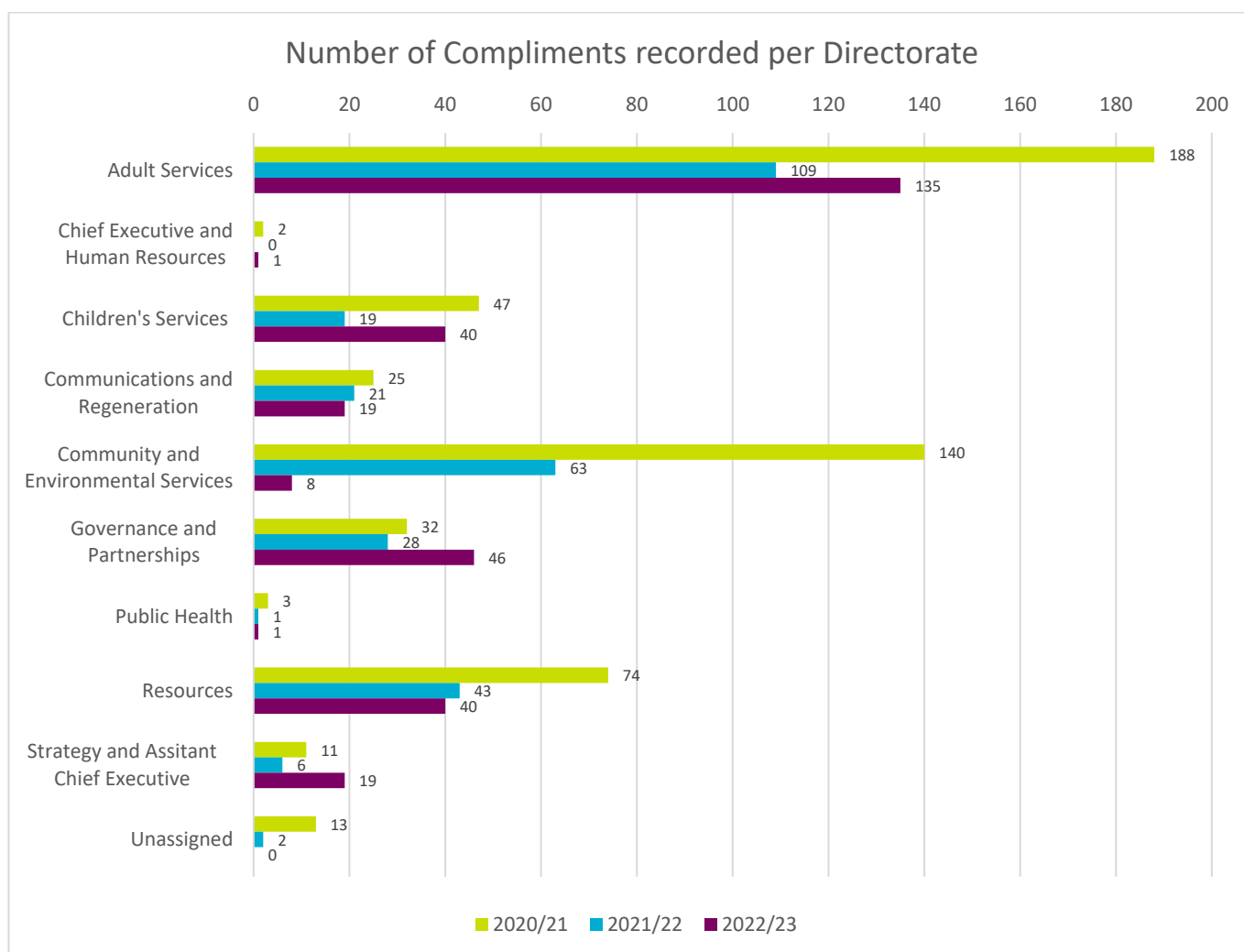
NB: The 2022/23 data in this report does not include feedback received for Blackpool Waste Services, Blackpool Coastal Housing and any other external organisations which have a separate procedure for handling customer feedback.

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

2. COMPLIMENTS

309 compliments were recorded in 2022/23. This is a 6% increase compared to 2021/22, which prior to this year also included Blackpool Waste Services compliment figures.

The graph below shows a breakdown of the compliments recorded by directorate:



**Unassigned = Feedback that cannot be allocated to a specific service – this could be general feedback about Blackpool or feedback covering a number of service areas.*

Individuals and teams that are mentioned in recorded compliments are highlighted in a monthly news item on the Council’s intranet ‘the Hub’. We hope to provide recognition to staff for all their hard work and dedication and raise awareness on the importance of logging all customer feedback.

Feedback for Adult and Children’s Services is coordinated by the Customer Relations Team, who ensure that positive feedback from service users is captured and reported on a regular basis. Combine this with the nature of the services provided and the size and nature of the work of the department and this inevitably leads to a

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

higher number of compliments recorded. It must however be noted that front line services also bear the brunt of many complaints received.

The lower level of compliments for other departments is not necessarily representative of poor quality service in these areas. Some departments carry out a higher proportion of back office duties, which can often result in less interaction with the public and therefore less opportunity to receive external feedback. Services are encouraged to report internal positive feedback, as well as compliments from service users.

Certain teams remain particularly good at recording compliments received; however, there are services that rarely pass on compliment data for reporting purposes. The reported figures may therefore not be a true reflection of compliments received by Council services and can only show the number of compliments which are officially recorded.

Below is a very small selection [*randomly selected*] of the many compliments received during this period:

I was recently visited and supported by Daniel from your team. As someone who has Asperger's and suffers with severe anxiety meeting and interacting with new people can be difficult/impossible at times. Daniel was brilliant and put me at complete ease. He was friendly and very helpful, and he made the whole process clear and simple for me to understand. The review was done quickly and easily and I was very pleased with the support and service provided by Daniel and I wish all such processes were as easy and quick.

[ADULT SERVICES: Adult Social Care - Direct Payments]

A card from three members of a family: "To Anna, we will forever be grateful for all of your constant support and guidance. Thank you for being in our corner, when at times it felt like no one else was. You have always believed and encouraged us, helping us to get to where we are today. I will never forget you and everything you have done for me. Love always" "Thank you for everything you have done for us." "Thank you so much for everything you have done for me and my family. You have been here for us the longest, and I am so grateful to have had you in our lives. You have helped us more than you know. Good luck with whatever the future has in store for you!"

[CHILDREN'S SERVICES: Safeguarding, Quality and Review - Independent Reviewing Officers]

I visited Bispham library with grandson this week. Chose books and then joined in a music and rhyme time which was a lovely extra we'd not booked on but there was room. We thoroughly enjoyed it. We were also given a bag of goodies one of which was book of rhymes and story with disc attached. He loved it. It really made his day. We've attended other activities usually on a Monday and just wanted to say how much we've enjoyed these events. The library staff always so friendly and helpful and the optional activities lovely. Thankyou **[COMMUNICATIONS AND REGENERATION: Libraries]**

Hello, I thought I'd email as it may be a rarity that the council receive an email of praise! (Many people are quick to complain but rarely take the time to say 'well done'.) So, a huge well-done on the new cycle path connecting Blackpool to Lytham St Annes. I cycled it for the first time yesterday and felt so much safer as opposed to the older cycle lane which had cars parked all over it (many times I've almost been hit off by driver's

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

opening their doors without looking). Brilliant work and thank you to everyone involved. Have a good day!
[COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES: Highways and Transport (Delivery)]

[Parents] A big thank you was received for the staff who undertook the burial of their baby's ashes. They said they didn't expect it to be such a dignified service, they were so pleased at how both staff members stood back from the grave and gave the time and space for them to grieve. They said they showed great respect at such a difficult time and that their actions made the burial so much easier for them.
[GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES: Cemeteries and Crematorium]

A gentleman phoned the Customer First team to compliment the staff at Horizon, they have helped him get back into work, he was really complimentary of the level of service and support they have provided and he was really happy and glad to have worked with them. Specifically the staff that supported him
[PUBLIC HEALTH: Public Health]

Can you please extend mine and my mum's thanks to Vanessa? She went over and beyond helping sort out my mum's council tax bill and direct debit today. She really is an asset to Blackpool Council. Can you also apologise if we kept Vanessa working for longer than she should have. **[RESOURCES: Customer First (Service Advisors)]**

I would just like to make aware of the absolute excellent communication/ response empathy and hard work and dedication given to me by Housing Options. [Deborah] Since working with this employee I have gained confidence and the sense to help myself achieve the life I want. I have suffered with severe mental health for years and felt no one really understood this condition and the how debilitating this is to a person's life. Deborah has given me her time and understanding throughout and has not once made me feel I was a burden. She has communicated everything over and over until I felt satisfied in my mind I understand how housing works at each stage and what I had to do and what she would do for me. I never felt judged or embarrassed by her. Together with her support I have just secured my own tenancy in such a short time and she has supported me into employment. I have witnessed how demanding the housing service is and how hard work of the employee has ended in my positive outcome. I feel that in time of need everyone just needs someone who believe in them to achieve and I will always remember the hand up from that one person who has helped me onto the path of a brighter future. **[STRATEGY AND ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Housing Options]**

3. COMMENTS

Comments are equally as important as complaints as they can help to shape and improve the quality of the services we provide. Comments can take the form of suggestions for improvement, customer observations, and in most cases the comments are initial requests for service. Ensuring that comments are dealt with and acted upon appropriately can avoid escalation to formal complaints. In total, **269** comments were received in 2022/23.

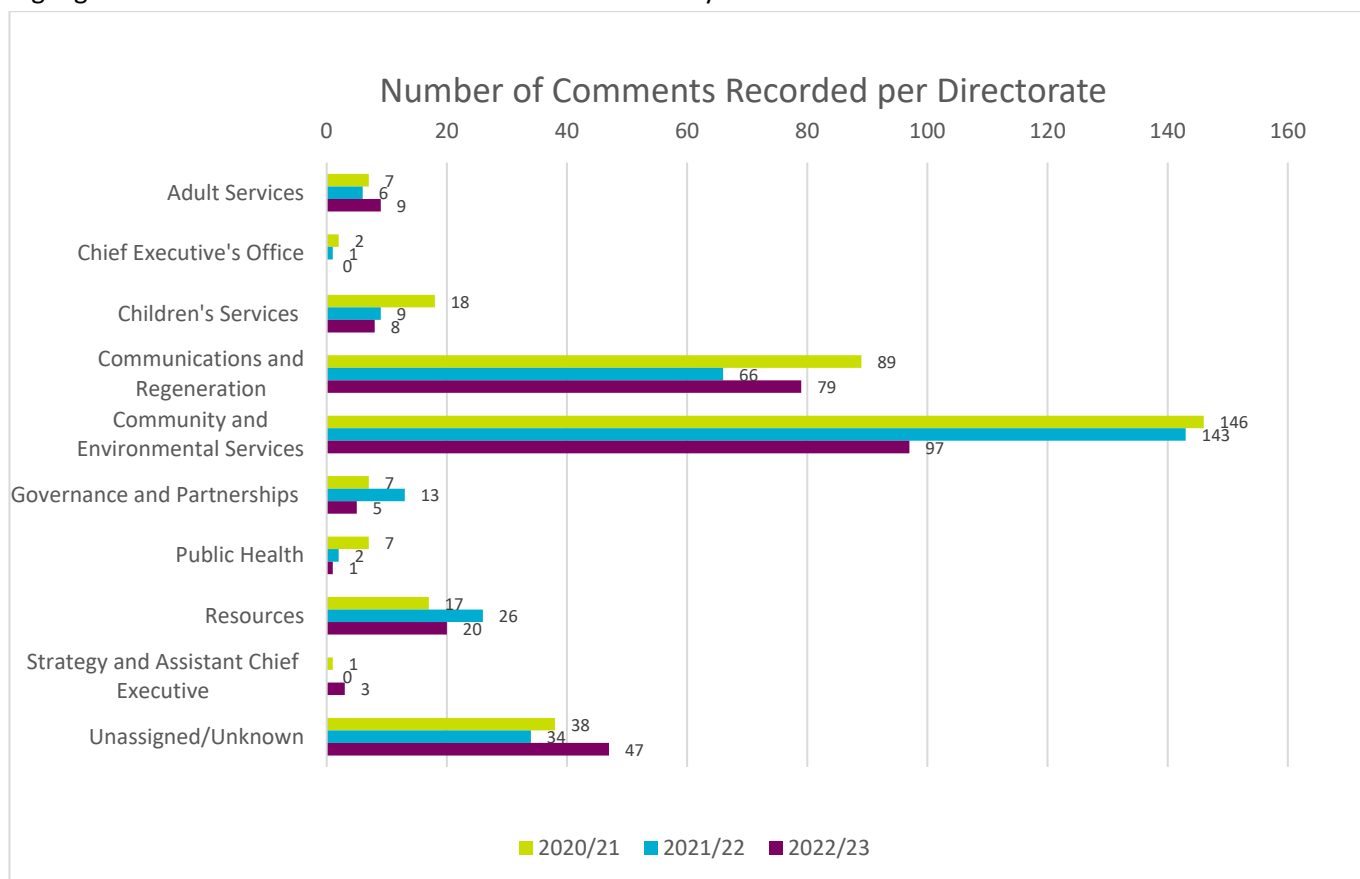
Community and Environmental Services previously included Blackpool Waste Services services and has therefore seen a reduction in the number of comments recorded in comparison to previous years. However, with a high proportion of the directorate's comments for Highways and Transport services and Public Protection, primarily initial requests for service, the department still accounts for the majority of comments received. Comments are usually received via the online feedback form directly from service users who have

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

submitted the feedback as a 'complaint'. If upon initial review by the service it is identified that the feedback does not fall within the remit of the corporate complaint policy, the service can adjust the feedback 'type' to comment, for appropriate action.

There has been a significant amount of channel shift work around creating alternative ways for customers to report issues and submit requests for service and this work continues to influence the number of comments logged.

Services do not tend to record all comments received, as these are mainly dealt with as 'general business;' therefore, the figures may not be a true reflection of all comments received by Council services and can only highlight the number of comments that have been formally recorded.



*Unassigned = Feedback that cannot be allocated to a specific service – this could be general feedback about Blackpool or feedback covering a number of service areas.

Below are some examples of comments received during the year:

I have started to come up from the South of UK on a regular basis for breaks and holidays; I cannot understand why there is a large long grand entrance to Blackpool Central Drive with charming old houses and a park and then many shops is all run down, I heard you are doing a massive entertainment complex at the town end of this road would it not make sense to make the whole of Central Drive a grand entrance to Blackpool, just my thinking nothing more love the town. Thank you [Communications and Regeneration: Growth and Prosperity]

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

*Hi, yesterday we attended the fireworks in Blackpool, absolutely fabulous. We parked by the football stadium in the car park, South? It took an hour to actually reach the one car park exit on leaving, an hour on the M55 due to the volume of traffic and then the northbound junction on the M6 was closed. Everyone was in the same position in the car park, waiting, frustrated. Some with very young children. Would it not be possible to open other exits to this car park when there is a major event? Would it not be possible to have a park and ride further out of town? I believe there is one in the summer from the airport? One exit from a major car park is hardly acceptable given the numbers attending. I nearly turned into a Victor Meldrew clone. I hope you will improve it. **[Communications and Regeneration: Parking]***

*Attention to zebra crossings at promenade at St Chads Road. No yellow warning lights to draw attention to cars approaching crossing and white line very faded. This is a very busy crossing and cars drivers often don't know it's a Zebra Crossing when people are trying to cross over because they can't see any white lines or yellow warning lights. It's only a matter of time before there is a fatal accident. So the white lines want repainting and the yellow warning lights want fixing. There are dog walkers, the elderly, school children and tram passengers all taking their life in their own hands crossing at these crossings even worse when it's dark. **[Community and Environmental Services: Highways and Transport (delivery)]***

*I am an athletics coach and use the track on a fairly regular basis but probably not enough to justify getting a leisure passes for my athletes. As they therefore have to pay it is very frustrating that the Sports Centre reception does not have a contactless card payment facility. Not only is this inconvenient but also takes time when there are others waiting at reception. Perhaps you might consider implementing this payment system. **[Community and Environmental Services: Leisure]***

*You need to sort out your communications. I have tried to phone you up over 2 days, at different times of the day about Council Tax but your system just cuts you off with the message 'No one is available to take your call' and then has the affront to say 'Our phone lines are open 9am to 5pm'! If it cuts you off, Very frustrating!!!! As for that stupid text system, you just go around in circles. This is not good enough. If your resources are limited, how about employing more people? **[Resources: Customer First]***

*Customer called as she has been trying to contact Housing Options, she has left messages and nothing back. She has been given an eviction letter. She has a disabled son and she isn't doing very well with her mental health. She is asking if someone can please call her as soon as possible. She is very worried **[Strategy and Assistant Directorate: Housing Options]***

I cannot understand how the council has made part of church street a pedestrianized zone, apart from what should be taxis and buses. The number of times that I am in town and watch this area used as a rat run, with some drivers using it like a racing track. This Friday afternoon for whatever reason Topping Street and Cookson Street are extremely busy and cars and vans are avoiding the wait and using the church street area to avoid the wait. Preston council introduced a taxi and bus lane only on Fishergate, with camera's to catch offenders. Initially the council made a large revenue from offenders until people started to realize that fines were in place

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

for offenders. Why doesn't Blackpool introduce this for this area. People's lives are being put at risk every day and you shouldn't wait until someone gets injured to rectify this important issue.
[Community and Environmental Services: Highways and Transport (delivery)]

4. COMPLAINTS

4.1 Types of Complaint

The Council has a three-stage process for dealing with corporate complaints:

- Stage 1** Investigation by the service
- Stage 2** Review by the relevant Director or delegated senior officer
- Stage 3** Review by the Complaints Panel on behalf of the Chief Executive (*if appropriate*)

The table below shows the number of **corporate complaints** logged for each stage during the period.

| Stage | Total | |
|---------|------------|-----|
| Stage 1 | 374 | 94% |
| Stage 2 | 25 | 6% |
| Stage 3 | 0 | 0% |
| | 399 | |

The small number of Stage 2 and Stage 3 complaints recorded suggests that the majority of Stage 1 complaints are dealt with effectively, therefore preventing complaints from escalating. However, it is also possible that complaints have escalated to Stage 2, but these were not recorded on the Feedback System by the client department. There are planned updates to the feedback system which will make recording escalated complaints much easier and this should help encourage services to record complaints that proceed to stage 2.

There have been a small number of Stage 2 complaints where the complainant has requested escalation to Stage 3; however, it has been decided that it would not be beneficial for the Council to hold a Stage 3 Panel to review the matter further and we have recommended that the complainant contacts the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. There are many reasons why Stage 3 would not be appropriate, some of the main reasons are listed below:

- The complaint was upheld at Stage 2 and further consideration would not help the complainant in terms of offering any further outcome
- The complaint is about a Council Policy and further consideration would not benefit the complainant in terms of offering any further outcome
- A review at Stage 3 would not seek to question the merits of a suitably qualified officer's decision to take action
- The outcome that the complainant is seeking could not be reached through a Stage 3 review

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

A Stage 3 complaint Panel consists of 3/4 senior officers, Chaired by the Director of Governance and Partnerships with the Customer Relations Manager as the Panel Officer. If we are aware that a further review at Stage 3 would not provide a different outcome or the outcome sought by the complainant, it would be a poor use of Council resource to continue to Stage 3.

In 2022/23, **176** complaints were received relating to Adult or Children's Social Care statutory duties. Complaints of this nature are dealt with under separate statutory procedures, with different stages to the process and are not included in the figures above. The below sections do however **include** the Adult and Children's Social Care statutory complaints. *For further detail on Adult and Children's Services feedback, please refer to the separate Social Care annual reports.*

4.2 Directorates and Service Areas

The number of complaints logged has decreased this year, and whilst the removal of Blackpool Waste Services data has impacted considerably*, the overall trend is still lower than in previous years. For comparison, the previous three years are shown in the table below.

| Complaints logged by Directorate | 2022/23 | % change since 21/22 | 2021/22 | 2020/21 | 2019/20 |
|--------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Adult Services | 82 | +28% | 64 | 75 | 106 |
| Chief Executive and Human Resources | 0 | -100% | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Children's Services | 128 | -30% | 182 | 173 | 175 |
| Communications and Regeneration | 88 | -3% | 91 | 53 | 87 |
| Community and Environmental Services | 141 | -55%* | 311 | 312 | 336 |
| Governance and Partnerships | 15 | +67% | 9 | 5 | 9 |
| Public Health | 0 | -100% | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Resources | 84 | +9% | 77 | 57 | 101 |
| Strategy and Assistant Directorate | 19 | +6% | 18 | 12 | 14 |
| Unassigned | 18 | +13% | 16 | 8 | 4 |
| Total | 575 | -26% | 773 | 697 | 836 |

*Unassigned = Feedback that cannot be allocated to a specific service – this could be general feedback about Blackpool or feedback covering a number of service areas.

The table below shows the services with the highest number of complaints recorded in 2022/23:

| Complaints - Service | 2022/23 | 2021/22 | 2020/21 | % change since 21/22 |
|------------------------|------------------|---------|---------|----------------------|
| Children's Social Care | 103 (18%) | 142 | 158 | -27% |
| Public Protection | 69 (12%) | 72 | 52 | -3% |
| Parking | 67 (12%) | 66 | 31 | +2% |
| Adult Social Care | 56 (10%) | 43 | 27 | +30% |
| Council Tax | 50 (9%) | 42 | 18 | +19% |

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

There are a number of services which have seen a noteworthy reduction in the number of complaints logged since 2021/22 and these can be seen in the table below:

| Complaints - Service | 2022/23 | 2021/22 | 2020/21 | % reduction since 21/22 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|-------------------------|
| Business Rates | 4 | 9 | 20 | 56% |
| Targeted Intervention – Children’s Services | 7 | 12 | 5 | 42% |
| Highways and Transport (Delivery) | 31 | 52 | 34 | 40% |
| Tourism | 7 | 11 | 2 | 36% |
| Children's Social Care | 103 | 142 | 158 | 27% |

The reduction could be down to a number of factors, some of which are outlined below:

- The implementation of changes based on previous feedback and the continuous improvement to services.
- Further work on channel shift giving customers and service users alternative routes for reporting issues.
- The successful implementation channel shift projects and the implementation of new processes in services to manage the customer contact.
- The correct use of the customer feedback system, and matters that do not fall within the complaints procedure being downgraded to comments.
- Better communication with service users on the alternative routes available for reporting concerns.
- We do have to also consider that services have not recorded some complaints received on the customer feedback system

A full breakdown of the number of complaints received by service area can be found in [Appendix A](#).

4.3 Complaint Themes

The table below highlights the predominant complaint themes. Following the same trend as the previous years, the majority of all complaints received (73%) relate to the following four themes: Council Action; Lack of Action; Quality of Service and Staff Conduct / Treatment of Customer.

| Theme | 2022/23 | % of complaints this year | % reduction since 21/22 |
|-------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Staff Conduct/Treatment of Customer | 125 | 22% | ↓ -42% |
| Lack of Action | 113 | 20% | ↓ -17% |
| Quality of Service | 93 | 16% | ↓ -80% |
| Council Action | 90 | 16% | ↓ -49% |
| | 421 | 73% | |

‘Staff Conduct/Treatment of Customer’, continues as last year, as the most common complaint theme. This theme is used if a customer’s complaint focuses on the attitude or unprofessional conduct of a Council officer or if their complaint is focused on being unfairly treated/disadvantaged by a service when no other theme is predominant.

If a complaint has a number of aspects to it, it is often difficult to highlight one particular theme; therefore, ‘Quality of Service’ tends to be used.

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

The new feedback system, currently in development, will provide a greater number of theme subcategories and the ability to choose more than one theme. This will help us to clearly identify and target trends for learning and monitoring purposes.

4.4 Response Timescales

We aim to respond to the majority of complaints at Stage 1 within 10 working days. If the complaint is going to take longer than this to complete, the Complainant will be informed of the expected date for response; this may be in the form of an interim letter.

If a complaint timescale has to be extended mid-investigation, the complaint will be classed as 'not meeting timescale;' the only exception to this is if the Complainant causes the need for extension, for example, by providing further information during the investigation process or if a meeting with the complainant is required and the complainant is unable to meet within the initial time frame.

Complaints relating to Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care are often covered by separate statutory legislation, and different timescales apply. The complaint system allows timescales to be amended based on what procedure is being followed.

| Fully Considered Complaints | 2022/23 | 2021/22 | 2020/21 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|
| Responded to within the initial timescale | 263 | 426 | 429 |
| Not responded to within the initial timescale | 208* | 243 | 210 |
| Total | 471 | 669 | 639 |

**includes 1 outstanding complaint as of 12.07.23*

In 56% of cases a response was sent to the Complainant by the client service within the initial timescale. This is unfortunately lower than the previous year, 64%.

It is the responsibility of the client service to set a reasonable investigation timescale (in line with the appropriate procedure), to communicate this information to the complainant and to ensure that the timescale is met.

General reasons for timescales not being met include:

- Increasing workloads on restricted resources means that it is not always possible to prioritise complaint responding / investigation within some service areas;
- Senior officers availability to respond within relevant timescales;
- Complex investigation work required, which may include multi-agency communication, can prolong the time it takes to respond to complaints;
- Key members of staff being unavailable to respond to complaints due to sickness or annual leave;
- Multiple complaints from the complainant regarding the same or different matters can cause delays in the investigation process.

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

- Difficulties in being able to contact complainants using the contact details supplied can sometimes mean we are unable to inform them of the outcome of their complaint.
- The capacity of the Customer Relations Team to carry out regular monitoring of outstanding cases and to work with services to ensure that the majority of complaints are responded to on time.
- The failure to close cases down on the system once dealt with.

Further work will be undertaken to improve compliance with response timescales.

4.5 Outcomes

The table below details the outcomes of fully considered complaints during this period.

| Outcome | 2022/23 | | DoT* | 2021/22 % |
|------------------|------------|------|------|-----------|
| Upheld | 69 | 15% | ↑ | 13% |
| Partially Upheld | 115 | 24% | ↓ | 25% |
| Not Upheld | 286 | 61% | ↑ | 58% |
| Outstanding ~ | 1 | 0.2% | ↓ | 4% |
| | 471 | | | |

* Direction of travel in numbers compared to 2021/22

~ Outstanding as of 12.07.23

If a complaint is upheld or partially upheld it means that there was fault found – there is at least one element identified that could have been done better. It is reassuring to see that the percentage of not upheld complaints has increased since last year; there has however, also been a slight increase in the number of fully upheld complaints.

Outcomes and actions taken as a result of a complaint are not often recorded on the customer feedback system, and this does make reporting difficult. Some of the general reasons for complaints being upheld over the year are detailed below:

- A lack of action and / or lengthy delays in delivering a service following a request from a customer;
- Errors in service delivery, such as not following correct policies and procedures;
- Failure to communicate with customers, for example, not informing them of a change of policy or action that has been taken in response to an earlier request;
- A combination of minor issues, which have overall resulted in a poor experience for the customer; and
- Staff attitude / behaviour towards customers, ranging from poor customer service to the use of rude or unprofessional language.

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

4.6 Lessons Learned

Learning and reflection from individual complaints and the sharing of learning within the organisation, is a key part of the complaint process. Following the completion of the complaint process, managers are asked to identify any learning from the complaint, either for their own staff or team or with implications across the Directorate. Learning should also be shared through 1-1's and team/service meetings. It should be noted that not all complaints yield lessons to be learned; however, each case should be reviewed to ensure that any learning points are recorded and actioned where applicable. It must be noted that the complaint process is one of several ways in which services obtain valuable feedback to learn, improve and share best practice.

Below are some general examples of learning and actions taken, as a result of complaint reviews:

- Staff training to be provided
- Reminders to staff of duties and responsibilities
- The development of easy to read information for service users
- Internal review of service to be carried out
- A review of the information provided to service users
- A reminder to staff about the importance of effective communication
- Concerns to be addressed at monthly review meetings
- A review of staffing levels
- A review of current processes and procedures to see if improvements can be made

The customer feedback system does allow services to record if lessons have been learned and the detail of what actions have been taken as a result of the complaint; however, this is not part of the system that services regularly use. Only 39% of the upheld or partially upheld complaints have actions and lessons learned been recorded on the system; this is however a slight increase to 30% last year. It must be noted that over half of these cases are for Adult and Children's Services, whereby the Customer Relations Team monitors and coordinates the process.

We will continue to encourage the review of complaints to ensure that we learn from the feedback provided by our customers. The Customer Relations Team will be sharing a lessons learned report template with corporate services, which could be used to monitor actions required as a result of complaints at the relevant divisional manager meetings.

The ability of services to take the time to review complaints and implement changes to improve services will be continually inhibited by the increasing demand on services and the pressure on existing resources; however, if services can learn and improve as a result of complaints, this could reduce the number of complaints received about similar themes.

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

5. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

The LGSCO provides an [interactive map of council performance](#) on its website. The map shows annual performance data for all councils in England and links to LGSCO published decision statements, public interest reports, annual letters and information about service improvements that have been agreed by each council

This tool provides a useful snapshot of the service improvement recommendations that each authority has agreed to. It also highlights the wider outcomes of LGSCO investigations to the public, advocacy and advice organisations, and others who have a role in holding local councils to account.

The key highlights of the LGSCO data can be found in this report, however should you wish to explore the information in more detail please visit <https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/blackpool-borough-council/statistics>

The LGSCO statistics focus on three key areas that help to assess an organisation's commitment to putting things right when they go wrong:

- **Complaints upheld** – The LGSCO upholds complaints when fault is found in an organisation's actions, including where the organisation accepted fault before the LGSCO investigated. The data includes the total number of investigations completed to provide important context for the statistic.
- **Compliance with recommendations** – The LGSCO recommends ways for organisations to put things right when faults have caused injustice and monitor their compliance with our recommendations. Failure to comply is rare and a compliance rate below 100% is a cause for concern.
- **Satisfactory remedy provided by the authority** - In these cases, the organisation upheld the complaint and the LGSCO agreed with how it offered to put things right. The Ombudsman encourages the early resolution of complaints and credits organisations that accept fault and find appropriate ways to put things right.

Finally, the LGSCO compares the above three key annual statistics for an organisation with similar authorities, to provide an average marker of performance. They do this for County Councils, District Councils, Metropolitan Boroughs, Unitary Councils, and London Boroughs.

The statistics provided by the LGSCO may not necessarily align with the data that the authority holds. For example, LGSCO numbers include enquiries from people that were signposted back to the authority and some of these may choose not to pursue the matter further with the Council.

5.1 Complaints Received by the LGSCO

Throughout 2022/23, twenty six complaints were referred to the LGSCO by a Complainant. The following table below shows the number of complaints received by the LGSCO over the last three years, broken down by service area:

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

| Complaints and Enquiries Received | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | DoT* |
|--|---------|---------|---------|------|
| Adult Care Services | 6 | 9 | 8 | ↓ |
| Benefits and Tax | 1 | 0 | 1 | ↑ |
| Corporate and Other Services | 5 | 2 | 0 | ↓ |
| Education and Children's Services | 3 | 10 | 7 | ↓ |
| Environmental Services, Public Protection and Regulation | 4 | 7 | 2 | ↓ |
| Highways and Transport | 1 | 1 | 2 | ↑ |
| Housing | 3 | 3 | 5 | ↑ |
| Other | 0 | 1 | 0 | ↓ |
| Planning and Development | 3 | 2 | 1 | ↓ |
| | 26 | 35 | 26 | |

* Direction of travel compared to 2021/22

5.2 Decisions made by the LGSCO

The table below shows a breakdown of the decisions made by the LGSCO over the last three years.

Appendix B contains a definition of the types of decision made.

| Decision Type | | No. of Complaints | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------|---------|---------|
| | | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
| Complaints investigated by LGSCO | Complaint upheld | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| | Complaint not upheld | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| Complaints not investigated by LGSCO | Closed after initial enquiries | 6 | 11 | 12 |
| | Premature decision - Advice given | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Premature decision - Referred back for local resolution | 10 | 15 | 7 |
| | Incomplete / invalid | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| | | 26 | 38 | 28* |

*The number of complaints decided can be different from the number of complaints received as it can include cases decided in the current year but received the year before.

Some Complainants prefer to contact the LGSCO in the first instance. The LGSCO will determine whether this is a premature complaint which must be directed back to the Council to investigate and respond to in the first instance or if they will commence an investigation based on the information provided by the Complainant.

Over the past two years, the LGSCO has reviewed its processes to ensure they utilise their resources effectively. One outcome of this is that they are more selective about the complaints they look at in detail, prioritising where it is in the public interest to investigate. This has meant that changes in uphold rates this year are not solely down to the nature of the cases received by the LGSCO.

The LGSCO is less likely to carry out investigations on 'borderline' issues, so they are naturally finding a higher proportion of fault overall. Our average uphold rate for all investigations has increased this year and, in line with this, our uphold rate is higher than previous years.

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

Of the twenty six complaints received by the LGSCO in 2022/23, six cases progressed on to the formal investigation stage. All of the complaints reaching this stage were upheld. This is disappointingly a higher figure compared to an average of 72% in similar authorities.

Twelve of the complaints were closed after initial enquiries and further information regarding the reasons for this can be found in **Appendix B**.

5.3 Compliance and Remedy

In line with the previous year, in 100% of cases, the LGSCO was satisfied Blackpool Council had successfully implemented its recommendations. This compares to an average of 99% in similar authorities.

With a significant improvement on last year, in 33% of upheld cases the LGSCO found that Blackpool Council had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman. This compares to an average of 13% in similar authorities.

In addition to remedy by apology and financial redress, the LGSCO has the power to recommend service improvements where a fault or maladministration by the Council has caused injustice to a Complainant. Service improvements agreed and implemented by Blackpool Council in 2022/23 can be explored in **Appendix C**.

Senior management review these cases to explore the reasons why the complaints have been upheld and identify any actions that can be taken to reduce the number of upheld complaints in the future. As the majority of remedies and services improvements were recommended by the LGSCO, senior management will explore whether the Council missed opportunities to resolve complaints through the use of remedies at an earlier stage in the complaints process.

5.4 Public Reports

The LGSCO can also issue Public Reports for specific cases. There are many reasons why the Ombudsman might issue a public report. The main reason is because they believe that it is in the public interest to highlight particular issues or problems. They might also issue a public report because what went wrong is significant or because of the impact on the complainant/service user is significant. The Ombudsman will always issue a public report if an organisation does not agree with their findings or recommendations, or put things right to our satisfaction.

The Public Reports are issued to help to ensure that councils, and other organisations providing public services, remain accountable to people who use those services. By highlighting the learning from complaints it helps to improve services for others. In line with last year, Blackpool Council has not been issued with any Public Reports in 2022/23.

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

6. Looking Forward

The Customer Relations Team will continue to offer support to staff involved in complaint handling to improve the timeliness and quality of responses, whilst aiming to reduce the need for secondary or follow up enquiries. The Complaints and Customer Feedback SharePoint site contains information and guidance materials, templates, policy documents and useful website links to support staff dealing with customer feedback. The site is updated regularly with any new information sourced, to assist with effective complaint handling.

We will continue to improve the recording and handling of complaints and the quality of responses; encouraging learning from complaints and compliments. We will look at developing a robust mechanism for sharing lessons learnt, best practice and potential development. The Senior Leadership Team will support with this work and will identify any key areas for improvement.

The Council has commissioned the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman to deliver Effective Complaint Handling online training to officers who deal with complaints as part of their role. We aim to commission further dates in due course if the training is well received.

A new council-wide customer feedback system is still in the pipeline, with the aim of providing a more user-friendly, straight forward approach of logging feedback. The systems improved reporting tools will allow essential feedback data to be provided to services on a more regular basis. It is hoped that the new system will empower services to take better control of complaint and feedback management and provide additional subcategories for complaint themes, so that trends can be clearly identified and acted upon. There has been a significant delay in progress of this project over the last few years, due to the pandemic and overall service capacity. The new system has however been tested by the Customer Relations Team and findings were reported back to Pentagull, so that minor adjustments can be made. Once the work by Pentagull is complete, further testing will be undertaken by a selection of other services, including Customer First, before full implementation.

The Customer Relations Manager, with the support of senior leadership and through the relevant management groups will:

- Encourage all Council services to use the customer feedback system
- Remind services that all feedback received, via whatever route, is appropriately and correctly recorded on the customer feedback system.
- Explore the use of KPI's to monitor complaint compliance across the Council
- Explore of the causes of complaints, especially within the Staff Conduct / Treatment of Customer and Quality of Service themes.
- Encourage services to capture learning where appropriate so that services can be improved as a result.
- Explore how we can share standard learning from complaints on a regular basis across the Council
- Communicate the importance of providing satisfactory remedy to fault and injustice identified, in line with the Ombudsman's guidance on remedies.

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

Services are encouraged to continue to work with the Customer Relations Team, in order:

- To ensure that we acknowledge the importance and value of complaints and all customer feedback.
- To ensure that all feedback is appropriately and correctly recorded on the Customer Feedback System to enable greater accuracy in the analysis of data
- To ensure that complaints are handled in line with the Council's Customer Care Standards and any other relevant legal and policy requirements.
- To provide and detail a clear route by which customers can raise concerns about the service they have received from the Council.
- To ensure complaints are dealt with fairly, promptly, and sensitively.
- To learn from our mistakes and use feedback from customers to continuously improve services.
- To provide a satisfactory remedy to fault and injustice before the complaint reaches the Ombudsman.
- To use insight gained from compliments to share best practice.

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

APPENDIX A – BREAKDOWN OF COMPLAINTS RECORDED* BY SERVICE AREA

KEY: ■ Same / Reduction ■ Increase <10 ■ Increase >10 or 101%

Last year's figures are provided in the RAG box

SCRUTINY: Climate Change and Environment – CCE; Levelling Up – LE; Children and Young People – CYP; Adult Social Care and Health - ASC

| Department | Service | Number of complaints recorded | | Relevant Scrutiny Committee | % of FC** complaints upheld in some element |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|---|
| Adult Services | Adult Social Care | 56 | 43 | ASC | 56% |
| | Corporate - Resources | 7 | 7 | ASC | 57% |
| | Care and Support | 6 | 2 | ASC | 80% |
| | Commissioned Services - Adults | 12 | 11 | ASC | 56% |
| | Unknown service | 1 | 1 | ASC | n/a |
| Chief Executive's Office | Exec Support | 0 | 1 | LU | n/a |
| | HR, Policy, and Comms | 0 | 1 | LU | n/a |
| Children's Services | Children's Social Care | 103 | 142 | CYP | 55% |
| | Commissioned Services – Children's | 0 | 2 | CYP | n/a |
| | Early Help (Targeted Services) | 7 | 12 | CYP | 50% |
| | SEND and Educational | 8 | 10 | CYP | 88% |
| | School Standards and Effectiveness | 5 | 3 | CYP | 33% |
| | Business Support and Resources | 0 | 1 | CYP | n/a |
| Unknown service | 5 | 12 | CYP | 0% | |
| Community and Environmental Services | Catering Services including Café | 3 | n/a | LU | 100% |
| | Coastal Services | 0 | 0 | CCE | n/a |
| | Facilities Management | 0 | 0 | LU | n/a |
| | Highways and Transport (delivery) | 31 | 52 | CCE | 30% |
| | Transport Council Fleet | 3 | 3 | CCE | 100% |
| | Integrated Transport | 10 | 7 | CCE | 78% |
| | Leisure | 12 | 11 | LU | 42% |
| | Parks Development (Council) | 13 | 17 | CCE | 92% |
| | Public Protection | 69 | 72 | CCE | 15% |
| Governance and Partnership Services | Cemeteries and Crematorium | 1 | 1 | CCE | 0% |
| | Coroner Services | 3 | 0 | CCE | 33% |
| | Customer Relations | 1 | 1 | LU | 0% |
| | Governance Services | 0 | 0 | LU | n/a |
| | Information Governance | 2 | 1 | LU | 0% |
| | Legal | 4 | 2 | LU | 67% |
| | Registrars | 4 | 4 | CCE | 100% |
| Communications and Regeneration | Arts | 0 | 1 | LU | n/a |
| | Beach Patrol | 3 | 0 | CCE | 67% |
| | Building Control | 2 | 1 | LU | 0% |

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----|----|-----|------|
| | Communications | 0 | 0 | LU | n/a |
| | Economic Development | 1 | 2 | LU | 0% |
| | Growth and Prosperity | 2 | 3 | LU | 50% |
| | Heritage | 1 | 0 | LU | 0% |
| | Highways and Transport (policy) | 0 | 0 | LU | n/a |
| | Learning, Adult and Community | 0 | 0 | LU | n/a |
| | Libraries | 2 | 2 | LU | 50% |
| | Parking | 67 | 66 | CCE | 25% |
| | Planning | 3 | 5 | LU | 0% |
| | Tourism | 7 | 11 | LU | 14% |
| Public Health | Public Health | 0 | 3 | LU | n/a |
| | Community Engagement | 0 | 0 | LU | n/a |
| | Public Health Commissioned Service | 0 | 0 | LU | n/a |
| Resources | Benefits | 6 | 9 | LU | 40% |
| | Business Rates | 4 | 9 | LU | 0% |
| | Council Tax | 50 | 42 | LU | 22% |
| | Customer First | 19 | 15 | LU | 63% |
| | Debtors and Creditors | 2 | 0 | LU | 100% |
| | Finance | 0 | 0 | LU | n/a |
| | ICT | 0 | 0 | LU | n/a |
| | Property and Asset Management | 3 | 2 | LU | 50% |
| | Risk and Insurance | 0 | 0 | LU | n/a |
| Strategy and Assistant CEX | Housing Options | 19 | 18 | LU | 24% |
| Unknown/Unallocated | Unknown/Unallocated | 18 | 16 | N/A | 40% |

*Complaints recorded includes cases which were withdrawn following review.

**FC = Fully considered complaints

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

APPENDIX B – LGSCO Further Exploration

Definitions

Upheld - Where the LGSCO has decided that the Council is at fault in how it acted and that this fault may or may not have caused an injustice to the Complainant, or where the Council has accepted that it needs to remedy the complaint.

Not upheld - Where the LGSCO has investigated a complaint and decided that the Council was not at fault.

Advice given - Where the LGSCO advises a Complainant that their complaint does not fall within their jurisdiction or where the complaint has already been investigated by the LGSCO and therefore cannot be investigated again.

Closed after initial enquiries - Where the LGSCO has made an early decision that they could not or should not investigate a complaint. Details can be found below of the complaints that were closed after initial enquiries.

Incomplete / invalid - These are complaints where the Complainant has not provided the LGSCO with enough information to be able to decide what should happen with their complaint, or where the Complainant no longer wishes to pursue their complaint.

Referred back for local resolution - These are complaints which have been referred back to the Council by the LGSCO because the Council has not had an opportunity to resolve the issues through its own complaints procedure.

2022/23: Complaints closed after initial enquiries

- **Sch 5.1 court proceedings** - The Ombudsman cannot investigate the complaint. The matter is or has been considered by a court
- **26(6)(c) Court remedy** - The Ombudsman will not investigate as the complainant has/had a remedy against the council via any court of law
- **26B(2) not made in 12 months (x2)** - The Ombudsman has exercised discretion not to investigate. The complainant did not come to the Ombudsman within 12 months of becoming aware of the matter
- **Not warranted by alleged fault (x4)** - there is not enough evidence of fault in the Council's actions to justify investigating. From initial review, there is no evidence of fault in the way the Council made its decision.
- **Not warranted by alleged injustice** - The personal injustice caused is not sufficient to warrant the Ombudsman's involvement
- **Separated - Referred back to PHSO, Council case closed at assessment** – The complaint was regarding health services and no action from the Council was required
- **No worthwhile outcome achievable by investigation (x2)** - The Ombudsman will not investigate as they do not believe they can achieve a worthwhile outcome by investigating

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

APPENDIX C – LGSCO Service Improvements

Four service improvements were agreed and are in the process of being implemented by Blackpool Council in 2022/23.

| Service Area | Service Improvements | Satisfaction with Compliance |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| Adult Social Care | Review and amend policy to ensure it has a system in place to ensure correct invoices are issued to those paying the full cost of care. | Ongoing – not yet decided |
| | Review and amend its policy to ensure it includes details of how it will ensure charges do not amount to more than those charged by the care provider for those paying a contribution. | |
| | Write to all people potentially affected by its previous policy in the last financial year. It should inform them of the decision the Ombudsman has made about its policy and ask those who believe they may have been affected to contact the Council. | |
| | Review the invoices for the last financial year for all people who contacted it with concerns to determine if a refund is due. | |

Annual Customer Feedback Report 2022-23

Document Control

| | |
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| Document owner: | Anna Fothergill, Customer Relations Manager |
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Approved By:

| Name | Title | Date |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Jonathan Pickup | Head of Information Governance | 12.09.23 |
| Mark Towers | Director of Governance and Partnerships | 04.10.23 |
| Corporate Leadership Team | | Shared 04.10.23 |
| Scrutiny Leadership Board | | |

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Report to: | SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD |
| Relevant Officer: | Steve Thompson, Director of Resources |
| Date of Meeting: | 17 October 2023 |

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING AS AT MONTH 4 2023/24 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/25 - 2026/27

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To report the level of spending and exposure against the Council's Revenue budgets and reserves and balances for the first 4 months to 31 July 2023. The report also includes an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 – 2026/27.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To independently review the financial and operational performances of the services of the Council.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure financial performance against the Council's Revenue Budget and its reserves and balances is kept under timely review by members.

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:

None.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 The relevant Council Priority is: The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool.

6.0 Background Information

6.1 See reports and appendices attached to this report.

6.2 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

- Appendix 5(a): Executive Report
- Appendix 2b - Chief Executive
- Appendix 2c - Governance and Partnership Services
- Appendices 2c/d - Ward Budgets
- Appendix 2e - Resources
- Appendix 2f - Communications and Regeneration
- Appendix 2g - Strategic Leisure Assets
- Appendix 2h - Growth and Prosperity
- Appendix 2i - Community and Environmental Services
- Appendix 2j - Adult Services
- Appendix 2k - Children's Services
- Appendix 2l - Public Health
- Appendix 2m - Budgets Outside the Cash Limit
- Appendix 2n - Housing Revenue Account
- Appendix 2o - Wholly-owned companies
- Appendix 2p - Budget Savings performance
- Appendix 2q - Capital Monitoring
- Appendix 2r - Cash Flow Summary
- Appendix 2s - General Fund Balance Sheet Summary

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 See reports and appendices attached to the report.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 Impact of financial performance against approved Revenue budgets and upon Council reserves and balances.

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

11.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was produced as a part of the budget-setting process and remains relevant.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None directly from this report.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

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| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Report to: | EXECUTIVE |
| Relevant Officer: | Steve Thompson, Director of Resources |
| Relevant Cabinet Member: | Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council |
| Date of Meeting: | 16 October 2023 |

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING AS AT MONTH 4 2023/24 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/25 – 2026/27

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To report the level of spending and exposure against the Council’s Revenue budgets and reserves and balances for the first 4 months to 31 July 2023. The report also includes an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 – 2026/27.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To note the report.

2.2 To require the respective directors, Chief Executive and Director of Resources to continue to closely monitor and manage service financial and operational performances, specifically the social care services.

2.3 To prompt the Scrutiny Leadership Board to continue to independently review the financial and operational performances of Council services.

2.4 To continue to lobby central government (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Department for Health and Social Care and Department for Education in particular) along with local authority peers and networks and the Local Government Association for the funding necessary to cope with the burdens and demands presenting as a result of exceptional inflationary pressures and demographic demands upon statutory services.

2.5 To continue to work towards target working balances of £6m by 31 March 2024 rising to £8m by 31 March 2025.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure financial performance against the Council's Revenue Budget and its reserves and balances is kept under timely review by members.

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:

None.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 The relevant Council Priority is: "The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool".

6.0 Background Information**6.1 Introduction and Context**

Over the 13-year period 2011/12 – 2023/24 cumulative Revenue Budget savings amounting to £218.0m have been required to be made by Blackpool Council in order to balance its Revenue Budget each year. This is greater than the Council's current annual Net Requirement Budget of £176.2m and even more starkly the compound effect over the same period amounts to nearly £1.6bn of resource that has been removed from the Blackpool economy. This reflects one of the highest reductions per head of population across local authorities in England and in an environment of growing demand upon services as befalling an authority with such recognised pockets of significant deprivation.

The principles of the Medium-Term Financial Sustainability Strategies 2016/17 - 2021/22 and 2021/22 - 2026/27 have been used to successfully keep pace with and deliver budget savings plans year after year. However, in tandem the soaring demand for child protection services and adult social care provision plus the rising costs of providing such care are still creating a burden that current levels of local taxation and Government funding struggle to meet. In addition, the financial consequences of Covid have been material (£3.16m in 2020/21 and £2.59m in 2021/22 both net of Government grants) with little prospect now of any further Government financial support.

The last 13 years have seen unprecedented volatility within local government finance: 9 years of successive central government funding cuts between 2011/12 – 2019/20 were followed by the United Kingdom’s exit from the European Union, 2 years of a global pandemic with legacy consequences and a war within the European continent whilst a promised Fair Funding Review has now been delayed by a decade. Indeed the most favourable social care grants currently receivable are based on a relative needs formula of 2013 which themselves are based on 2001 census data. This has all conspired to produce a perfect storm of labour and supply shortages, pay demands, excessive inflation, continually rising interest rates in the Bank of England’s attempt to stem the pressure and a central government funding system that is decades out of synchronisation. During this period the Council has strived to i) deliver its annual budget in line with statutory requirements; ii) maintain its reserves and balances at stable and appropriate levels that reflect the risk environment; iii) consistently fund and deliver the ambitions of successive administrations; and iv) deliver for the people of Blackpool. However, here in the present, sector experts and economic commentators cannot agree how and when these key drivers of the economy will land, which makes medium-term financial planning and financial management extremely challenging.

When the Revenue Budget for 2023/24 was approved by Council on 22 February 2023, realistic service budgets had been agreed and set, an achievable budget savings plan was in place, reasonable levels of working balances and earmarked reserves were available and the medium-term outlook was as favourable as it had been for some time with additional Government support for social care funding having been announced. However, within weeks local government employers had made a pay offer at nearly three times that provided within the Budget, non-pay inflation remained stubbornly high with June CPI at 7.9% and RPI at 10.7% though welcome reductions being seen in electricity and gas costs, the more costlier social care cases experiencing growing demand, the base rate increasing (for the 14th consecutive time in August) and inevitable consequential pressures emerging from some of the Council’s capital schemes.

- 6.2 This report sets out the summary revenue budget position for the Council and its individual directorates for the first 4 months of 2023/24, i.e. the period to 31 July 2023, together with an outlook for the remainder of the year. The report is complemented with an assessment of performance to date of balances and reserves, income collection, the Council’s latest Capital Programme and statements relating to Cash Flow Summary and Balance Sheet Summary. It also incorporates the impact of the Council’s wholly-owned companies for which the Council is parent company and underwriter.

Separate reports have been prepared for each of the Council’s core areas of responsibility:

- Appendix 2b - Chief Executive
- Appendix 2c - Governance and Partnership Services
- Appendices 2c/d - Ward Budgets
- Appendix 2e - Resources
- Appendix 2f - Communications and Regeneration
- Appendix 2g - Strategic Leisure Assets
- Appendix 2h - Growth and Prosperity
- Appendix 2i - Community and Environmental Services
- Appendix 2j - Adult Services
- Appendix 2k - Children's Services
- Appendix 2l - Public Health
- Appendix 2m - Budgets Outside the Cash Limit
- Appendix 2n - Housing Revenue Account
- Appendix 2o - Wholly-owned Companies

These incorporate summary financial statements which continue to be prepared on a full accruals basis and focus on the forecast revenue outturns for 2023/24. There is an accompanying narrative to explain any areas of significant variance from budget and to highlight any areas of potential pressure along with action plans agreed with service managers to address them.

The combined effect of the directorates' financial performances is aggregated in a summary financial statement at Appendix 2a which mirrors the Council's Revenue Budget Book. This summary allows proactive month-on-month monitoring of the Council's forecast working balances to be undertaken to ensure appropriate and prudent levels are maintained.

6.3 Budget Performance

At its meeting on 8 November 2021 the Executive approved the Medium-Term Financial Sustainability Strategy for 2021/22 to 2026/27. As part of the Strategy it was agreed that due to the current level of financial risk and volatility the roll forward of service budget under and overspends is suspended in order that finances can be managed more strategically at corporate level. The exception to this related to any underspend in respect of the scheme commitments on Ward Budgets, however because 2023/24 is an election year there will be no carry-forward in accordance with an earlier overriding Executive decision.

The full-year forecast position at this stage of 2023/24 shows a deterioration in the Council's financial standing when compared with the estimated draft unaudited position as at the close of 2022/23 which showed working balances of £2,459k. Working balances are expected to fall to a surplus of **£1,673k** by the end of 2023/24 after taking account of the budgeted transfer of £4,335k to working balances. Plans are being developed to address the in-year pressures identified in this report with

fortnightly meetings held between the Chief Executive, Director of Resources and respective directors of the more pressured services.

The Council's Revenue Budget for 2023/24 set a target level of General Fund working balances of around £6m. It is deemed appropriate to maintain this target level of £6m for working balances for the medium term and to continue to work towards target working balances of £6m by 31 March 2024 rising to £8m by 31 March 2025.

The impacts of directorates' revenue budget performance and progress in achieving planned savings fall upon the Council's working balances. The main areas accounting for the month 4 forecast overspend of **£5,121k** for 2023/24 are summarised below:-

| Directorate | Service | Forecast Variance £000 |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Children's Services | <p>An overspend of £5,513k is forecast. The full-year impact of the Children's Social Care pressures as at M7 2022/23 has been rightsized as part of the Corporate Medium Term Financial Plan, equating to an additional budget of £5,221k allocated in 2023/24. However, Children's Social Care Placements is forecasting an overspend against this increased budget of £4,744k, mainly due to new-to-care placements being higher than those exiting care and the additional support required following the breakdown of high-cost placements. The actual number of residential placements as at 31st July 2023 is 76 with this forecast to reduce to 69 by 31st March 2024, whereas the plan suggested there would be 70 as at 31st July reducing to 60 by the end of March 2024. There was also an additional savings target of £1,924k, of which only £1,155k is anticipated to be met this financial year, leaving a further budget gap of £769k.</p> <p>However, the number of Children in Care continues to reduce and currently sits at 540 children. This brings Blackpool from a rate of 218 per 0-17 10,000 population to 194. The ambition is to bring ourselves in line with comparator Local Authorities over the next couple of years and we are confident that this ambition will be realised. Officers have seen this reduction as a result of reduced entry into care, and increased numbers exiting our care system. Within the cohort of Children Looked After, the Council has had a higher than national average</p> | 5,513 |

| | | |
|----------------|--|-------|
| | <p>of children in residential placements. Residential settings, for most children, are not the optimum placement and these children do not usually have the same degree of positive outcomes as children in foster placements, or family placements for example. Residential placements are costly, with unit costs rising year on year by 14.1%. We have seen movement in the numbers of residential placements, from 84 to 76 because of a focused, ongoing piece of work led by our newly recruited Head of Service for Supporting our Children. We have reviewed a number of care plans and as a result children have been moved from residential settings to settings that better meet their needs, always ensuring their safety and individual needs are at the forefront when planning.</p> <p>The service has additionally seen a reduction in agency social work staff during the last 12-18 months. In 2021/2022 the service had rates of up to 40% agency staff in some teams. A refreshed Workforce Strategy, overseen by a Workforce Board, chaired monthly by the Director of Childrens Services, has seen a reduction of agency staff to under 15% across the social care teams. The national average is now 17% and regionally the rate is much higher. The last set of regional data put Blackpool at the lowest for agency rates. Officers continue to monitor this closely in a challenging and competitive market.</p> | |
| Adult Services | <p>An overspend of £3,200k is forecast. Adult Commissioning Placements is forecasting an overspend of £3,284k. There are savings shortfalls of £1,012k from the proposal in which the Integrated Care Board (ICB) were expected to provide additional income of £1.6m into the Better Care Fund (BCF) and a further shortfall on Winter Pressures funding of £337K. There is a pressure of £1,130k in Supported Living due to additional packages of care along with £457k of pressures due to additional packages of short-term care linked to hospital discharge. An increased number of complex case packages have also created a pressure of £150k. £439k pressures relates to Out of Area Residential and Nursing Placements fee uplifts being significantly greater than forecast. There is a £211k pressure on Homecare whereby the current</p> | 3,200 |

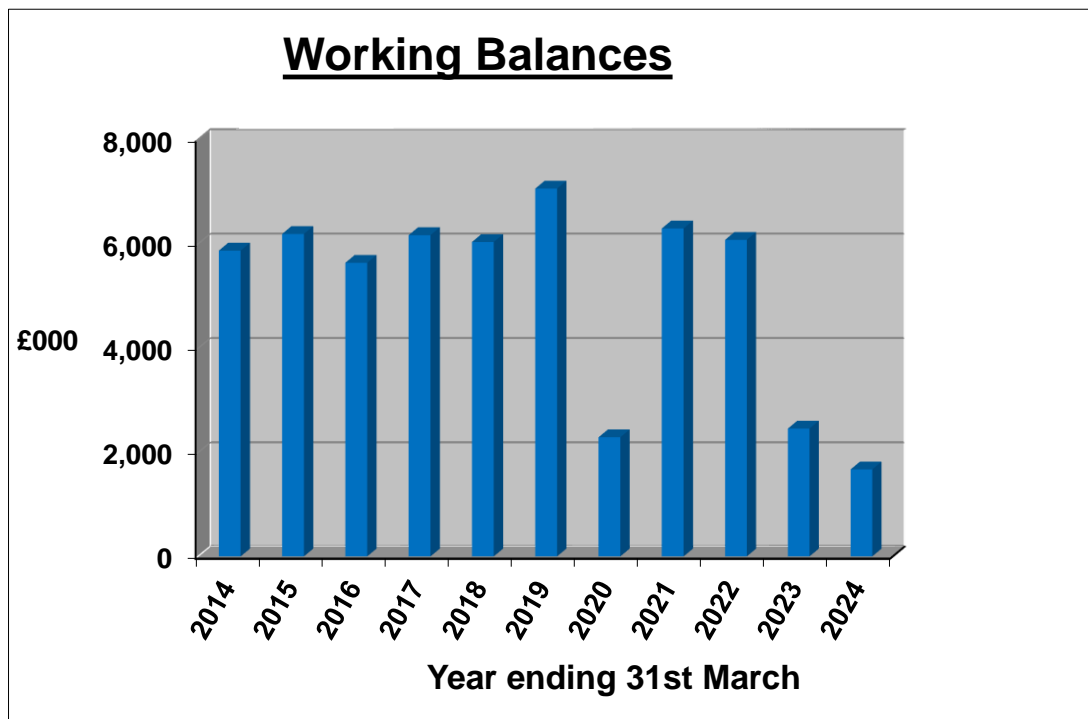
| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----|
| | <p>commissioned hours exceeds budget. Direct payment pressures of £150k are resulting from a forecasted reduction in claw-backs based on year-to-date actuals and increased packages. There is £602k in the forecast relating to the recently announced Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund which is being used to offset the residential/nursing top ups and Out of Area fee rates. Adult Social Care is forecasting an underspend of £74k due to a high volume of vacant positions.</p> | |
| Community and Environmental Services | <p>An overspend of £500k is forecast. Children's Transport Services is reporting an overspend of £500k due to a combination of increased demand pressures and historic savings targets which have not been able to be achieved. Waste Services are reporting a break-even position. There are forecast pressures within Street Cleansing and within Public Conveniences, where an inflationary uplift has been applied to the contract. Trade Waste income, however, is forecasting an increase against budget that will offset these pressures. There are pressures in other services of the Directorate but these are expected to be covered by other savings and income generation.</p> | 500 |
| Communications and Regeneration | <p>An overspend of £10k is forecast. Tourism and Communications is forecasting a pressure of £50k due to increased costs in Visit Blackpool. There are also risks around income generation as a result of the cost of living crisis and increased costs in relation to the Illuminations extension that will be quantified later in the year. Economic Development and Cultural Services is currently forecasting an underspend of £40k due to vacant posts.</p> | 10 |
| Strategic Leisure Assets | <p>Strategic Leisure Assets is forecasting an underspend of £854k. In accordance with the original decision for this programme by the Executive on 7th February 2011 any under or overspend on Strategic Leisure Assets will be transferred to an Earmarked Reserve. The cumulative deficit as at March 2022/23 was £10,690k. In 2023/24 a transfer of £1,420k has been made to Contributions to Reserves reducing this deficit balance to £9,270k. This transfer is in line with the budget. The above underspend will further reduce this deficit to £8,416k. The latest Leisure Assets medium-term financial plan currently expects the service to break-even, in-year, from 2023/24 and cumulatively by 2034/35.</p> | Nil |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------|
| Growth and Prosperity | An underspend of £3,600k is forecast. This is due to the expectation of proceeds raised from the current work programme exceeding costs including prudential borrowing. The Executive at its meeting on 8 th November 2021 agreed to the approach to transition out the Growth and Prosperity net revenue budget target over a 2-year period, 2022/23-23/24, with any proceeds subsequently realised from the existing work programme being directed to bolstering reserves and any new proceeds being retained by Growth and Prosperity for re-investment. This surplus will be transferred to Earmarked Reserves to go against the current balance. The cumulative deficit as at March 2022/23 was £10,125k and it is therefore expected that the balance at the end of 2023/24 will be £6,525k. | Nil |
| Public Health | A break-even position is forecast. The Public Health Directorate is forecasting spending the full grant of £19,858,394 in the financial year to March 2024. | Nil |
| Governance and Partnership Services | An underspend of £19k is forecast. Corporate Legal Services is forecasting a £43k overspend due to additional staffing costs. Information Governance is forecasting an underspend of £37k due to increased income and a release of reserves that is now deemed as no longer required and Life Events is forecasting an underspend of £25k due to staff turnover. | (19) |
| Resources | An underspend of £153k is forecast. Savings across the Directorate relate to staff vacancies, additional income from increased rents, new leases, HMRC, other income generation opportunities and the receipt of New Burdens funding for the Covid-19 business support grant post-assurance work. | (153) |
| Chief Executive | An underspend of £200k is forecast due to a release of reserves that are now deemed as no longer required. | (200) |
| Contingencies and Reserves | The original Contingencies Cash Limited Budget was £7,722k. Movements out of Contingencies since the beginning of the financial year have been reflected in services' Cash Limited Budgets. Services will be experiencing both pay and non-pay pressures during the | (1,711) |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---------|
| | <p>year. The cost of the pending pay award (based on the initial pay offer which has been rejected) is estimated at £4,829k compared to the provision in Contingencies for a 2% pay award of £1,686k resulting in an initial pressure of £3,143k. However, energy is currently forecast to cost £5,542k compared to the provision in Contingences of £8,699k resulting in a saving of £3,157k. Adult Services have updated the Adults Reserve forecast and this is reflected in the Reserve tables below. This has also improved the Contingencies position by £1,000k. There is an additional Public Health saving of £200k and a Business Rate refund relating to Central Car Park of £505k. There is a pressure of £8k relating to New Homes Bonus which is contra to the underspend in 'Budgets Outside the Cash Limit'. The overall net impact is therefore an underspend of £1,711k.</p> | |
| Budgets Outside the Cash Limit | <p>An underspend of £2,019k is forecast. Treasury Management is forecasting an underspend of £1,574k, which includes £2,184k of prudential recharges to services and means that the £150k savings target will be met in 2023/24 and an increase in Interest received from investments providing additional income of £152k. Offset against this is £697k pressure relating to higher interest rates on temporary borrowing and a reduction in the interest charge to the Housing Revenue Account as less borrowing is required in 2023/24 than originally budgeted. However, interest rates are predicated to increase further over the duration of the financial year and these increases are likely to have a negative impact on the current position of the service. The Council is currently using 50:50 temporary and long-term borrowing to finance prudentially-funded capital expenditure and this gearing is under continual review by the Treasury Management Panel. The Business Loans Fund has a savings target of £154k and is forecasting a surplus of £402k as new business loans have been awarded at a higher repayment rates than originally forecast for 2023/24. Following a review of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), which was approved by the Executive on 8 February 2021, a saving of £5,158k has been released in 2023/24. Subsidiary Companies is forecasting a £35k saving due to reduction in charges, mainly relating to debt management and New Homes</p> | (2,019) |

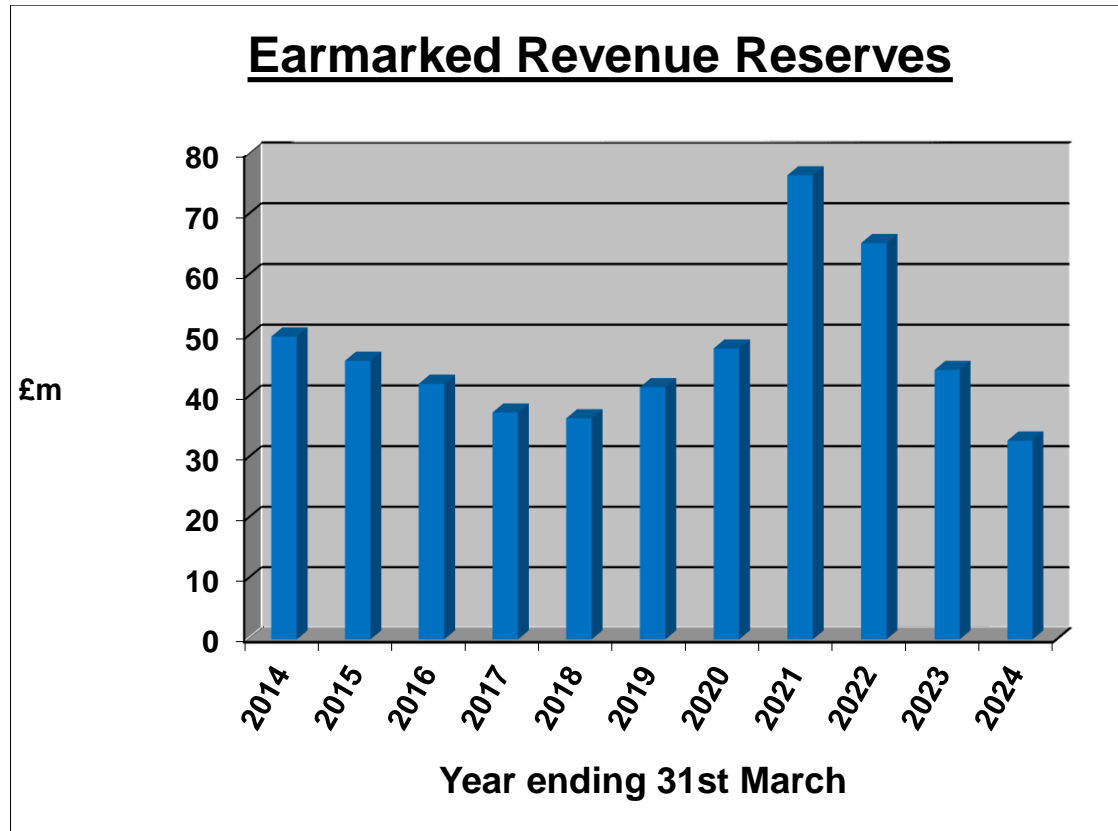
| | | |
|--------------|--|--------------|
| | Bonus is forecasting an underspend of £8k and this is offset by an equivalent sum in contingencies. All other services within the Budgets Outside the Cash Limit are forecasting no in-year pressures in 2023/24. Although Parking Services is currently forecasting a break-even position, this will depend on the impact of the cost of living crisis, the quality of the holiday season and the availability of parking due to regenerational projects within the town. | |
| Total | | 5,121 |

The graph below shows the stark impact on the level of Council working balances in year together with the last 10 years' year-end balances for comparison:



Whilst the Council maintains working balances to address any in-year volatilities, it also maintains a number of Earmarked Revenue Reserves (ERR) for such longer-term commitments as future Private Finance Initiative payments, uncertainties within the Localised Business Rate system and self-insured risks

and insurance excesses. In order to present a complete picture of the Council's financial standing an equivalent graph to that of working balances, including a projection to 31st March 2024, is shown below:



| Provisional Available Earmarked Reserves | £m |
|---|----------------|
| Provisional Balance at 1 April 2023 | 44.511 |
| Less: Savings target | (9.946) |
| Add: Contributions to Reserves on Council Tax summary | 2.136 |
| Add: Growth and Prosperity Reserve | 3.600 |
| Add: Strategic Leisure Assets Underspend | 0.854 |
| Less: Savings targets in services to be transferred from reserves | (0.440) |
| Less: Balance on contributions to/from reserves budget | (3.156) |
| Less: Estimated other movements in 2023/24 | <u>(4.675)</u> |
| Forecast Available Earmarked Revenue Reserves as at 31st March 2024 | <u>32.884</u> |

6.4 Budget Savings

Appendix 2p comprises a summary schedule showing the progress made by directorates in achieving their revenue budget savings targets for 2023/24 which total £23,395k. As at 31st July 2023 61% of the 2023/24 recurrent savings target has been delivered. The full-year forecast predicts that 91% will be achieved by the year-end. Currently 45% of the saving has been found recurrently.

6.5 Collection Rates

Council Tax

Being the most deprived local authority in England per the Office for National Statistics, collection of Council Tax is a challenge but 2022/23 saw an improvement in collection rate to 5th lowest and this progress has continued with the amount collected for Council Tax (excluding Police and Fire precepts) being £23.4m and the collection rate **33.7%** at the end of month 4. This compares to £21.7m and 33.3% at the same point in 2022/23. The amount collected has risen by £1.7m, which is mainly due to increases in both the Council Tax rate and base.

In the light of the reductions in discount and the introduction of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme the target collection rate is still 97.5% over a 4-year collection period as approved on 31 January 2023 as part of the setting of the Council Tax Base for 2023/24.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)

The Council Tax Reduction Scheme was introduced on 1st April 2013. It is approved annually to ensure that a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme is in place by the start of the following financial year thereby avoiding the financial risks associated with the Government imposing a default scheme. The current 2023/24 Scheme was approved by the Executive on 23rd January 2023 to ensure that Council Tax support is available to the working aged and pensioners based upon a means test.

At the end of month 4 the amount collected (excluding Police and Fire precepts) in respect of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Council Tax for those who have to pay CTRS either for the first time or in addition to a proportion of their Council Tax was £0.88m and the collection rate was **25.0%**. This compares to £0.98m and 23.7% at the same point in 2022/23.

The likely impact for 2023/24 is that the underlying rate of collection of Council Tax Reduction Scheme will be under similar pressure to 2022/23 due to accumulated arrears, limits on the amount that can be recovered from Attachment of Benefits and the impact of the cost of living crisis on disposable household income.

Business Rates

Prior to 1 April 2013 Business Rate income was collected by billing authorities on behalf of central government and then redistributed among all local authorities and police authorities as part of Formula Grant. Since then the income relating to Blackpool is shared between central government (50%), the Council (49%) and the Fire Authority (1%) other than for an intermittent period when Blackpool Council participated in a Lancashire-wide pooling arrangement.

During 2022/23 Blackpool's collection rate rose significantly from 21st lowest in England to 32nd lowest and this progress has continued with the amount collected for Business Rates being £13.4m and the collection rate **35.7%** at the end of month 4. This compares to £15.0m and 34.9% at the same point in 2022/23. 2022/23 excludes the s31 Extended Retail/Nurseries, etc. relief provided by central government which reduced to 50% in 2022/23. This will have a slight impact on future collection rates.

From April 2014 Business Ratepayers have been entitled to elect to pay by 12 monthly instalments instead of over 10 months which has allowed businesses more time to pay.

In the 4 months to the end of July 2023 - 147 business rate summonses were issued.

6.6 Capital Monitoring Performance

All active capital schemes have been included within Appendix 2q. The purpose is to present the overall position of capital spend. The schemes are shown individually where total scheme budget is greater than £500k and grouped as "other schemes" otherwise. As in previous financial years, the emphasis regarding capital monitoring will be on scheme variance rather than in-year progress since many schemes cross financial years such as the major housing developments. Therefore, some degree of flexibility for the management of slippage is necessary in order to balance the overall capital programme each year to the funding allocations available.

The report includes the capital programme as approved by the Executive on 6th February 2023. The month 4 report includes this data for comparative purposes. Future reports may show further changes in the Capital Programme, representing schemes that were approved after submission of the 2023/24 capital programme.

The economic climate remains challenging. High inflation, rising interest rates, supply chain issues (particularly in relation to steel) and a lack of labour are leading to increased costs, primarily on capital schemes that are likely to span a number of years. An ongoing review of capital schemes is therefore being undertaken to establish any schemes where approved budgets may become insufficient and potential overspendings identified. Therefore, in tandem an asset disposal plan is

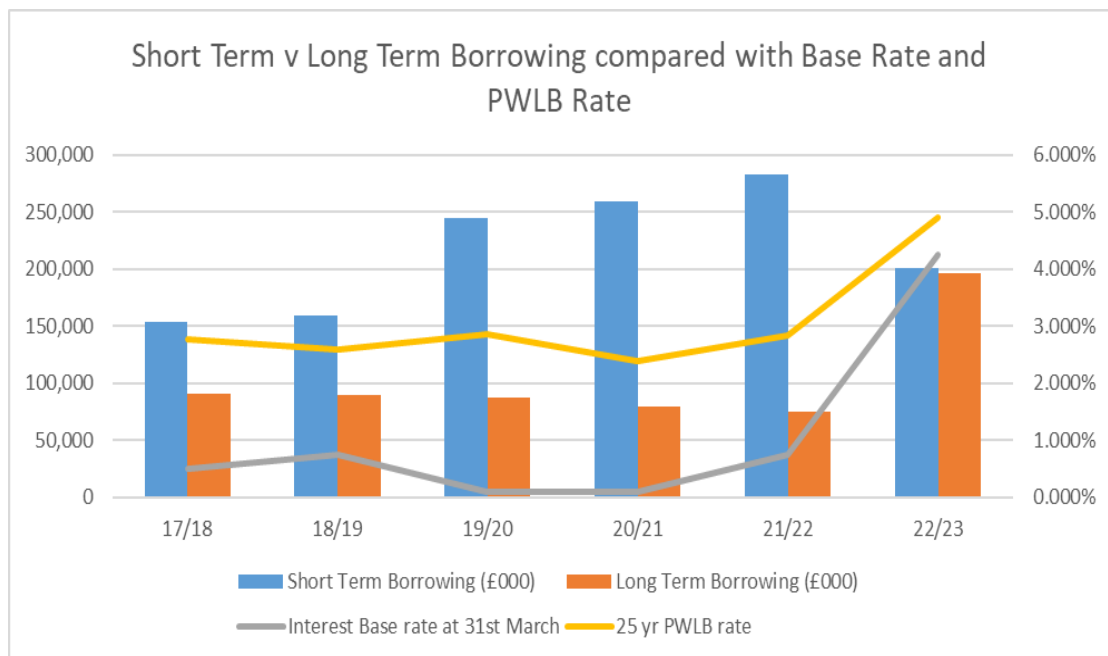
being developed to generate capital receipts that may be applied to offset any such pressures. In some cases where appropriate, legal challenge/adjudication will be considered to redress the position. Where uncertainties of outcomes (adverse or favourable) still exist, scheme forecast variances are shown as break-even but highlighted as amber.

6.7 Summary Cash Flow Statement

As part of the reporting format for this financial year a summary cash flow statement is included at Appendix 2r. This provides a comparison of the actual cash receipts and payments compared to forecast for 2023/24.

During the first 4 months of the year the Council’s net cashflow has resulted in fluctuations in short-term net investment/borrowing balances due to the receipt of up-front grant income in this financial year. The Council fixed £125m of temporary loans in August 2022 at around 3.0%, which resulted in an increase in investment balances and over the next few months short-term borrowing will be repaid using the fixed-term borrowing taken.

The graph below demonstrate the changes in the profile of the Council’s borrowings over the last 6 years. It shows that Council borrowing has increased from less than £250m at the end of 2017/18 to nearly £400m at the end of 2022/23. The profile of this borrowing has also changed as we now have a 50:50 split between long-term and short-term borrowing as interest rates have rapidly risen with uncertainties on where they will land and with consequences of increased borrowing costs.



6.8 Summary Balance Sheet

In order to provide a complete picture of the Council's financial performance Appendix 2s provides a snapshot of the General Fund balance sheet as at the end of month 4. The key areas of focus are any significant movements in debtors, cash and cash equivalents, bank overdraft and creditors as these impact upon the Council's performance in the critical areas of debt recovery, treasury management and Public Sector Payment Policy.

The balance sheet has been prepared under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS/IASs). Each year an accounting adjustment under IAS 19 is made for the value of the pension fund at year-end. In 2022/23, for the first time, this produced a pension asset rather than a pension liability. Based on the latest advice from the Pension Fund the Council has not recognised the pension asset. However this is currently under review and therefore the figure is subject to change. Any change will also affect the unusable reserves. Usable reserves include unallocated General Fund reserves and revenue reserves. Unusable reserves are those that the Council is not able to use to provide services. This category includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets were sold.

Due to statutory changes regarding the accounting treatment of infrastructure assets which were approved in Parliament in late November 2022, the 2020/21 and 2021/22 accounts have not yet been signed off by the Council's external auditor. The audits are still ongoing and as soon as they are completed the 2022/23 balance sheet may require amendment, therefore the figures should be treated as draft.

Over the 4-month period there has been an increase in Property, Plant and Equipment of £25.7m due to capital expenditure which is in line with the Council's approved capital programme for 2023/24. Short-term borrowing has reduced by £18.3m due to the timing of capital and revenue grants.

6.9 Medium-Term Financial Plan Update and Earmarked Reserves Forecast

The 6-year Medium-Term Financial Sustainability Strategy (MTFSS) covering 2021/22 – 2026/27 was approved by the Executive on 8th November 2021 and whilst the principles still stand the current economic climate has had a significant impact on the supporting Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Officers are meeting regularly to review and continuously update the Medium Term Financial Plan and the Corporate Leadership Team are meeting on 26 September 2023 and fortnightly thereafter as part of the budget planning process for 2024/25. An updated position will be reported to a future Executive as part of the financial

monitoring, but a latest indication of future Budget gaps based on current information is given below:

| Medium Term Financial Plan v1.4 | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|
| 2024/25 | Budget Gap | 2026/27 |
| £m | 2025/26 | £m |
| | £m | £m |
| 22.8 | 7.3 | 7.9 |

As part of this budget planning process which consolidates the individual MTFPs of the Children's, Adult and Growth and Prosperity services, a detailed exercise has also been undertaken on their consequences upon Earmarked Revenue Reserves to check the validity of amounts held and a forecast of when funds will be drawn down over the same period as the latest MTFSS. A summary table is shown below :

| Reserves Summary | | | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Directorate | Draft 31/03/22 | Est Balance 31/03/23 | Est Balance 31/03/24 | Est Balance 31/03/25 | Est Balance 31/03/26 | Est Balance 31/03/27 |
| | £m | £m | £m | £m | £m | £m |
| Total | (65.4) | (44.5) | (32.9) | (29.1) | (30.5) | (32.8) |

In addition to General Fund Earmarked Revenue Reserves the Council Holds a Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Reserve to manage the Schools, High Needs and Early Years Blocks of grant. Under a Statutory Override to 2025/26 this reserve is maintained separately from the Council's portfolio of revenue reserves as many local authorities are in significant deficit and their consolidation could tip their overall financial standing into deficit. In Blackpool's case the DSG Reserve stood at a deficit of £2,784k as at 31/03/23 but with the support of the Department for Education's Safety Valve Programme this reserve is planned to return to surplus in 2024/25.

A further reserve to note is the Council's Housing Revenue Account (Appendix 2n), a ringfenced account for the management and maintenance of the Council's housing stock. As at 31 March 2023 this reserve was at a level of £1,721k and is forecast to be £1,323k at the end of the financial year; still ahead of its minimum agreed level of £1m.

6.10 Central Government Monitoring and Oversight

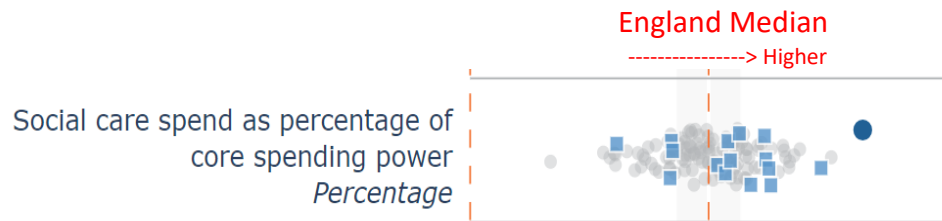
Local government finance is clearly in a fragile and precarious position. There are at least 25 local authorities who have been outed in the media recently for challenges with their financial standing and there are many others who are known to be struggling. In addition, 8 have already filed Section 114 (s114) Notices. Councils are required by law to have balanced budgets. The issuing of a s114 notice stops all but

essential spending, making sure that vital services can continue to be provided to the most vulnerable residents. External oversight exists via periodic Local Government Association peer reviews and CIPFA financial healthchecks but local public audit has been unable to keep up the pace with 504 external audits outstanding in England between 2015/16-2021/22 at the last count. On top of this central government does require 29 financial monitoring returns from local authorities each year.

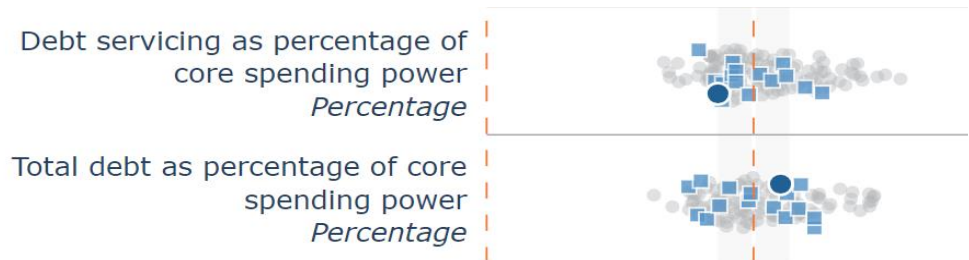
As a result of this perilous climate the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities launched the Office for Local Government (Oflog) in July this year, whose purpose is to increase transparency, foster accountability and use data to further improve performance and help identify problems at an earlier stage. Using most recent financial data from the 2021/22 Revenue Outturn (RO) returns, Oflog has published benchmarking data for local authorities against others and particularly nearest neighbours. These can be found within the following link:

[Local Authority Data Explorer - DLUHC Data Dashboards](#)

As an example of what is available and relevant, the following dashboard shows Blackpool’s social care spend as a percentage of its core spending power which unsurprisingly is in the highest quartile as would be expected for a local authority with such deprivation and demand. The blue circle is Blackpool, blue squares are Blackpool’s statistical neighbours and the grey circles are all other local authorities:



Again, unsurprisingly the level of debt reflecting the magnitude of the generational programme of capital investment is above the median though not significantly, whilst the debt financing is below the median illustrating effective treasury management:



Officers will endeavour to employ this tool in future monthly financial monitoring reports.

6.11 Conclusions and Recommendations

The Council's Revenue Budget for 2023/24 set a target level of General Fund working balances of around £6m. However, given the current economic climate it is recommended that work continues towards target working balances of £6m by 31st March 2024 rising to £8m by 31 March 2025. Earmarked revenue reserves at the start of the financial year stood at £44.5m, though with known in-year commitments against this the balance will fall to an estimated £32.9m by the end of the year. This should still be sufficient to underwrite the current year's financial risks with a financial plan in place for the Council's wholly-owned companies (ref. Appendix 2o).

If the 2023/24 forecast position became the actual outturn, then in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules within its Constitution the forecast revenue outturn 2023/24 within this report contravenes both of the two specific conditions that excess spending does not:

1. exceed 1% (= £5m) of the authority's total gross revenue expenditure; or
2. have the effect of reducing the authority's Working Balances below 50% of their normal target level (= £3m).

However, these are still unprecedented times for the whole of the local government sector and in the context of relatively healthy levels of Earmarked Revenue Reserves and with 8 months of the financial year still remaining officers are working continuously to improve the position - revised service and financial plans are being developed including the review of technical accounting treatments, a continuing policy of freezing non-essential spend, a robust approach at weekly Resourcing Panel meetings to only allow the filling of critical vacant posts and the prospective redesignation of earmarked reserves should they need to be used.

6.12 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

Appendix 2a - Revenue Summary

Appendix 2b - Chief Executive
Appendix 2c - Governance and Partnership Services
Appendices 2c/d - Ward Budgets
Appendix 2e - Resources
Appendix 2f - Communications and Regeneration
Appendix 2g - Strategic Leisure Assets
Appendix 2h - Growth and Prosperity
Appendix 2i - Community and Environmental Services
Appendix 2j - Adult Services
Appendix 2k - Children's Services
Appendix 2l - Public Health
Appendix 2m - Budgets Outside the Cash Limit
Appendix 2n - Housing Revenue Account
Appendix 2o - Wholly-owned companies
Appendix 2p - Budget Savings performance
Appendix 2q - Capital Monitoring
Appendix 2r - Cash Flow Summary
Appendix 2s - General Fund Balance Sheet Summary

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 As outlined in this report and appendices.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 Impact of financial performance against approved Revenue budgets and upon Council reserves and balances.

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

11.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was produced as a part of the budget-setting process and remains relevant.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None directly from this report.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

15.0 Key decision information:

15.1 Is this a key decision? No

15.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:

15.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? N/A

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

16.0 Call-in information:

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

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

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed:

Date approved:

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1

19.0 Summary of Discussion:

19.1

20.0 Executive decision:

20.1

21.0 Date of Decision:

21.1

22.0 Reason(s) for decision:

22.1

23.0 Date Decision published:

23.1

24.0 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

24.1

25.0 Executive Members present:

25.1

26.0 Call-in:

26.1

27.0 Notes:

27.1

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Blackpool Council

Revenue summary - budget, actual and forecast:

| BLACKPOOL COUNCIL | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| FORECAST GENERAL FUND POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2024 | | | | | | | |
| SUMMARY | | | | | | | |
| APP. | GENERAL FUND NET REQUIREMENTS | BUDGET | EXPENDITURE | | | VARIANCE | 2022/23 (UNDER)/OVER SPEND B/FWD £000 |
| | | ADJUSTED CASH LIMITED BUDGET £000 | EXPENDITURE APR - JUL £000 | 2023/24 PROJECTED SPEND £000 | FORECAST OUTTURN £000 | F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000 | |
| 2(b) | CHIEF EXECUTIVE | 1,537 | 3,804 | (2,467) | 1,337 | (200) | - |
| 2(c) | GOVERNANCE & PARTNERSHIP SERVICES | 1,985 | 222 | 1,744 | 1,966 | (19) | - |
| 2(c/d) | WARD BUDGETS | 269 | (67) | 336 | 269 | - | - |
| 2(e) | RESOURCES | 2,419 | (6,259) | 8,525 | 2,266 | (153) | - |
| 2(f) | COMMUNICATIONS AND REGENERATION | 4,085 | 2,343 | 1,752 | 4,095 | 10 | - |
| 2(g) | STRATEGIC LEISURE ASSETS | 2,625 | 278 | 1,493 | 1,771 | (854) | - |
| | STRATEGIC LEISURE ASSETS - TRANSFER TO/(FROM) RESERVES | - | - | 854 | 854 | 854 | - |
| 2(h) | GROWTH & PROSPERITY | (5,879) | 1,897 | (11,376) | (9,479) | (3,600) | - |
| | GROWTH & PROSPERITY - TRANSFER TO/(FROM) RESERVES | - | - | 3,600 | 3,600 | 3,600 | - |
| 2(i) | COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES | 53,274 | 6,647 | 47,127 | 53,774 | 500 | - |
| 2(j) | ADULT SERVICES | 63,968 | 19,826 | 47,342 | 67,168 | 3,200 | - |
| 2(k) | CHILDREN'S SERVICES | 68,316 | 15,312 | 58,517 | 73,829 | 5,513 | - |
| 2(l) | PUBLIC HEALTH | 3 | (16,822) | 16,825 | 3 | - | - |
| 2(m) | BUDGETS OUTSIDE THE CASH LIMIT | 13,743 | (2,143) | 13,867 | 11,724 | (2,019) | - |
| | CAPITAL CHARGES | (30,008) | (10,003) | (20,005) | (30,008) | - | - |
| | NET COST OF SERVICES: | 176,337 | 15,035 | 168,134 | 183,169 | 6,832 | - |
| | CONTRIBUTIONS: | | | | | | |
| | - TO / (FROM) RESERVES | (13,102) | (8,526) | (4,576) | (13,102) | - | |
| | - REVENUE CONSEQUENCES OF CAPITAL OUTLAY | 500 | - | 500 | 500 | - | |
| | CONTINGENCIES | 7,691 | (438) | 6,418 | 5,980 | (1,711) | |
| | LEVIES | 457 | 74 | 383 | 457 | - | |
| | CONTRIBUTIONS, etc. | (4,454) | (8,890) | 2,725 | (6,165) | (1,711) | |
| | TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE TO BE MET FROM PUBLIC FUNDS | 171,883 | 6,145 | 170,859 | 177,004 | 5,121 | |
| | ADDED TO/(TAKEN FROM) BALANCES | 4,335 | - | (786) | (786) | (5,121) | |
| | NET REQUIREMENT AFTER WORKING BALANCES | 176,218 | 6,145 | 170,073 | 176,218 | - | |
| GENERAL BALANCES AS AT 1st APRIL 2023 PER UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2022/23 | | | | | | | 2,459 |
| Budgeted In-year (reduction in) / addition to General Fund Working Balances | | | | | | | 4,335 |
| | | | | | | | 6,794 |
| Forecast In-year (reduction in) / addition to General Fund Working Balances | | | | | | | (5,121) |
| ESTIMATED UNEARMARKED WORKING BALANCES AS AT 31st MARCH 2024 | | | | | | | 1,673 |

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Blackpool Council - Chief Executive

Revenue summary - budget, actual and forecast:

| FUNCTIONS OF THE SERVICE | BUDGET | EXPENDITURE | | | VARIANCE | 2022/23 (UNDER)/OVER SPEND B/FWD £000 |
|--|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| | ADJUSTED CASH LIMITED BUDGET £000 | EXPENDITURE APR - JUL £000 | PROJECTED SPEND £000 | FORECAST OUTTURN £000 | F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000 | |
| CHIEF EXECUTIVE | | | | | | |
| NET EXPENDITURE | | | | | | |
| CHIEF EXECUTIVE | 620 | 277 | 343 | 620 | - | - |
| HUMAN RESOURCES, ORGANISATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT | (7) | (1,104) | 1,097 | (7) | - | - |
| CHIEF EXECUTIVE TOTAL | 613 | (827) | 1,440 | 613 | - | - |
| CORPORATE DELIVERY UNIT | (9) | (1,795) | 1,586 | (209) | (200) | - |
| HOUSING | 933 | 6,426 | (5,493) | 933 | - | - |
| ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE | 924 | 4,631 | (3,907) | 724 | (200) | - |
| TOTALS | 1,537 | 3,804 | (2,467) | 1,337 | (200) | - |

Commentary on the key issues:

Directorate Summary - basis

The Revenue summary (above) lists the outturn projection for each individual service within the Chief Executive's Directorate against their respective, currently approved, revenue budget. Forecast outturns are based upon actual financial performance for the first 4 months of 2023/24 together with predictions of performance, anticipated pressures and efficiencies in the remainder of the financial year.

Chief Executive

This service is currently forecasting a break-even position.

Human Resources, Organisation and Workforce Development

This service is currently forecasting a break-even position.

Corporate Delivery Unit

This service is currently forecasting a £200k underspend due to the release of a reserve now deemed as no longer required.

Housing

This service is currently forecasting a break-even position.

Budget Holder – Mr N Jack, Chief Executive

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Blackpool Council – Governance and Partnership Services

Revenue summary - budget, actual and forecast:

| FUNCTIONS OF THE SERVICE | BUDGET | EXPENDITURE | | | VARIANCE | 2022/23 (UNDER)/OVER SPEND B/FWD £000 |
|--|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| | 2023/24 | | | | | |
| | ADJUSTED CASH LIMITED BUDGET £000 | EXPENDITURE APR - JUL £000 | PROJECTED SPEND £000 | FORECAST OUTTURN £000 | F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000 | |
| GOVERNANCE & PARTNERSHIP SERVICES | | | | | | |
| NET EXPENDITURE | | | | | | |
| DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE | 2,358 | 1,345 | 1,013 | 2,358 | - | - |
| CORPORATE LEGAL SERVICES | (59) | (1,196) | 1,180 | (16) | 43 | - |
| INFORMATION GOVERNANCE | 78 | (206) | 247 | 41 | (37) | - |
| LIFE EVENTS | (392) | 279 | (696) | (417) | (25) | - |
| GOVERNANCE & PARTNERSHIP SERVICES | 1,985 | 222 | 1,744 | 1,966 | (19) | - |
| WARDS | 269 | (67) | 336 | 269 | - | - |
| TOTALS | 2,254 | 155 | 2,080 | 2,235 | (19) | - |

Commentary on the key issues:

Directorate Summary - basis

The Revenue summary (above) lists the outturn projection for each individual service within Governance and Partnership Services against their respective, currently approved, revenue budget. Forecast outturns are based upon actual financial performance for the first 4 months of 2023/24 together with predictions of performance, anticipated pressures and efficiencies in the remainder of the financial year, all of which have been agreed with the head of service.

Democratic Governance Service

The Democratic Governance Service is currently forecasting a break-even position.

Corporate Legal Services

This service is forecasting a £43k overspend due to additional staffing costs.

Information Governance

This service is forecasting an underspend of £37k due to increased income and a release of reserves that is now deemed as no longer required.

Life Events

This service is forecasting an underspend of £25k due to staff turnover.

Ward Budgets

Ward budgets are expected to break-even in 2023/24.

Budget Holder - Mr M Towers, Director of Governance and Partnership Services.

Blackpool Council
Ward Budgets
2023/24
Month 4

Wards

| Ward | Councillors | Total No. of Requisitions Submitted | No. of Requisitions Approved | No. Awaiting Approval | Total No. of Requisitions Completed | Total 2023-24 Budget | 2023-24 Budget Committed to Approved Schemes | Remaining 2023-24 Budget |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Anchorsholme Ward 61008/61030 | Cllr. Galley Cllr. Cooper | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £0.00 £0.00 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 |
| Bispham Ward 61009/61031 | Cllr. Warne Cllr. Wilshaw | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £0.00 £0.00 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 |
| Bloomfield Ward 61010/61032 | Cllr. Fenlon Cllr. Hobson | 0 3 | 0 3 | 0 0 | 0 3 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £0.00 £1,031.00 | £7,000.00 £5,969.00 |
| Brunswick Ward 61011/61033 | Cllr. Marshall Cllr. Thomas | 1 1 | 1 1 | 0 0 | 0 0 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £315.42 £382.35 | £6,684.58 £6,617.65 |
| Claremont Ward 61012/61034 | Cllr. Taylor Cllr. L Williams | 3 3 | 3 3 | 0 0 | 2 2 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £2,879.43 £2,879.43 | £4,120.57 £4,120.57 |
| Clifton Ward 61013/61035 | Cllr. Burdess Cllr. Humphries | 4 4 | 4 4 | 0 0 | 2 2 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £2,288.17 £2,308.16 | £4,711.83 £4,691.84 |
| Greenlands Ward 61014/61036 | Cllr. Flanagan Cllr. Jones | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £0.00 £0.00 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 |
| Hawes Side Ward 61015/61037 | Cllr. N Brookes Cllr. Critchley | 1 1 | 1 1 | 0 0 | 0 0 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £100.00 £99.00 | £6,900.00 £6,901.00 |
| Highfield Ward 61016/61038 | Cllr. Hunter Cllr. B Mitchell | 1 0 | 1 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £144.00 £0.00 | £6,856.00 £7,000.00 |
| Ingthorpe Ward 61017/61039 | Cllr. Bamborough MBE Cllr. Farrell | 0 1 | 0 1 | 0 0 | 0 1 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £0.00 £100.00 | £7,000.00 £6,900.00 |
| Layton Ward 61018/61040 | Cllr. Benson Cllr. Boughton | 4 4 | 4 4 | 0 0 | 2 1 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £917.56 £917.55 | £6,082.44 £6,082.45 |
| Marton Ward 61019/61041 | Cllr. S Brookes Cllr. S Smith | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £0.00 £0.00 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 |
| Norbreck Ward 61020/61043 | Cllr. Ellison Cllr. Sloman | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £0.00 £0.00 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 |
| Park Ward 61021/61044 | Cllr. Campbell Cllr. Hoyle | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £0.00 £0.00 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 |
| Squires Gate Ward 61022/61045 | Cllr. C Mitchell MBE Cllr. Walsh | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £0.00 £0.00 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 |
| Stanley Ward 61023/61046 | Cllr. Baker Cllr. Roberts | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £0.00 £0.00 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 |
| Talbot Ward 61024/61046 | Cllr. Hugo Cllr. M Smith | 3 3 | 3 3 | 0 0 | 2 2 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £620.38 £620.37 | £6,379.62 £6,379.63 |
| Tyldesley Ward 61025/61047 | Cllr. Roe Cllr. Webb | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £0.00 £0.00 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 |
| Victoria Ward 61026/61048 | Cllr. Jackson Cllr. P Brookes | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £0.00 £0.00 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 |
| Warbreck Ward 61027/61049 | Cllr. D Scott Cllr. Mrs M Scott | 3 3 | 3 3 | 0 0 | 3 3 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £1,272.50 £1,272.50 | £5,727.50 £5,727.50 |
| Waterloo Ward 61028/61050 | Cllr. Cartmell Cllr. D Mitchell MBE | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 | £0.00 £0.00 | £7,000.00 £7,000.00 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Ward Totals | 43 | 43 | 0 | 25 | £294,000.00 | £18,147.82 | £275,852.18 |
| Unallocated Budget | - | - | - | - | (£25,000.00) | £0.00 | (£25,000.00) |
| Income Budget | - | - | - | - | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| Area Ward Totals | 43 | 43 | 0 | 25 | £269,000.00 | £18,147.82 | £250,852.18 |

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Blackpool Council - Resources

Revenue summary - budget, actual and forecast:

| FUNCTIONS OF THE SERVICE | BUDGET | EXPENDITURE | | | VARIANCE | 2022/23 (UNDER)/OVER SPEND B/FWD £000 |
|--|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| | 2023/24 | | | | | |
| | ADJUSTED CASH LIMITED BUDGET £000 | EXPENDITURE APR - JUL £000 | PROJECTED SPEND £000 | FORECAST OUTTURN £000 | F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000 | |
| RESOURCES | | | | | | |
| NET EXPENDITURE | | | | | | |
| PROCUREMENT & EXCHEQUER SERVICES | (8) | (515) | 478 | (37) | (29) | - |
| BENEFITS | (1,615) | 866 | (2,481) | (1,615) | - | - |
| REVENUES SERVICES | 1,765 | 1,346 | 419 | 1,765 | - | - |
| CUSTOMER FIRST | 18 | (545) | 574 | 29 | 11 | - |
| ICT SERVICES | (9) | (1,971) | 1,962 | (9) | - | - |
| ACCOUNTANCY | 23 | (856) | 785 | (71) | (94) | - |
| RISK SERVICES | (4) | (574) | 554 | (20) | (16) | - |
| PROPERTY SERVICES (Incl. INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO) | 2,250 | (3,899) | 6,130 | 2,231 | (19) | - |
| EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY | (1) | (111) | 104 | (7) | (6) | - |
| TOTALS | 2,419 | (6,259) | 8,525 | 2,266 | (153) | - |

Commentary on the key issues:

Directorate Summary - basis

The Revenue summary (above) lists the outturn projection for each individual service within Resources against their respective, currently approved, revenue budget. Forecast outturns are based upon actual financial performance for the first 4 months of 2023/24 together with predictions of performance, anticipated pressures and efficiencies in the remainder of the financial year, all of which have been agreed with each head of service.

Procurement and Exchequer Services

Procurement and Exchequer Services are forecasting an underspend of £29k. This position has been achieved as a result of measures to deliver savings through dis-establishment of posts and increased income opportunities. Additional one-off, ad hoc income has been secured in year and there is currently a vacant post within the Procurement team.

Benefits

The Benefits Service is forecasting a break-even position. The cumulative Housing Benefit new claims processing outturn figure for July was 42 days. The cumulative processing time to-date for new claims for Housing Benefit, new claims for Council Tax Reduction and changes in circumstances notifications was 9 days.

Revenue Services

Revenue Services are forecasting a break-even position on a gross budget of £2.64m.

Customer First

Customer First is forecasting an overspend of £11k against a gross budget of £1.19m. This is due to an unachieved savings target but the position is expected to improve through the year.

ICT Services

ICT is forecasting a break-even position on a gross budget of £5.95m. The budget is currently under pressure from inflationary increases in software licences and the hardware supply chain. The budget is currently being balanced from additional income generation and staff turnover.

Accountancy

Accountancy is forecasting an underspend of £94k due to freeing of vacant posts and additional income from HMRC.

Risk Services

Risk Services are forecasting an underspend of £16k against a gross budget of £1.07m. This is due to a number of factors including staff vacancies, additional income opportunities and also through receipt of new burden funding for the Covid-19 business support grant post assurance work.

Property Services (incl. Investment Portfolio)

Property Services are forecasting an underspend of £19k against a gross budget of £14.28m, savings arising from staff vacancies across the service.

Equality and Diversity

Equality and Diversity are forecasting an underspend of £6k. This reflects the projected impact of a renegotiation with Unison of their Facilities Time Agreement.

Summary of the revenue forecast

After 4 months of the financial year Resources are forecasting a £153k underspend. The Directorate continues to operate on the basis of not filling staff vacancies other than in exceptional circumstances.

Budget Holder - Mr S Thompson, Director of Resources

Blackpool Council – Communications & Regeneration

Revenue summary - budget, actual and forecast:

| FUNCTIONS OF THE SERVICE | BUDGET | EXPENDITURE | | | VARIANCE | 2022/23 (UNDER)/OVER SPEND £000 |
|--|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| | 2023/24 | | | | | |
| | ADJUSTED CASH LIMITED BUDGET £000 | EXPENDITURE APR - JUL £000 | PROJECTED SPEND £000 | FORECAST OUTTURN £000 | F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000 | |
| COMMUNICATIONS & REGENERATION | | | | | | |
| NET EXPENDITURE | | | | | | |
| ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & CULTURAL SERVICES | 244 | 1,243 | (1,039) | 204 | (40) | - |
| PLANNING | 488 | 107 | 381 | 488 | - | - |
| TOURISM AND COMMUNICATIONS | 3,353 | 993 | 2,410 | 3,403 | 50 | - |
| TOTALS | 4,085 | 2,343 | 1,752 | 4,095 | 10 | - |

Commentary on the key issues:

Directorate Summary – basis

The Revenue summary (above) lists the outturn projection for each individual service area within the Directorate against their respective, currently approved, revenue budget. The forecast outturn is based upon actual financial performance for the first 4 months of 2023/24 together with predictions of performance, anticipated pressures and efficiencies in the remainder of the financial year, all of which have been agreed with each head of service.

Economic Development and Cultural Services

This service is currently forecasting an underspend of £40k due to vacant posts.

Planning

This service is currently forecasting a break-even position.

Tourism & Communications

This service is forecasting a £50k pressure. This is due to some increased costs in Visit Blackpool. There are also risks around income generation in the Directorate as a result of the cost of living crisis and increased costs in relation to the Illuminations extension that will be quantified later in the year.

Budget Holder – Mr A Cavill, Director of Communications & Regeneration

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Blackpool Council – Strategic Leisure Assets

Revenue summary - budget, actual and forecast:

| FUNCTIONS OF THE SERVICE | BUDGET | EXPENDITURE | | | VARIANCE | 2022/23 (UNDER)/OVER SPEND B/FWD £000 |
|--------------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| | ADJUSTED CASH LIMITED BUDGET £000 | EXPENDITURE APR - JUL £000 | 2023/24 | | F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000 | |
| | | | PROJECTED SPEND £000 | FORECAST OUTTURN £000 | | |
| STRATEGIC LEISURE ASSETS | | | | | | |
| NET EXPENDITURE | | | | | | |
| STRATEGIC LEISURE ASSETS | 2,625 | 278 | 1,493 | 1,771 | (854) | - |
| TOTALS | 2,625 | 278 | 1,493 | 1,771 | (854) | - |

Commentary on the key issues:

Directorate Summary - basis

The Revenue summary (above) lists the outturn projection for the Service against its respective, currently approved, revenue budget. The forecast outturn is based upon actual financial performance for the first 4 months of 2023/24 together with predictions of performance, anticipated pressures and efficiencies in the remainder of the financial year, all of which have been agreed with the head of service.

Key Issues

In month 4, Strategic Leisure Assets are reporting an underspend of £854k. This is due to a reduction in the forecast repair spend and a release from reserves no longer expected to be required.

In accordance with the original decision for this programme by the Executive on 7th February 2011, any under or overspend on Strategic Leisure Assets will be transferred to Earmarked Reserves to go against the current balance. The cumulative deficit as at March 2022/23 was £10,690k. In 2023/24, a transfer of £1,420k has been made to Contributions to Reserves reducing this deficit balance to £9,270k. This transfer is in line with the budget. The above underspend will further reduce this deficit to £8,416k.

The latest Leisure Assets medium-term financial plan currently expects the service to break-even, in-year, from 2023/24 and cumulatively by 2034/35.

Budget Holder – Mr A Cavill, Director of Communications & Regeneration

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Blackpool Council – Growth & Prosperity

Revenue summary - budget, actual and forecast:

| FUNCTIONS OF THE SERVICE | BUDGET | EXPENDITURE | | | VARIANCE | 2022/23 (UNDER)/OVER SPEND B/FWD £000 |
|--------------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| | ADJUSTED CASH LIMITED BUDGET £000 | EXPENDITURE APR - JUL £000 | 2023/24 | | F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000 | |
| | | | PROJECTED SPEND £000 | FORECAST OUTTURN £000 | | |
| GROWTH & PROSPERITY | | | | | | |
| NET EXPENDITURE | | | | | | |
| GROWTH & PROSPERITY | (5,879) | 1,897 | (11,376) | (9,479) | (3,600) | - |
| TOTALS | (5,879) | 1,897 | (11,376) | (9,479) | (3,600) | - |

Commentary on the key issues:

Directorate Summary - basis

The Revenue summary (above) lists the outturn projection for the Service against its respective, currently approved, revenue budget. The forecast outturn is based upon actual financial performance for the first 4 months of 2023/24 together with predictions of performance, anticipated pressures and efficiencies in the remainder of the financial year, all of which have been agreed with the head of service.

Key Issues

As at month 4, the service is forecasting surplus of £3,600k. This is due to the expectation of proceeds raised from the current work programme exceeding costs including prudential borrowing.

The Executive, at its meeting on 8th November 2021, agreed to the approach to transition out the Growth and Prosperity net revenue budget target over a 2-year period, 2022/23-2023/24, with any proceeds subsequently realised from the existing work programme being directed to bolstering reserves and any new proceeds being retained by Growth and Prosperity for their re-investment. It is therefore assumed that this surplus will be transferred to Earmarked Reserves to go against the current balance. The cumulative deficit as at March 2022/23 was £10,125k. It is therefore expected that the balance at the end of 2023/24 will be £6,525k.

Budget Holder – Mr A Cavill, Director of Communications & Regeneration

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Blackpool Council – Community and Environmental Services

Revenue summary - budget, actual and forecast:

| FUNCTIONS OF THE SERVICE | BUDGET | EXPENDITURE | | | VARIANCE | 2022/23 (UNDER)/OVER SPEND B/FWD £000 |
|---|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| | 2023/24 | | | | | |
| | ADJUSTED CASH LIMITED BUDGET £000 | EXPENDITURE APR - JUL £000 | PROJECTED SPEND £000 | FORECAST OUTTURN £000 | F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000 | |
| COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES | | | | | | |
| NET EXPENDITURE | | | | | | |
| BUSINESS SERVICES | (915) | 266 | (1,181) | (915) | - | - |
| LEISURE AND CATERING | 5,436 | 3,607 | 1,829 | 5,436 | - | - |
| PUBLIC PROTECTION | 1,457 | 1,269 | 188 | 1,457 | - | - |
| HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SERVICES | 18,001 | (1,246) | 19,247 | 18,001 | - | - |
| STREET CLEANSING AND WASTE | 19,987 | 129 | 19,858 | 19,987 | - | - |
| COASTAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS | 6,501 | 1,248 | 5,253 | 6,501 | - | - |
| INTEGRATED TRANSPORT | 2,807 | 1,374 | 1,933 | 3,307 | 500 | - |
| TOTALS | 53,274 | 6,647 | 47,127 | 53,774 | 500 | - |

Commentary on the key issues:

Directorate Summary - basis

The Revenue summary (above) lists the outturn projection for each individual service area within the Directorate against their respective, currently approved, revenue budget. The forecast outturn overspend of £500k is based upon actual financial performance for the first 4 months of 2023/24 together with predictions of performance, anticipated pressures and efficiencies in the remainder of the financial year, all of which have been agreed with each head of service.

Business Services

This service is currently forecasting a break-even position.

Leisure and Catering

Leisure and Catering is currently forecasting a break-even position. Leisure income is in line with budget and there are savings within staffing, due to vacancies. Catering is facing a pressure due to the increased cost of provisions, but this is expected to be covered by other savings within the service.

Public Protection

The service is currently forecasting a break-even position. There are pressures within Licencing, where the income forecast is currently under budget. However, there have been savings identified within other areas of Public Protection to mitigate this.

Highways and Traffic Management Services

This service is currently forecasting a break-even position.

Street Cleansing and Waste

Waste Services are reporting a break-even position. There are forecast pressures within Street Cleansing and within Public Conveniences, where an inflationary uplift has been applied to the contract. Trade Waste income, however, is forecasting an increase against budget to off-set these pressures.

Coastal and Environmental Partnerships

This service is currently forecasting a break-even position.

Integrated Transport

This service is currently forecasting an overspend of £500k. Childrens Transport Services is reporting an overspend of £500k, due to a combination of increased demand pressures and historic savings targets which have not been able to be achieved.

Conclusion – Community and Environmental Services financial position

At the end of July 2023, the Community and Environmental Services Directorate is forecasting an overspend of £500k. The major pressure is within Integrated Transport where the Childrens Transport Service is forecasting a pressure of £500k. There are other pressures within the Directorate, but these are expected to be covered through other means.

Budget Holder - Mr J Blackledge, Director of Community and Environmental Services

Blackpool Council - Adult Services

Revenue summary - budget, actual and forecast:

| FUNCTIONS OF THE SERVICE | BUDGET | EXPENDITURE | | | VARIANCE | 2022/23 (UNDER)/OVER SPEND B/FWD £000 |
|--------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| | ADJUSTED CASH LIMITED BUDGET £000 | EXPENDITURE APR - JUL £000 | 2023/24 | | F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000 | |
| | | | PROJECTED SPEND £000 | FORECAST OUTTURN £000 | | |
| ADULT SERVICES | | | | | | |
| NET EXPENDITURE | | | | | | |
| ADULT SOCIAL CARE | 9,328 | 4,362 | 4,892 | 9,254 | (74) | - |
| CARE & SUPPORT | 4,446 | 1,835 | 2,601 | 4,436 | (10) | - |
| ADULT COMMISSIONING PLACEMENTS | 50,118 | 13,633 | 39,769 | 53,402 | 3,284 | - |
| ADULT SAFEGUARDING | 76 | (4) | 80 | 76 | - | - |
| TOTALS | 63,968 | 19,826 | 47,342 | 67,168 | 3,200 | - |

Commentary on the key issues:

Directorate Summary – basis

The Revenue summary (above) lists the latest outturn projection for each individual service within the Adult Services Directorate against their respective, currently approved, revenue budget. Forecast outturns are based upon actual financial performance for the first 4 months of 2023/24 together with predictions of performance, anticipated pressures and efficiencies in the remainder of the financial year, all of which have been agreed with each head of service.

Adult Social Care

Adult Social Care is forecasting an underspend of £74k at month 4 due to a high volume of vacant positions.

Adult Commissioning Placements (Social Care Packages)

The Adult Commissioning Placements budget is forecasting an overspend of £3,284k. There are savings shortfalls of £1,012k from the proposal in which the Integrated Care Board (ICB) were expected to provide additional income of £1.6m into the Better Care Fund (BCF) and a further shortfall on Winter Pressures funding of £337K. There is a pressure of £1,130k in Supported Living due to additional packages of care along with £457k of pressures due to additional packages of short-term care linked to hospital discharge. An increased number of complex case packages have also created a pressure of £150k. £439k pressures relates to Out of Area Residential and Nursing Placements fee uplifts being significantly greater than forecast. There is a £211k pressure on Homecare whereby the current commissioned hours exceeds budget. Direct payment pressures of £150k are resulting from a forecasted reduction in claw-backs based on year-to-date actuals and increased packages. There is £602k in the forecast relating to the recently announced Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund which is being used to offset the residential/nursing top ups and Out of Area fee rates.

Care and Support

Care and Support is forecasting an underspend of £10k at month 4 due to slippage on vacant positions.

Adults Safeguarding

Adults safeguarding is forecasting a break-even position at month 4.

Summary of the Adult Services financial position

As at the end of July 2023 the Adult Services Directorate is forecasting an overall overspend of £3,200k for the financial year to March 2024 on a net budget of £64m.

Budget Holder – K Smith, Director of Adult Services

Blackpool Council – Children’s Services

Revenue summary - budget, actual and forecast:

| FUNCTIONS OF THE SERVICE | BUDGET | EXPENDITURE | | | VARIANCE | 2022/23 (UNDER)/OVER SPEND B/FWD £000 |
|---|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| | 2023/24 | | | | | |
| | ADJUSTED CASH LIMITED BUDGET £000 | EXPENDITURE APR - JUL £000 | PROJECTED SPEND £000 | FORECAST OUTTURN £000 | F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000 | |
| CHILDREN'S SERVICES | | | | | | |
| NET EXPENDITURE | | | | | | |
| LOCAL SCHOOLS BUDGET - ISB | 20,112 | 6,819 | 13,293 | 20,112 | - | - |
| LOCAL SCHOOLS BUDGET - NON DELEGATED | 281 | 157 | 124 | 281 | - | - |
| EDUCATION | 27,334 | 3,940 | 23,394 | 27,334 | - | - |
| EARLY HELP FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES | 182 | 61 | 121 | 182 | - | - |
| BUSINESS SUPPORT AND RESOURCES | 9,330 | 3,517 | 5,813 | 9,330 | - | - |
| DEDICATED SCHOOL GRANT | (57,926) | (20,952) | (36,974) | (57,926) | - | - |
| CARRY FORWARD OF DSG UNDER/(OVER) SPEND | 687 | - | 687 | 687 | - | - |
| TOTAL DSG FUNDED SERVICES | - | (6,458) | 6,458 | - | - | - |
| CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPRECIATION | 1,748 | - | 1,748 | 1,748 | - | - |
| EDUCATION | 1,933 | 1,475 | 458 | 1,933 | - | - |
| EARLY HELP FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES | 5,840 | 329 | 5,511 | 5,840 | - | - |
| CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE | 59,079 | 19,634 | 44,189 | 63,823 | 4,744 | - |
| BUSINESS SUPPORT AND RESOURCES | (100) | 332 | 337 | 669 | 769 | - |
| LOCAL SERVICES SUPPORT GRANT | (18) | - | (18) | (18) | - | - |
| SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANT | (166) | - | (166) | (166) | - | - |
| TOTAL COUNCIL FUNDED SERVICES | 68,316 | 21,770 | 52,059 | 73,829 | 5,513 | - |
| TOTALS | 68,316 | 15,312 | 58,517 | 73,829 | 5,513 | - |

Commentary on the key issues:

Directorate Summary – basis

The Revenue summary (above) lists the latest outturn projection for each individual service within the Children’s Services Directorate against their respective, currently approved, revenue budget. Forecast outturns are based upon actual financial performance for the first 4 months of 2023/24 together with predictions of performance, anticipated pressures and efficiencies in the remainder of the financial year, all of which have been agreed with each Head of Service.

Children’s Social Care

The full-year impact of the Children’s Social Care pressures as at M7 2022/23 has been rightsized as part of the Corporate Medium Term Financial Plan, equating to an additional budget of £5,221k allocated in 2023/24. However, Children’s Social Care Placements is forecasting an overspend against this increased budget of £4,744k, mainly due to new-to-care placements being higher than those exiting care and the additional support required following the breakdown of high-cost placements. The actual number of residential placements as at 31st July 2023 is 76 with this forecast to reduce to 69 by 31st March 2024, whereas the plan suggested there would be 70 as at 31st July reducing to 60 by the end of March 2024.

However, the number of Children in Care continues to reduce and currently sits at 540 children. This brings Blackpool from a rate of 218 per 0-17 10,000 population to 194. The ambition is to bring ourselves in line with comparator Local Authorities over the next couple of years and we are confident that this ambition will be realised. Officers have seen this reduction as a result of reduced entry into care,

and increased numbers exiting our care system. Within the cohort of Children Looked After, the Council has had a higher than national average of children in residential placements. Residential settings, for most children, are not the optimum placement and these children do not usually have the same degree of positive outcomes as children in foster placements, or family placements for example. Residential placements are costly, with unit costs rising year on year by 14.1%. We have seen movement in the numbers of residential placements, from 84 to 76 as a result of a focussed, ongoing piece of work led by our newly recruited Head of Service for Supporting our Children. We have reviewed a number of care plans and as a result children have been moved from residential settings to settings that better meet their needs, always ensuring their safety and individual needs are at the forefront when planning.

The service has additionally seen a reduction in agency social work staff during the last 12-18 months. In 2021/2022 the service had rates of up to 40% agency staff in some teams. A refreshed Workforce Strategy, overseen by a Workforce Board, chaired monthly by the Director of Childrens Services, has seen a reduction of agency staff to under 15% across the social care teams. The national average is now 17% and regionally the rate is much higher. The last set of regional data put Blackpool at the lowest for agency rates. Officers continue to monitor this closely in a challenging and competitive market.

Dedicated Schools Grant Funded Services

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is the funding stream that supports the Schools Budget, which includes amounts that are devolved through the Individual School Budget (ISB), together with centrally-retained pupil-related services as listed in the revenue summary. Any under or overspends against services funded by the DSG will be carried forward to 2024/25 and, in the case of overspends, become the first call on the grant in that year.

Business Support and Resources

Business Support and Resources is forecasting an overspend of £769k. There was an additional Children's Services savings target of £1,924k, of which, only £1,155k is anticipated to be met this financial year, leaving a budget gap of £769k.

Summary of the Children's Services financial position

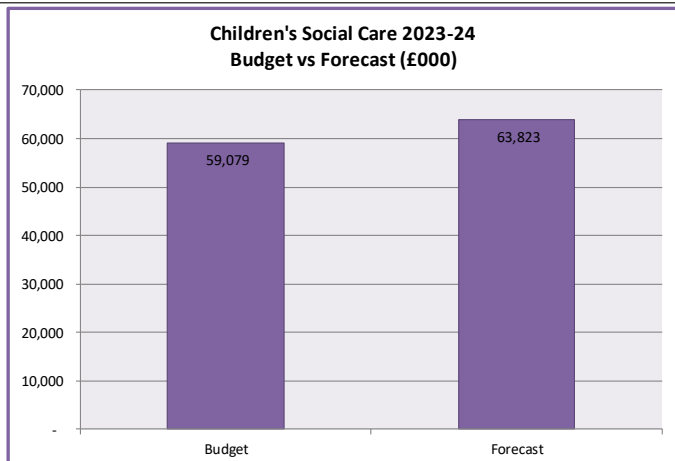
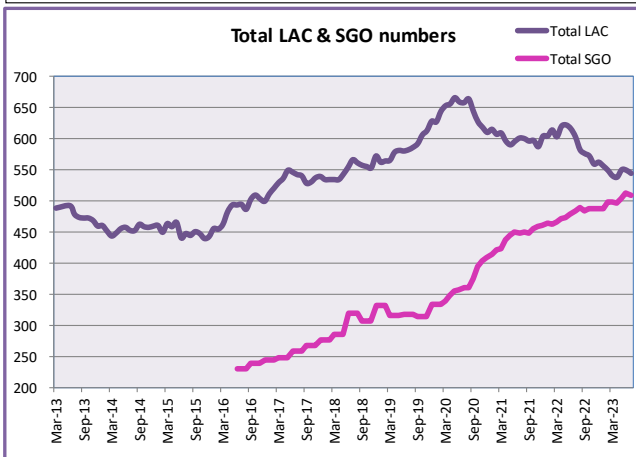
As at the end of July 2023 the Children's Services Directorate is forecasting an overspend of £5,513k for the financial year to March 2024.

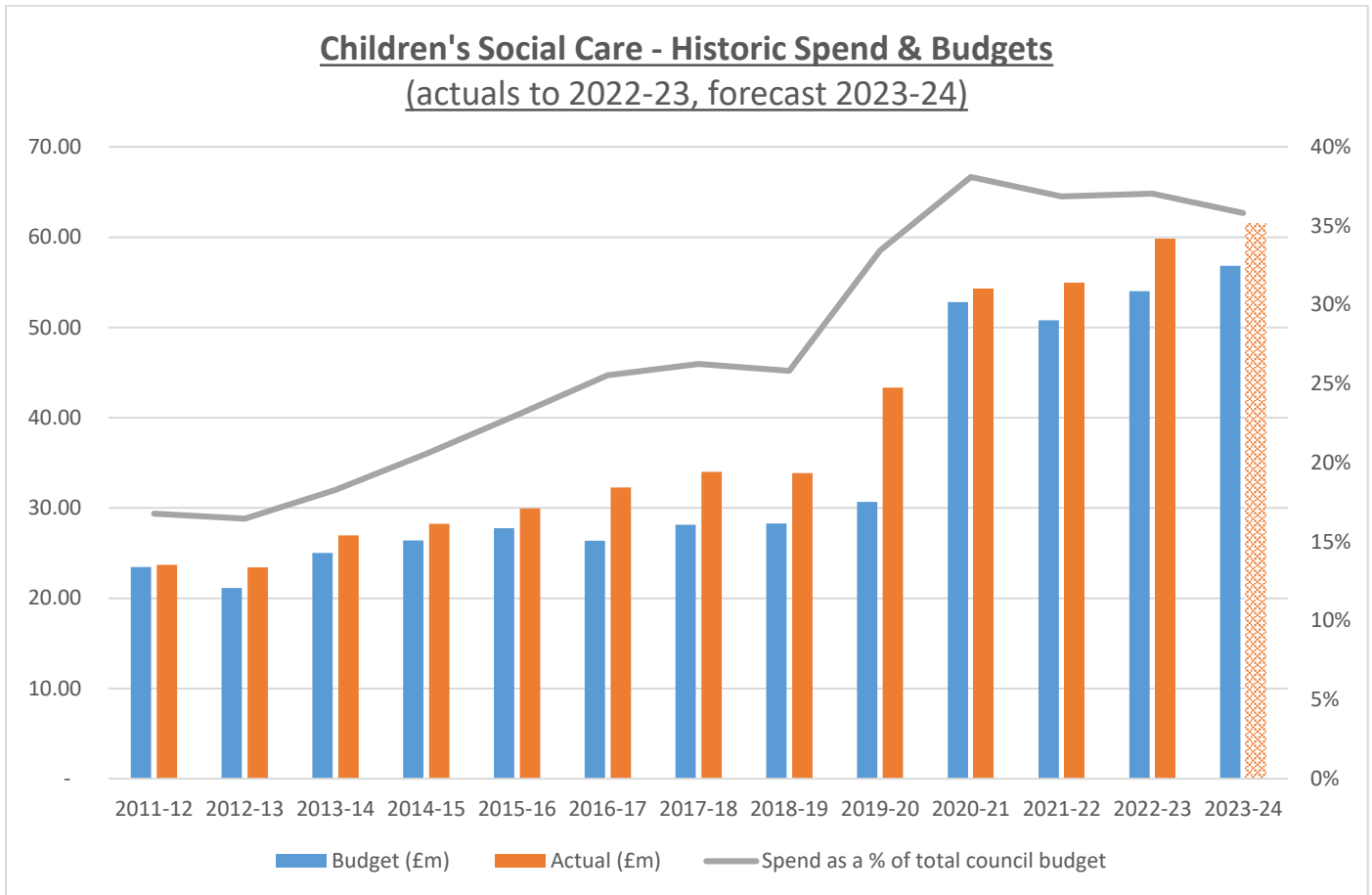
Budget Holder – Victoria Gent, Director of Children's Services

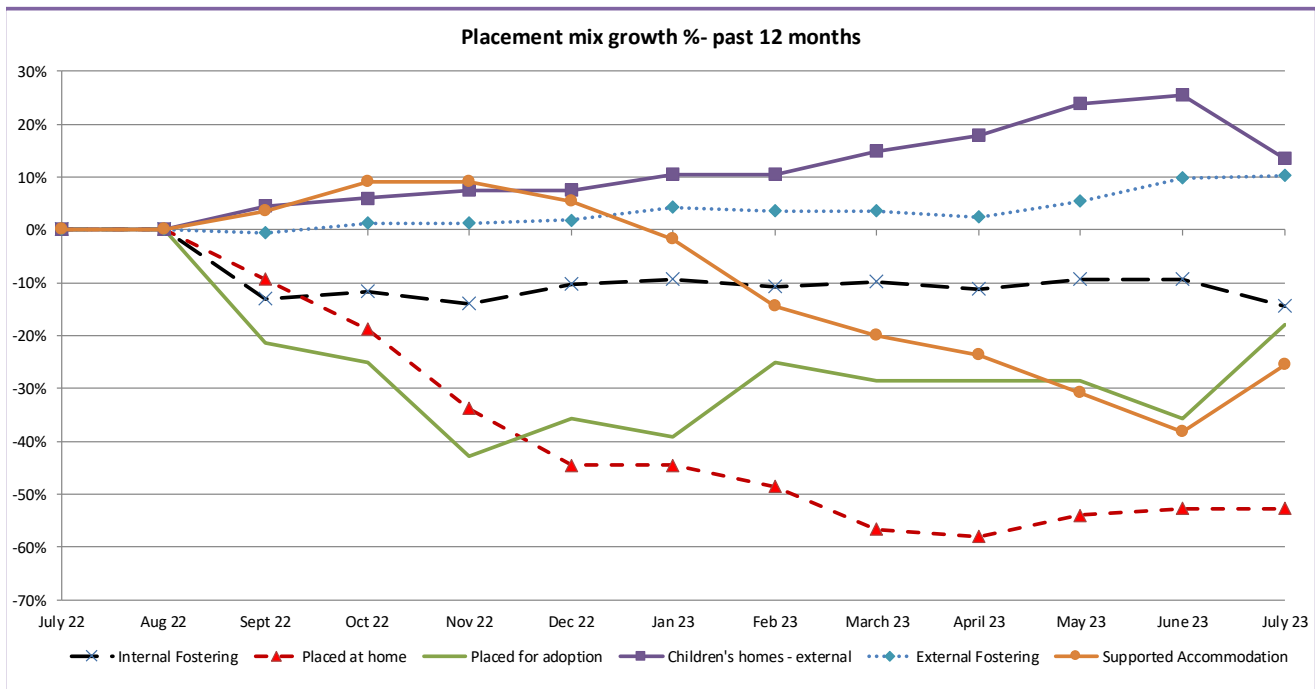
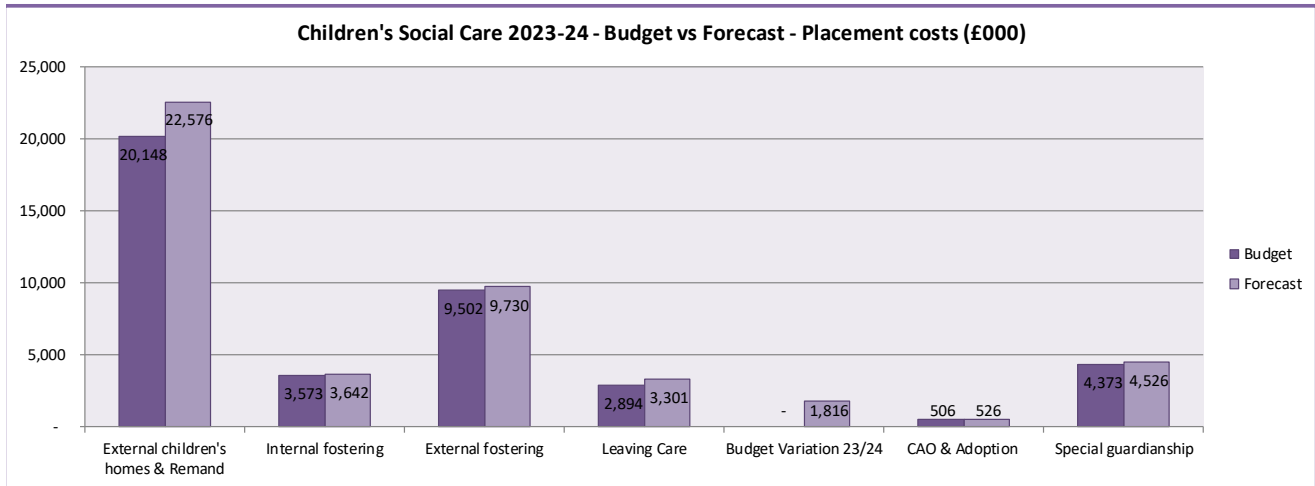
Children's Social Care Trends

| Date | External Placements Projection | | | | | | Internal Fostering | | | Supported Accommodation | | | LAC number | SGO | |
|--------|--------------------------------|----------|-----------------|-------------------|----------|-----------------|--------------------|----------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------|-----------------|------------|---------|-----------------|
| | Residential | | | Fostering inc M&B | | | Number | % of LAC | £ per placement | Number | % of LAC | £ per placement | No. | Number | £ per placement |
| | Number | % of LAC | £ per placement | Number | % of LAC | £ per placement | | | | | | | | | |
| Jun-13 | 41 | 8% | 111,596 | 72 | 15% | 36,202 | 263 | 53% | 11,887 | 16 | 3% | no data | 492 | no data | |
| Sep-13 | 33 | 7% | 111,523 | 66 | 14% | 35,667 | 272 | 58% | 11,908 | 17 | 4% | no data | 472 | no data | |
| Dec-13 | 30 | 7% | 117,073 | 69 | 15% | 36,560 | 260 | 57% | 11,828 | 17 | 4% | no data | 459 | no data | |
| Mar-14 | 27 | 6% | 118,473 | 64 | 14% | 34,058 | 248 | 56% | 11,757 | 15 | 3% | no data | 443 | no data | |
| Jun-14 | 25 | 5% | 102,561 | 74 | 16% | 35,928 | 250 | 55% | 12,833 | 18 | 4% | no data | 457 | no data | |
| Sep-14 | 21 | 5% | 121,210 | 75 | 16% | 37,655 | 237 | 51% | 12,570 | 27 | 6% | no data | 462 | no data | |
| Dec-14 | 18 | 4% | 124,281 | 70 | 15% | 38,760 | 243 | 53% | 12,474 | 23 | 5% | no data | 459 | no data | |
| Mar-15 | 23 | 5% | 128,868 | 73 | 16% | 40,155 | 244 | 53% | 12,374 | 19 | 4% | no data | 463 | no data | |
| Jun-15 | 25 | 6% | 147,777 | 74 | 17% | 40,625 | 219 | 50% | 12,541 | 20 | 5% | no data | 440 | no data | |
| Sep-15 | 25 | 6% | 142,934 | 73 | 16% | 40,040 | 225 | 50% | 12,549 | 16 | 4% | no data | 450 | no data | |
| Dec-15 | 27 | 6% | 145,196 | 70 | 16% | 41,243 | 217 | 49% | 12,428 | 17 | 4% | no data | 442 | no data | |
| Mar-16 | 29 | 6% | 146,120 | 69 | 15% | 42,215 | 257 | 56% | 12,453 | 22 | 5% | no data | 462 | no data | |
| Jun-16 | 34 | 7% | 157,136 | 77 | 16% | 42,145 | 259 | 53% | 12,630 | 28 | 6% | 38,608 | 493 | 230 | 5,472 |
| Sep-16 | 32 | 6% | 169,996 | 84 | 17% | 42,750 | 254 | 51% | 12,688 | 27 | 5% | 41,376 | 502 | 240 | 5,582 |
| Dec-16 | 36 | 7% | 175,954 | 89 | 18% | 43,038 | 258 | 52% | 12,857 | 28 | 6% | 41,037 | 499 | 245 | 5,562 |
| Mar-17 | 44 | 8% | 179,669 | 103 | 19% | 43,502 | 269 | 51% | 12,872 | 26 | 5% | 42,416 | 529 | 249 | 5,555 |
| Jun-17 | 49 | 9% | 151,450 | 100 | 18% | 40,933 | 272 | 50% | 13,227 | 26 | 5% | 60,946 | 546 | 258 | 5,576 |
| Sep-17 | 35 | 7% | 161,487 | 95 | 18% | 40,991 | 270 | 51% | 13,213 | 36 | 7% | 57,928 | 528 | 267 | 5,383 |
| Dec-17 | 43 | 8% | 162,623 | 103 | 19% | 41,277 | 272 | 50% | 13,169 | 36 | 7% | 58,358 | 539 | 277 | 5,281 |
| Mar-18 | 44 | 8% | 165,935 | 98 | 18% | 41,099 | 273 | 51% | 13,116 | 30 | 6% | 55,728 | 534 | 286 | 5,109 |
| Jun-18 | 45 | 8% | 164,794 | 97 | 18% | 40,083 | 297 | 54% | 13,403 | 24 | 4% | 48,006 | 554 | 320 | 5,512 |
| Sep-18 | 45 | 8% | 159,388 | 97 | 17% | 40,425 | 302 | 54% | 13,441 | 28 | 5% | 46,073 | 557 | 308 | 5,294 |
| Dec-18 | 47 | 8% | 169,287 | 99 | 17% | 40,227 | 305 | 53% | 13,430 | 33 | 6% | 46,167 | 572 | 332 | 5,175 |
| Mar-19 | 53 | 9% | 177,477 | 94 | 17% | 39,536 | 306 | 54% | 13,289 | 23 | 4% | 45,845 | 565 | 317 | 5,238 |
| Jun-19 | 53 | 9% | 172,929 | 107 | 18% | 42,426 | 305 | 53% | 13,014 | 26 | 4% | 68,367 | 580 | 318 | 5,988 |
| Sep-19 | 58 | 10% | 180,014 | 116 | 20% | 43,981 | 294 | 50% | 12,649 | 32 | 5% | 56,148 | 592 | 315 | 5,693 |
| Dec-19 | 62 | 10% | 184,396 | 145 | 23% | 45,812 | 300 | 48% | 12,854 | 31 | 5% | 60,289 | 628 | 334 | 5,670 |
| Mar-20 | 65 | 10% | 183,892 | 167 | 26% | 45,201 | 292 | 45% | 13,166 | 33 | 5% | 61,076 | 653 | 339 | 5,624 |
| Jun-20 | 69 | 10% | 207,288 | 175 | 27% | 47,565 | 284 | 43% | 12,877 | 32 | 5% | 92,575 | 659 | 357 | 5,882 |
| Sep-20 | 75 | 12% | 211,328 | 173 | 27% | 47,125 | 277 | 43% | 12,979 | 30 | 5% | 97,225 | 644 | 376 | 6,056 |
| Dec-20 | 72 | 12% | 209,062 | 178 | 29% | 47,361 | 248 | 41% | 14,343 | 32 | 5% | 105,274 | 610 | 410 | 6,551 |
| Mar-21 | 72 | 12% | 209,953 | 189 | 31% | 47,883 | 230 | 38% | 14,234 | 25 | 4% | 107,561 | 609 | 424 | 6,685 |
| Jun-21 | 68 | 11% | 225,246 | 200 | 34% | 45,809 | 213 | 36% | 16,619 | 26 | 4% | 78,324 | 596 | 450 | 7,650 |
| Sep-21 | 64 | 11% | 229,272 | 194 | 33% | 47,303 | 221 | 37% | 17,059 | 39 | 7% | 70,834 | 596 | 448 | 7,752 |
| Dec-21 | 66 | 11% | 238,266 | 186 | 31% | 47,535 | 219 | 36% | 17,064 | 40 | 7% | 68,328 | 604 | 461 | 7,884 |
| Mar-22 | 70 | 12% | 247,935 | 184 | 30% | 47,718 | 214 | 35% | 17,348 | 47 | 8% | 68,576 | 608 | 467 | 8,076 |
| Jun-22 | 69 | 11% | 251,588 | 174 | 28% | 50,006 | 221 | 36% | 17,030 | 50 | 8% | 74,397 | 616 | 479 | 8,093 |
| Sep-22 | 70 | 12% | 255,469 | 164 | 28% | 48,674 | 193 | 34% | 16,646 | 57 | 10% | 72,203 | 576 | 484 | 8,186 |
| Dec-22 | 72 | 13% | 264,844 | 168 | 30% | 52,295 | 199 | 35% | 16,770 | 58 | 10% | 69,007 | 562 | 487 | 8,175 |
| Mar-23 | 77 | 14% | 267,333 | 171 | 32% | 52,073 | 200 | 37% | 16,785 | 44 | 8% | 67,462 | 540 | 499 | 8,205 |
| Apr-23 | 79 | 15% | 277,464 | 169 | 31% | 57,959 | 197 | 37% | 18,853 | 42 | 8% | 79,291 | 538 | 497 | 8,841 |
| May-23 | 83 | 15% | 283,061 | 174 | 32% | 56,809 | 201 | 37% | 18,793 | 38 | 7% | 77,678 | 550 | 504 | 8,869 |
| Jun-23 | 84 | 15% | 287,055 | 181 | 33% | 56,473 | 201 | 37% | 19,532 | 34 | 6% | 75,503 | 549 | 513 | 8,873 |
| Jul-23 | 76 | 14% | 294,796 | 182 | 33% | 54,787 | 190 | 35% | 19,011 | 41 | 8% | 70,674 | 544 | 509 | 8,906 |

Note: The variance between the current total number of Looked After Children (544) and the total internal fostering and external placement numbers (489) is children with care orders, adoption placements etc. They are still classed as LAC but do not incur any commissioned costs. SGO = Special Guardianship Order.







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Blackpool Council – Public Health

Revenue summary - budget, actual and forecast:

| FUNCTIONS OF THE SERVICE | BUDGET | EXPENDITURE | | | VARIANCE | 2022/23 (UNDER)/OVER SPEND B/FWD £000 |
|---|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| | ADJUSTED CASH LIMITED BUDGET £000 | EXPENDITURE APR - JUL £000 | 2023/24 | | F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000 | |
| | | | PROJECTED SPEND £000 | FORECAST OUTTURN £000 | | |
| PUBLIC HEALTH | | | | | | |
| NET EXPENDITURE | | | | | | |
| PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTORATE & CORPORATE SUPPORT | 1,353 | (15,113) | 16,466 | 1,353 | - | - |
| NHS HEALTH CHECKS - MANDATED | 100 | 100 | - | 100 | - | - |
| CHILDREN (5-19) - PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMMES | 617 | 209 | 408 | 617 | - | - |
| CHILDREN'S 0-5 SERVICES | 2,520 | 891 | 1,629 | 2,520 | - | - |
| TOBACCO CONTROL | 374 | 158 | 216 | 374 | - | - |
| MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING | 15 | - | 15 | 15 | - | - |
| SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES - MANDATED | 1,845 | 613 | 1,232 | 1,845 | - | - |
| SUBSTANCE MISUSE (DRUGS AND ALCOHOL) | 2,744 | 929 | 1,815 | 2,744 | - | - |
| HARM REDUCTION (SEXUAL HEALTH, DRUGS AND ALCOHOL) | 773 | 184 | 589 | 773 | - | - |
| HEALTHY WEIGHT/WEIGHT MANAGEMENT | 267 | 123 | 144 | 267 | - | - |
| MISCELLANEOUS PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES | 9,253 | 49 | 9,204 | 9,253 | - | - |
| GRANT | (19,858) | (4,965) | (14,893) | (19,858) | - | - |
| TOTALS | 3 | (16,822) | 16,825 | 3 | - | - |

Commentary on the key issues:

Directorate Summary – basis

The Revenue summary (above) lists the latest outturn projection for each individual scheme against their respective, currently approved, revenue budget. Forecast outturns are based upon actual financial performance for the first 4 months of 2023/24 together with predictions of performance, anticipated pressures and efficiencies in the remainder of the financial year, all of which have been agreed with the service leads.

Public Health Grant

The Public Health Grant is a central government grant which is ring-fenced.

The grant conditions require quarterly financial reporting of spend against a prescribed set of headings and spend of the grant must link explicitly to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Public Health Outcomes Framework and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

The Public Health Directorate are forecasting an overall spend of the full grant, £19,858,394, for the financial year to March 2024.

Payment by Results (PbR)/ Activity-based Commissioning

A number of Public Health schemes' payments are linked to activity. The aim of Payment by Results (PbR) is to provide a transparent, rules-based system for payment. It rewards outputs, outcomes and supports patient choice and diversity. Payment will be linked to activity. This does, however, raise a number of challenges when determining accurate budgetary spend/forecast spend.

Summary of the Public Health Directorate financial position

As at the end of July 2023, the Public Health Directorate are forecasting a break-even position for the financial year to March 2024.

Budget Holder – Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health

Blackpool Council – Budgets Outside the Cash Limit

Revenue summary - budget, actual and forecast:

| FUNCTIONS OF THE SERVICE | BUDGET | EXPENDITURE | | | VARIANCE | 2022/23 (UNDER)/OVER SPEND B/FWD £000 |
|--|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| | 2023/24 | | | | | |
| | ADJUSTED CASH LIMITED BUDGET £000 | EXPENDITURE APR - JUL £000 | PROJECTED SPEND £000 | FORECAST OUTTURN £000 | F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000 | |
| BUDGETS OUTSIDE THE CASH LIMIT | | | | | | |
| NET EXPENDITURE | | | | | | |
| TREASURY MANAGEMENT | 13,254 | (2,108) | 13,386 | 11,278 | (1,976) | - |
| PARKING SERVICES | (5,505) | (1,264) | (4,241) | (5,505) | - | - |
| CORPORATE SUBSCRIPTIONS | 135 | 88 | 47 | 135 | - | - |
| HOUSING BENEFITS | 1,850 | 617 | 1,233 | 1,850 | - | - |
| COUNCIL TAX & NNDR COST OF COLLECTION | 1,894 | 632 | 1,262 | 1,894 | - | - |
| SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES | (929) | (110) | (854) | (964) | (35) | - |
| LAND CHARGES | (50) | (17) | (33) | (50) | - | - |
| CONCESSIONARY FARES | 4,065 | 349 | 3,716 | 4,065 | - | - |
| EMPLOYERS PREVIOUS YEARS' PENSION LIABILITY | (957) | (319) | (638) | (957) | - | - |
| NEW HOMES BONUS | (14) | (11) | (11) | (22) | (8) | - |
| TOTALS | 13,743 | (2,143) | 13,867 | 11,724 | (2,019) | - |

Commentary on the key issues:

Directorate Summary - basis

The Revenue summary (above) lists the latest outturn projection for each individual service categorised as falling 'outside the cash limit' and thereby exempt from the cash limited budget regime. Forecast outturns are based upon actual financial performance for the first 4 months of 2023/24 together with predictions of performance, anticipated pressures and savings in the remainder of the financial year, which have been agreed by each designated budget manager.

Treasury Management

Treasury Management is forecasting an underspend of £1,574k. This figure includes £2,184k of prudential recharges to services and means that the £150k savings target will be met in 2023/24 and an increase in interest received from investments providing additional income of £152k. Offset against this is £697k pressure relating to higher interest rates on temporary borrowing and a reduction in the interest charge to the Housing Revenue Account as less borrowing is required in 2023/24 than originally budgeted. However, interest rates are predicted to increase over the duration of the financial year and these increases are likely to have a negative impact on the current position of the service. The Council is currently using 50:50 temporary and long-term borrowing to finance prudentially-funded capital expenditure and this gearing is under continual review by the Treasury Management Panel.

The Business Loans Fund has a savings target of £154k and is forecasting a surplus of £402k as new business loans have been awarded at a higher repayment rates than originally forecast for 2023/24.

Following a review of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), which was approved by the Executive on 8th February 2021, a total of £5,158k of saving has been forecast to be achieved in 2023/24.

Parking Services

Parking Services is forecasting a break-even position for 2023/24. This will depend on the impact of the cost of living crisis, the quality of the holiday season and the availability of parking due to regeneration projects within the town.

As at Week 22 (w/e 27th August) parking income is at £2.9m with patronage at 553,266. Car Park patronage is down by 12,137 and income up by £5k on 2022/23. On-Street Pay and Display patronage is down by 3,835 and income up by £5k.

The graphs below show, for comparison, the patronage and income figures for 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Housing Benefit

This service is forecasting a break-even position.

Council Tax and NNDR Cost of Collection

This service is forecasting a break-even position.

Subsidiary Companies

This service is forecasting a £35k saving due to reduction in charges, mainly relating to debt management.

Land Charges

This service is forecasting a break-even position.

Concessionary Fares

This service is forecasting a break-even position.

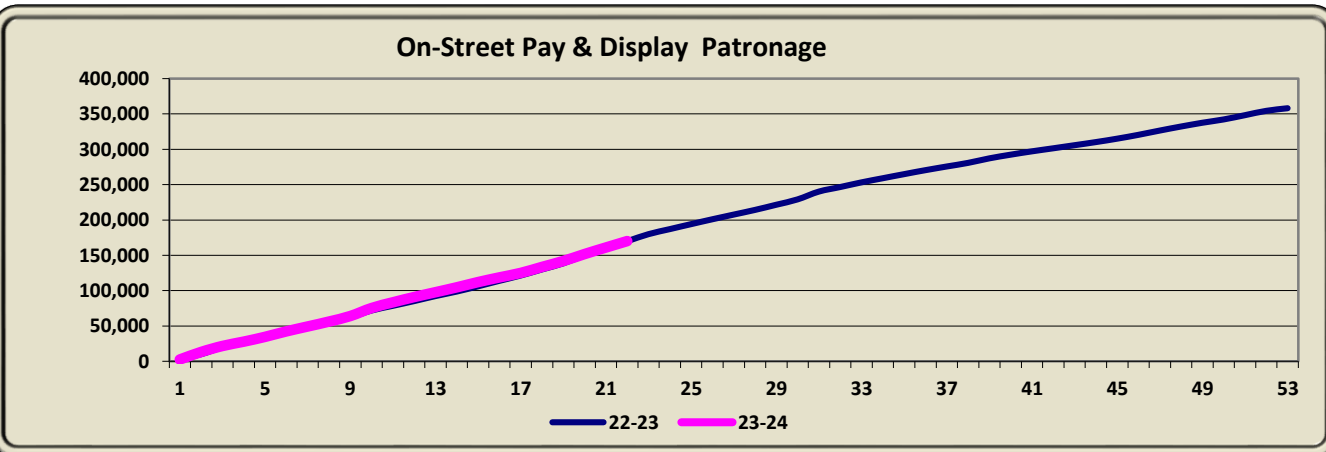
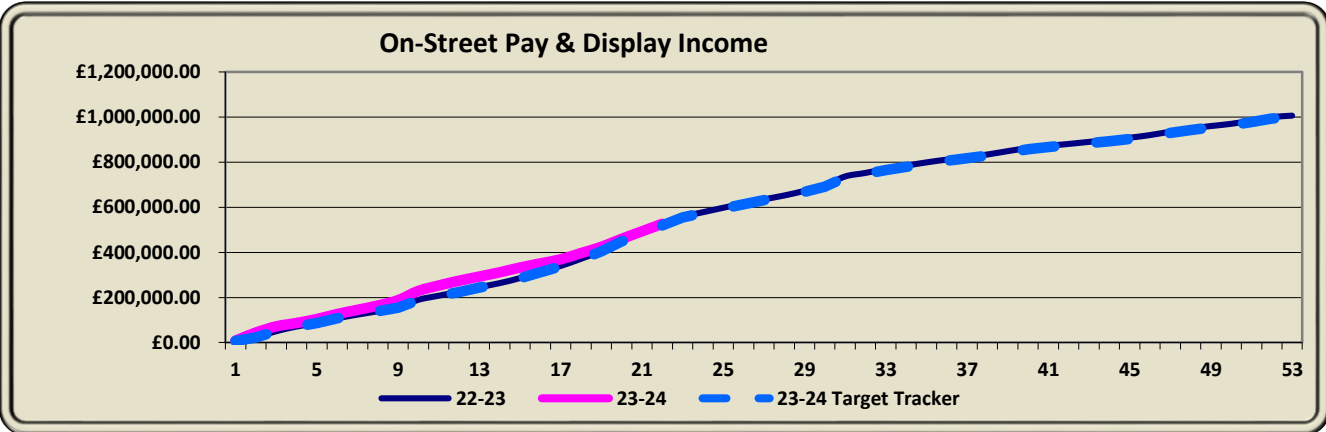
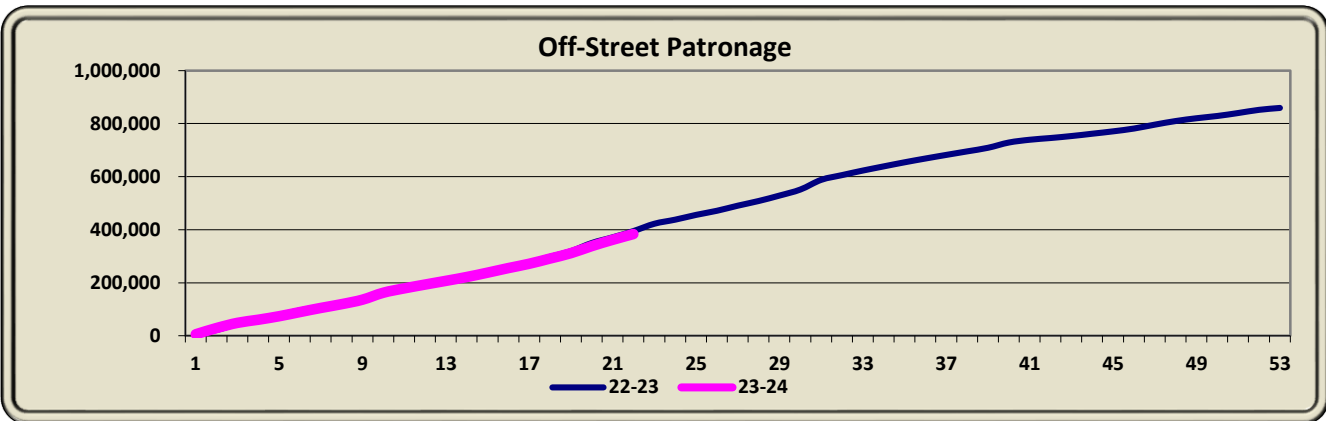
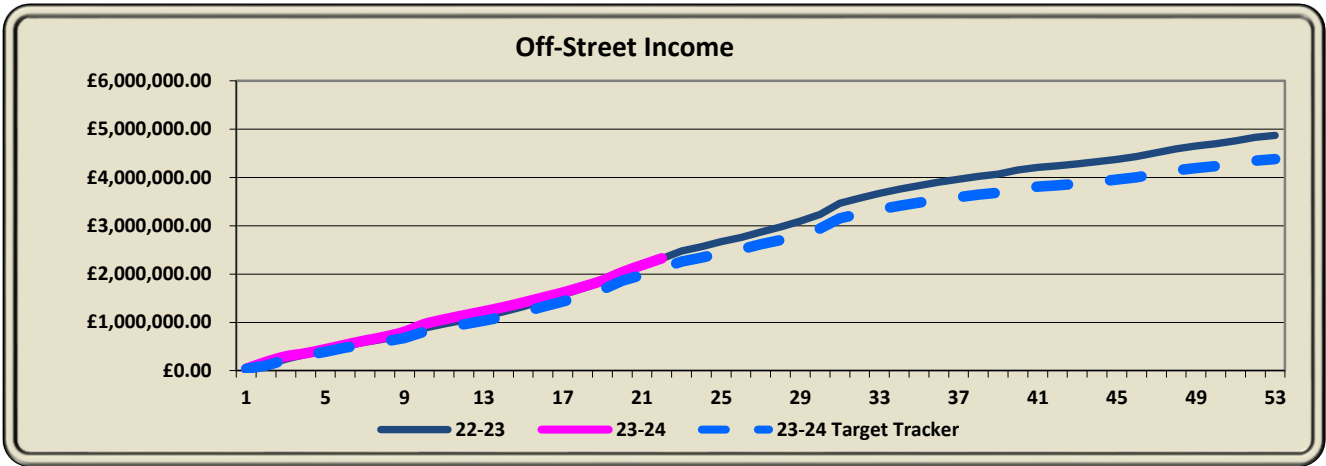
New Homes Bonus

This service is forecasting an underspend of £8k and this is offset by an equivalent sum in contingencies.

Summary of the revenue forecasts

After 4 months of the financial year, the Budgets Outside the Cash Limit services are forecasting a £2,019k underspend.

Car Parking Trends



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HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Appendix 2 (n)

BUDGET MONITORING MONTH 4 2023/2024

| FUNCTIONS | 2023/2024 BUDGET MONTH 4 | 2023/2024 ACTUAL MONTH 4 | 2023/2024 VARIANCE MONTH 4 | 2023/2024 FULL YEAR BUDGET | 2023/2024 PROJECTED OUTTURN | 2023/2024 VARIATION |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| <u>RENT & SERVICE CHARGE INCOME DUE</u> | | | | | | |
| Rental Income | 6,499 | 4,804 | (1,695) | 19,497 | 19,359 | (138) |
| Sheltered Housing | 245 | 181 | (64) | 734 | 724 | (10) |
| Emergency Housing | 218 | 166 | (52) | 668 | 720 | 52 |
| Resilience Housing | 80 | 58 | (22) | 542 | 542 | - |
| Other Supported Housing | 67 | 43 | (24) | 204 | 174 | (30) |
| Satellite Television Systems | 27 | 20 | (7) | 80 | 80 | - |
| Community Cleaning | 9 | 7 | (2) | 27 | 27 | - |
| Community Lighting | 11 | 8 | (3) | 33 | 33 | - |
| Door Entry Systems | 3 | 2 | (1) | 9 | 9 | - |
| Gardening Scheme | 22 | 16 | (6) | 67 | 67 | - |
| Grounds Maintenance | 84 | 63 | (21) | 253 | 253 | - |
| <u>OTHER RENTS & CHARGES</u> | | | | | | |
| Garages | 29 | 22 | (7) | 86 | 86 | - |
| Leasehold | 95 | 105 | 10 | 189 | 189 | - |
| Commercial/Other Rents | 24 | 24 | - | 72 | 69 | (3) |
| Other Income | 40 | 16 | (24) | 120 | 120 | - |
| <u>INTEREST INCOME</u> | | | | | | |
| Interest on Revenue Balances | - | - | - | 185 | 185 | - |
| TOTAL INCOME | 7,453 | 5,535 | (1,918) | 22,766 | 22,637 | (129) |
| MANAGEMENT FEE | 3,942 | 3,942 | - | 11,826 | 11,826 | - |
| GENERAL FUND SERVICES | - | - | - | 2,114 | 2,114 | - |
| OTHER HRA COSTS | - | - | - | 30 | 30 | - |
| CAPITAL CHARGES | - | - | - | 8,681 | 8,681 | - |
| PROVISION FOR BAD AND DOUBTFUL DEBTS | - | - | - | 384 | 384 | - |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 3,942 | 3,942 | - | 23,035 | 23,035 | - |
| CONTRIBUTION TO / (FROM) WORKING BALANCES | 3,511 | 1,593 | (1,918) | (269) | (398) | (129) |

| WORKING BALANCES | 2023/2024 FULL YEAR BUDGET | 2023/2024 PROJECTED OUTTURN | 2023/2024 VARIATION |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| BALANCE AT 1ST APRIL | 1,399 | 1,721 | 322 |
| CONTRIBUTION TO / (FROM) WORKING BALANCES | (269) | (398) | (129) |
| BALANCE AT 31ST MARCH | 1,130 | 1,323 | 193 |

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Blackpool Council

Wholly-Owned Companies

Covid Support to Council Wholly-Owned Companies

The Coronavirus pandemic led to a number of Council Wholly-Owned Companies (WOCs) facing significant income losses as a result of lockdown and subsequent social distancing restrictions. This impacted both company profitability and cashflow. It looked likely that without Council support some would not be able to recover within a reasonable timeframe, which could leave the Council without an operator for assets of significant financial value and importance to the town and its tourist economy.

In November 2020 the Executive approved the establishment of a £24m Covid Recovery Fund (PH46/2020), £20m plus a 20% contingency, ringfenced for WOCs only, from within the existing Business Loans Fund.

To be eligible to access the Covid Recovery Fund facility companies needed to produce a 5-year Covid recovery plan (2020/21 year + 4) and to demonstrate a cumulative break-even income and expenditure position by the end of year 5 of their recovery plan, or as close as possible to this term.

Loans were offered at a fixed rate over 5 years, thereby providing the WOCs with certainty over future repayments requirements and were tailored to the individual circumstances of the company and its recovery plan, offers being made on either an interest-only basis with balloon principal repayment or with monthly repayments of interest and principal.

To date there have been loan approvals of £16.11m against that facility of which £9.52m has been drawn down. £2.17m of this has subsequently been repaid. The Council's Business Loans Fund Panel monitors progress against the WOCs' respective recovery plans on a regular basis.

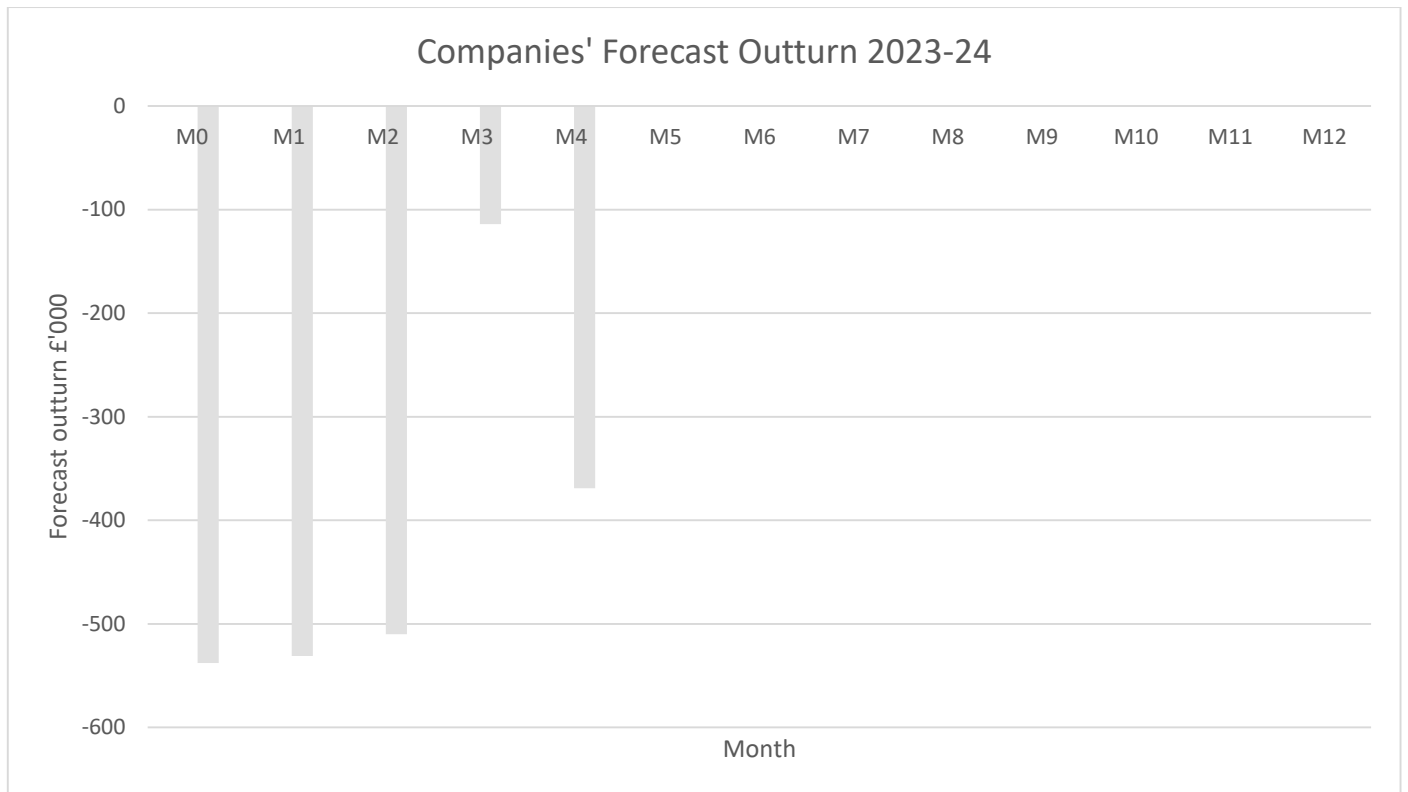
Non Covid-related loan support to WOCs

The Council also supports its WOCs' capital spending (capex) requirements where there is a robust business case demonstrating either a valid 'Spend to Save' initiative or an opportunity to spend to generate income. The Council's exposure to principal and capitalised interest in respect of such WOC capex loans is currently £45.28m.

There are currently no short-term cash flow loans outstanding in respect of Council Wholly-owned companies.

Wholly-owned companies financial performance as at Month 4 2023/24

The consolidated forecast financial position of the Council's wholly-owned subsidiary companies is a loss of £0.369m based on their Month 4 financial monitoring reports. This represents a deterioration of £0.255m from the position reported at Month 3. This is largely due to a change in the accounting treatment of depreciation on revalued assets in one company following completion of the 2022/23 audit of financial statements. There have also been both small improvements in some forecasts and small deteriorations in others.



The Council has taken advice from CIPFA regarding the proper accounting treatment in respect of company forecast losses. CIPFA has advised that the Council does not need to include the forecast losses in its forecast revenue outturn; the company losses will be included in the Council's consolidated financial position.

Blackpool Council

Budget Savings Target 2023/24

Summary of progress as at 31st July 2023.

| | Target | Achieved | Not yet achieved | To be achieved before year-end | Not able to be achieved | Amount of saving not yet found recurrently |
|------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| <u>Recurrent Savings</u> | | | | | | |
| Corporate Services | 12,975 | (11,269) | 1,706 | (1,706) | 0 | 9,946 |
| Adult Services | 3,337 | (1,908) | 1,429 | 0 | 1,429 | 1,429 |
| Chief Executive | 159 | (30) | 129 | (129) | 0 | 0 |
| Children's Services | 2,044 | 0 | 2,044 | (1,278) | 766 | 1,494 |
| Governance & Partnership Services | 507 | (91) | 416 | (416) | 0 | 0 |
| Community & Environmental Services | 367 | 0 | 367 | (367) | 0 | 0 |
| Outside Cash Limit | 1,349 | (275) | 1,074 | (1,074) | 0 | 0 |
| Public Health | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Communications & Regeneration | 497 | (215) | 282 | (282) | 0 | 0 |
| Growth & Prosperity | 1,510 | 0 | 1,510 | (1,510) | 0 | 0 |
| Resources | 650 | (475) | 175 | (175) | 0 | 0 |
| Recurrent Saving | 23,395 | (14,263) | 9,132 | (6,937) | 2,195 | 12,869 |

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2023/24 CAPITAL MONITORING
MONTH 4

Forecast scheme variance underminable at this stage Key:

| | £000 | Spend as at 31/3/23 £000 | Budget Brought Forward 2022/23 £000 | Capital Programme 2023/24 £000 | Total Available Budget 2023/24 £000 | Spend to Date April - July £000 | Forecast to Year End £000 | Forecast Variance £000 |
|--|----------------|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Director Responsible for Resources | | | | | | | | |
| Property and Asset Management | | | | | | | | |
| Central Business District Phase 1 | 40,432 | 38,142 | 2,290 | - | 2,290 | - | 2,290 | - |
| ICT Refresh | 924 | - | - | 924 | 924 | 12 | 912 | - |
| Core CCTV Replacement | 2,000 | 1,179 | 821 | - | 821 | - | 821 | - |
| Finance, HR, Payroll System | 3,225 | 2,535 | 187 | 503 | 690 | 381 | 309 | - |
| Central Library/ Grundy Gallery Roof | 525 | 188 | 337 | - | 337 | 279 | 58 | - |
| South King Street | 597 | 320 | 277 | - | 277 | 231 | 46 | - |
| Other Resources Schemes | 828 | - | 208 | 620 | 828 | 136 | 692 | - |
| Total Resources | 48,531 | 42,364 | 4,120 | 2,047 | 6,167 | 1,039 | 5,128 | - |
| Director Responsible for Adult Services | | | | | | | | |
| Support to Vulnerable Adults - Grants | 2,384 | - | 398 | 1,986 | 2,384 | 507 | 1,877 | - |
| I-Switch | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other Adult Services Schemes | 2,561 | 1,233 | 770 | 558 | 1,328 | 12 | 1,316 | - |
| Total Adult Services | 4,945 | 1,233 | 1,168 | 2,544 | 3,712 | 519 | 3,193 | - |
| Director Responsible for Community and Environmental Services | | | | | | | | |
| Anchorsholme Seawall | 30,966 | 26,632 | 4,334 | - | 4,334 | 8 | 4,326 | - |
| Coastal Protection Strategy 2021-2025 | 61,265 | 1,206 | 94 | 7,790 | 7,884 | 2 | 7,882 | - |
| Coastal Protection Studies | 4,520 | 3,562 | 958 | - | 958 | 51 | 907 | - |
| Beach Nourishment | 57,010 | - | - | 500 | 500 | 17 | 483 | - |
| Others | 1,101 | 498 | 396 | 207 | 603 | 449 | 154 | - |
| Total Community and Environmental Services | 154,862 | 31,898 | 5,782 | 8,497 | 14,279 | 527 | 13,752 | - |

**2023/24 CAPITAL MONITORING
MONTH 4**

| | | Spend as at 31/3/23 | Budget Brought Forward 2022/23 | Capital Programme 2023/24 | Total Available Budget 2023/24 | Spend to Date April - July | Forecast to Year End | Forecast Variance |
|---|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| Chief Executive | | | | | | | | |
| Housing | | | | | | | | |
| Foxhall Village | 12,797 | 13,471 | (674) | - | (674) | - | (674) | - |
| Work towards Decent Homes Standard | 3,985 | - | - | 3,985 | 3,985 | 731 | 3,254 | - |
| Queens Park Redevelopment Ph2 | 13,453 | 13,453 | - | - | - | (386) | 386 | - |
| Troutbeck Redevelopment | 11,970 | 11,675 | 295 | - | 295 | (81) | 376 | - |
| Grange Park | 24,206 | 11,776 | 190 | 12,240 | 12,430 | 3,153 | 9,277 | - |
| Dunsop Court | 1,233 | 1,227 | 6 | - | 6 | 41 | (35) | - |
| Feasibility/ Infill site | 2,750 | 231 | 2,389 | 130 | 2,519 | - | 2,519 | - |
| Haweside Masterplan | 562 | 82 | 480 | - | 480 | - | 480 | - |
| Garstang Road West | 3,495 | 3,495 | - | - | - | (133) | 133 | - |
| Acquisition and Refurbishment | 4,871 | 1,775 | 3,096 | - | 3,096 | 35 | 3,061 | - |
| Others | 7,101 | - | - | 7,101 | 7,101 | - | 7,101 | - |
| Total Chief Executive | 86,423 | 57,185 | 5,782 | 23,456 | 29,238 | 3,360 | 25,878 | - |
| Director Responsible for Communications and Regeneration | | | | | | | | |
| Regeneration | | | | | | | | |
| College Relocation/Illumination Depot | 13,505 | 13,924 | (519) | 100 | (419) | - | (419) | - |
| Leisure Assets | 68,579 | 66,346 | 2,233 | - | 2,233 | 806 | 1,427 | - |
| Conference Centre | 30,562 | 31,025 | (463) | - | (463) | 9 | (472) | - |
| CBD Phase 2 - Hotel | 24,500 | 24,213 | 287 | - | 287 | 2,382 | (2,095) | - |
| CBD Phase 3 | 99,750 | 14,631 | 85,119 | - | 85,119 | 9,245 | 75,874 | - |
| Land Release Fund | 3,204 | 845 | 2,359 | - | 2,359 | 7 | 2,352 | - |
| Enterprise Zone | 29,720 | 15,123 | 14,597 | - | 14,597 | 431 | 14,166 | - |
| Town Centre Parking Strategy | 16,000 | 1,889 | 14,111 | - | 14,111 | 134 | 13,977 | - |
| Museum | 9,653 | 8,016 | 1,637 | - | 1,637 | 1,192 | 445 | - |
| Abingdon Street Market | 3,634 | 4,067 | (433) | - | (433) | 159 | (592) | - |
| HoundsHill Ph2 | 20,190 | 13,879 | 6,311 | - | 6,311 | 2,379 | 3,932 | - |
| Heritage Action Zone | 1,566 | 1,179 | 387 | - | 387 | 82 | 305 | - |
| Devonshire Road Hospital Land | 1,447 | 1,447 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Town Deal | 57,190 | 5,888 | 51,302 | - | 51,302 | 2,532 | 48,770 | - |
| Land Acqn Alfred, Leopold & Adelaide Streets | 1,790 | 1,787 | 3 | - | 3 | 4 | (1) | - |
| Marks and Spencers Acquisition | 4,800 | 4,687 | 113 | - | 113 | - | 113 | - |
| Town Centre Investments | 57,100 | 51,208 | 5,892 | - | 5,892 | (100) | 5,992 | - |
| Multi-Storey Car Park | 1,782 | - | - | 1,782 | 1,782 | 187 | 1,595 | - |
| Transport | | | | | | | | |
| Local Transport Plan 2021/22 | 2,630 | 2,630 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Local Transport Plan Project 30 2021/22 | 283 | 283 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Local Transport Plan 2022/23 | 2,690 | 413 | 2,277 | - | 2,277 | 294 | 1,983 | - |
| Local Transport Plan Project 30 2022/23 | 223 | 223 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Local Transport Plan 2023/24 | 2,690 | - | - | 2,690 | 2,690 | - | 2,690 | - |
| Local Transport Plan Project 30 2023/24 | 223 | - | - | 223 | 223 | - | 223 | - |
| Blackpool/Fleetwood Tramway | 99,990 | 99,990 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Tramway Extension | 17,054 | 16,780 | 274 | - | 274 | 356 | (82) | - |
| Tramway Refurbishment | 1,053 | 713 | 340 | - | 340 | - | 340 | - |
| Total Communications and Regeneration | 571,808 | 381,186 | 185,827 | 4,795 | 190,622 | 20,099 | 170,523 | - |

**2023/24 CAPITAL MONITORING
MONTH 4**

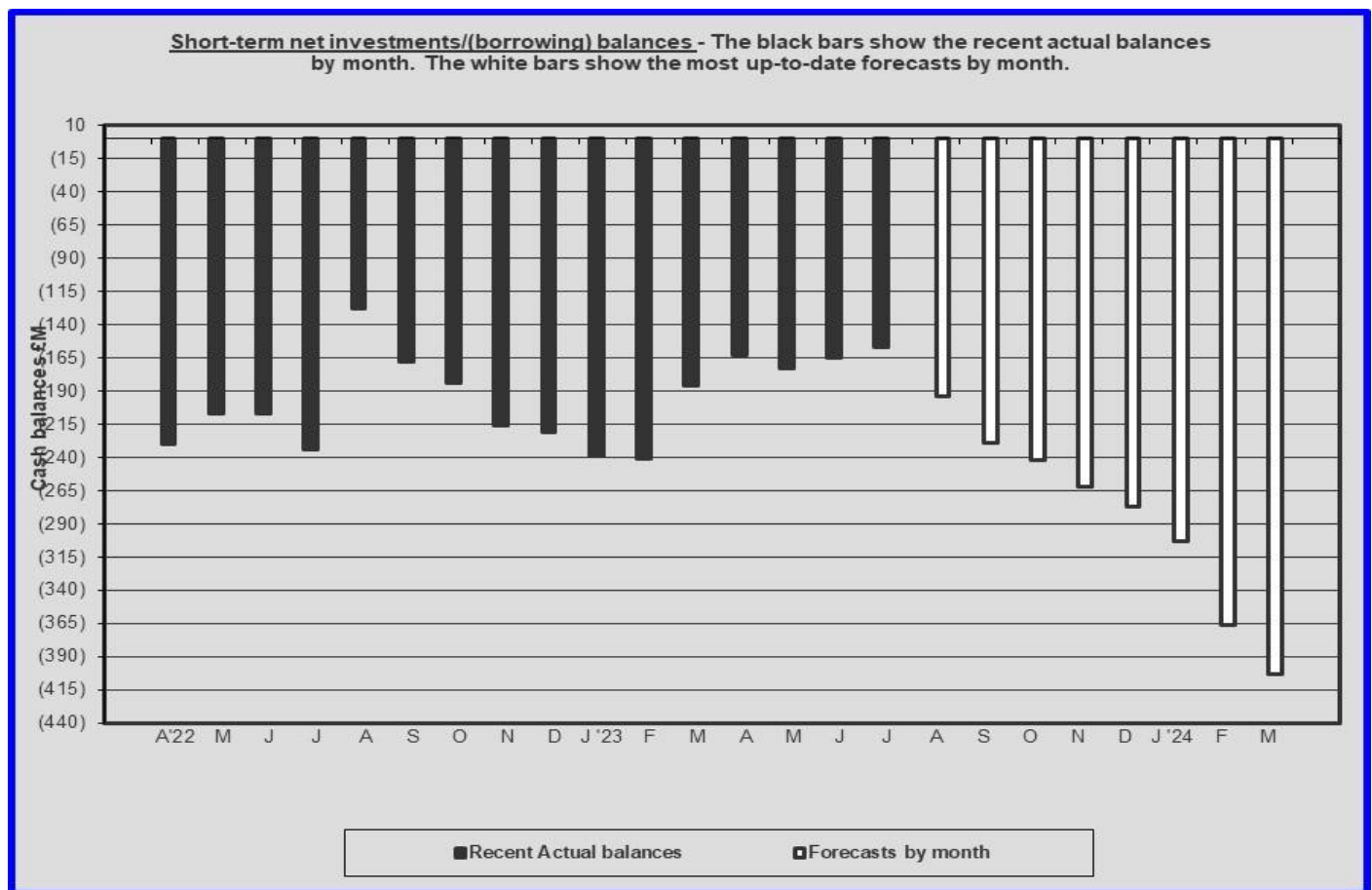
| | | Spend as at 31/3/23 | Budget Brought Forward 2022/23 | Capital Programme 2023/24 | Total Available Budget 2023/24 | Spend to Date April - July | Forecast to Year End | Forecast Variance |
|---|----------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| Director Responsible for Children's Services | | | | | | | | |
| Devolved Capital to Schools | 846 | 711 | 135 | - | 135 | 2 | 133 | - |
| Park Expansion | 610 | 412 | 198 | - | 198 | - | 198 | - |
| Basic Need | 1,309 | 3 | 933 | 373 | 1,306 | - | 1,306 | - |
| Condition | 1,878 | 527 | 845 | 506 | 1,351 | 23 | 1,328 | - |
| Pegasus Expansion | 800 | 9 | 791 | - | 791 | - | 791 | - |
| Others | 1,852 | 152 | 611 | 1,089 | 1,700 | 98 | 1,602 | - |
| Total Children's Services | 7,295 | 1,814 | 3,513 | 1,968 | 5,481 | 123 | 5,358 | - |
| CAPITAL TOTAL | 873,864 | 515,680 | 206,192 | 43,307 | 249,499 | 25,667 | 223,832 | - |

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Blackpool Council

Cash summary - budget, actual and forecast:

| CASH FLOW - SUMMARY - 23/24 | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| FULL YEAR CASH FLOW ORIGINAL BUDGET (*) | APR-JUL CASH FLOW ORIGINAL BUDGET (*) | APR-JUL CASH FLOW ACTUAL | AUG-MAR CASH FLOW FORECAST | (*) THE CASH FLOW BUDGET IS CONSISTENT WITH THE REVENUE BUDGET AND THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME IN TOTAL. THE BUDGETED CASH FLOW PHASING IS BASED ON DETAILED EXPECTATIONS AND PAST EXPERIENCE | APR-JUL MORE / (LESS) CASH ACTUAL vs ORIGINAL BUDGET | AUG-MAR MORE / (LESS) CASH FORECAST vs ORIGINAL BUDGET | FULL YEAR MORE / (LESS) AS NOW FORECAST vs ORIGINAL BUDGET |
| £M | £M | £M | £M | | £M | £M | £M |
| | | | | RECEIPTS | | | |
| 42 | 13 | 10 | 28 | Housing Benefit & Subsidy | (3) | (1) | (4) |
| 118 | 41 | 36 | 74 | Council tax and NNDR | (5) | (3) | (8) |
| 22 | 7 | 6 | 18 | VAT | (1) | 3 | 2 |
| 46 | 16 | 40 | 28 | RSG & BRR | 24 | (2) | 22 |
| 136 | 25 | 78 | 72 | Other Grants | 53 | (39) | 14 |
| 149 | 48 | 50 | 101 | Other Income | 2 | - | 2 |
| - | - | - | - | Money Market Transactions Received | - | - | - |
| 25 | 25 | 84 | 47 | Receipt of Loans | 59 | 47 | 106 |
| 538 | 175 | 304 | 368 | RECEIPTS - NORMAL ACTIVITIES | 129 | 5 | 134 |
| | | | | PAYMENTS | | | |
| 12 | 4 | 4 | 9 | Police & Fire | - | (1) | (1) |
| 430 | 125 | 149 | 288 | General Creditors | (24) | 17 | (7) |
| - | - | - | - | RSG & BRR | - | - | - |
| 127 | 43 | 42 | 85 | Salaries & wages | 1 | (1) | - |
| 37 | 12 | 11 | 24 | Housing Benefits | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| - | - | - | - | Money Market Transactions Paid Out | - | - | - |
| 606 | 184 | 206 | 406 | PAYMENTS - NORMAL ACTIVITIES | (22) | 16 | (6) |
| (68) | (9) | 98 | (38) | NET CASH FLOW IN/(OUT) | 107 | 21 | 128 |
| A | B | C | D | | = C less B | = D less (A-B) | |

Cash - short-term net investments/(borrowing) balances:

Commentary on Cash Movements during the year:

The summary on the previous page provides a comparison of the actual cash receipts and payments compared to the forecasted cash receipts and payments.

During the first four months of the year, the Council's net cashflow resulted in fluctuations in short-term net investment/borrowing balances due to the receipt of up-front grant income in this financial year. The Council fixed £125m of temporary loans in August 2022 at around 3.0%, which resulted in an increase in investment balances and over the next few months, short-term borrowing will be repaid using the fixed-term borrowing taken.

The chart of actual and forecast month-end balances shows temporary investment and borrowing levels throughout the year. The forecast shows the level of borrowing that may be required to cover planned and approved capital expenditure up to 31st March 2024. However, it is likely that the council will take out some long-term borrowing to cover some of this expenditure part way through 2023/24.

Blackpool Council

Balance Sheet / Working Capital:

| BALANCE SHEET 2023/24 | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| LAST Y/END | | CURRENT | CHANGE | NEXT Y/END |
| Draft Unaudited 31 Mar 23 | | 31 Jul 23 Actual | Movement since 31 Mar 23 | 31 Mar 24 Forecast |
| £000s | | £000s | £000s | £000s |
| 588,919 | Property, Plant and Equipment | 614,586 | 25,667 | 675,287 |
| 279,731 | Infrastructure Assets | 280,333 | 602 | 263,731 |
| 8,540 | Heritage Assets | 8,540 | - | 8,600 |
| 2,401 | Intangible Assets | 2,344 | (57) | 2,171 |
| 27,399 | Long-term Investments | 28,149 | 750 | 29,650 |
| 77,306 | Long-term Debtors | 79,543 | 2,237 | 81,353 |
| | Current Assets | | | |
| 76,398 | Debtors | 78,920 | 2,522 | 75,000 |
| 836 | Inventories | 894 | 58 | 800 |
| 14,284 | Cash and cash equivalents | 15,024 | 740 | 15,000 |
| 1,075,814 | Total Assets | 1,108,333 | 32,519 | 1,151,592 |
| | Current Liabilities | | | |
| (200,475) | Borrowing Repayable within 12 months | (182,200) | 18,275 | (200,000) |
| (81,762) | Creditors | (79,500) | 2,262 | (82,000) |
| | Long-term Liabilities | | | |
| (196,052) | Borrowing Repayable in excess of 12 months | (196,052) | - | (185,000) |
| (90,961) | Long-term Creditors | (90,961) | - | (88,131) |
| (50,576) | Capital Grants in Advance | (50,576) | - | (40,000) |
| (6,106) | Provisions | (6,152) | (46) | (6,100) |
| (62) | Other Long-term Liabilities | (62) | - | (62) |
| 449,820 | Total Assets less Liabilities | 502,830 | 53,010 | 550,299 |
| (82,888) | Usable Reserves | (73,229) | 9,659 | (69,649) |
| (366,932) | Unusable Reserves | (429,601) | (62,669) | (480,650) |
| (449,820) | Total Reserves | (502,830) | (53,010) | (550,299) |

Commentary on the key issues:

In order to provide a complete picture of the Council's financial performance, the above table provides a snapshot of the General Fund balance sheet as at the end of month 4. The key areas of focus are any significant movements in debtors, cash and cash equivalents, bank overdraft and creditors as these impact upon the Council's performance in the critical areas of debt recovery, treasury management and Public Sector Payment Policy.

The balance sheet has been prepared under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS/IAS's). Each year an accounting adjustment under IAS 19 is made for the value of the pension fund at year-end. In 2022/23, for the first time, this produced a pension asset rather than a pension liability. Based on the latest advice from the Pension Fund the Council has not recognised the pension asset. However this is currently under review and therefore the figure is subject to change. Any change will also affect the unusable reserves. Usable reserves include unallocated General Fund reserves and revenue reserves. Unusable reserves are those that the Council is not able to use to provide services. This category includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets were sold.

Due to statutory changes regarding the accounting treatment of infrastructure assets which were approved in Parliament in late November 2022, the 2020/21 and 2021/22 accounts have not yet been signed off by the Council's external auditor. The audits are still ongoing and as soon as they are completed the 2022/23 balance sheet may require amendment, therefore the figures above should be treated as draft.

Over the 4-month period there has been an increase in Property, Plant and Equipment of £25.7m due to capital expenditure which is in line with the Council's approved capital programme for 2023/24. Short-term borrowing has reduced by £18.3m due to the timing of capital and revenue grants.

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Report to: | SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD |
| Relevant Officer: | Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager |
| Date of Meeting: | 17 October 2023 |

SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD WORKPLAN

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To confirm the workplan for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year and consider the update to previous Committee recommendations.

2.0 Recommendations:

2.1 To confirm the workplan for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year.

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

3.0 Reasons for recommendations:

3.1 To ensure the Workplan is robust and fit for purpose and actions are monitored.

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

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

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background Information

6.1 **Scrutiny Workplan**

The workplan is a flexible document that sets out the work that will be undertaken by the Board over the course of the year, both through scrutiny review and Committee meetings.

Board Members are also invited to suggest topics at any time that might be suitable for scrutiny review through completion of the Scrutiny Review Checklist. The checklist forms part of the mandatory scrutiny procedure for establishing review panels and must therefore be completed and submitted for consideration by the Committee, prior to a topic being approved for scrutiny outside of the workplanning workshop.

6.2 **Implementation of Recommendations/Actions**

The table attached at Appendix 6(a) has been developed to assist the Board in effectively ensuring that the recommendations made by the Board are acted upon. The table will be regularly updated and submitted to each Board meeting.

Members are requested to consider the updates provided in the table and ask follow-up questions as appropriate to ensure that all recommendations are implemented.

6.3 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 **List of Appendices:**

7.1 Appendix 6(a) - Implementation of Recommendations/Actions.

8.0 **Financial considerations:**

8.1 None.

9.0 **Legal considerations:**

9.1 None.

10.0 **Risk management considerations:**

10.1 None.

11.0 **Equalities and Children and Young People's considerations:**

11.1 None.

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

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

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Scrutiny Leadership Board Workplan 2023/2024

| | |
|--|---|
| October 2023 Formal Committee | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corporate Financial Performance Monitoring 2. Update on Channel Shift Scrutiny Review recommendations 3. Council Complaints and Feedback |
| Informal meeting December 2023 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finance/Budget 2023/2024 discussion 2. MTFS |
| Informal meeting January 2024 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capital and Revenue budgets/Budget scrutiny |
| March 2024 Formal Committee | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corporate Financial Performance Monitoring 2. Referral from Audit Committee - That a report on progress of the interventions outlined in the Directorate Medium Term Financial Plans to address the overspend in Children's and Adults social care be brought to a meeting of the Scrutiny Leadership Board 12 months on (from January 2022). |
| Informal meeting May 2024 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scrutiny Annual Report 2. Scrutiny Self-Assessment |

Public Engagement Working Group – 17 October 2023, 4.30pm

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Scrutiny Leadership Board meeting action tracker

| | DATE OF REC | RECOMMENDATION | TARGET DATE | RESPONSIBLE OFFICER | UPDATE | RAG RATING |
|---|-------------|---|-------------|---------------------|---|------------|
| 1 | 13.07.23 | Receive further information with regards to the take-up of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and data regarding the bands utilising it most. | 08.09.23 | Mark Golden | Response received from Louise Jones as per email 4/09/23. Should Members require anything further please advise. | |
| 2 | 13.07.23 | Receive an overview of the different levels of debt and interest paid over the previous five to 10 years to the Board following the meeting. | 08.09.23 | Mark Golden | Mr Golden advises that this request has been taken on board and graphical information on debt levels and interest rates will be built into Treasury Management reporting going forward. | |
| 3 | 13.07.23 | Further information was requested relating to the reduction in referrals to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services and the Child and Adolescent Support and Help Enhanced Response Team and it was agreed this would be provided following the meeting. | 09.08.23 | Ruth Henshaw | <p>The data has been reviewed and the apparent drop in referrals is actually down to changes in the data source used in 2022/23. In previous years, data from the Integrated Care Board has been reported which uses data for all children and young people under 18 referred to Blackpool's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health services. Whereas the data reported by Blackpool Teaching Hospitals last year included all under 25s referred to the CAMHS, CASHER and Youththerapy services only.</p> <p>The team are now able to pull data from a PowerBI dashboard which provides much more accurate information. For the 2 years in question, the data shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Blackpool in 2021/22 there were 2,444 accepted referrals. • For Blackpool in 2022/23 there were 2,474 accepted referrals. | |

| | DATE OF REC | RECOMMENDATION | TARGET DATE | RESPONSIBLE OFFICER | UPDATE | RAG RATING |
|--|-------------|----------------|-------------|---------------------|---|------------|
| | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This represents a 1.2% increase in accepted referrals. <p>This data is for all Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health services for children and young people (including mental health support in schools).</p> <p>We'll update the description and data included in the Council Plan reports for this KPI going forward.</p> | |