

Public Document Pack

Blackpool Council

8 March 2024

To: Councillors Benson, N Brookes, Burdess, Farrell, Hobson, Hugo, M Smith, Taylor and Williams

The above members are requested to attend the:

EXECUTIVE

Monday, 18 March 2024 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room A, Town Hall, Blackpool

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 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING AS AT MONTH 10 2023/24 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/25 - 2026/27 (Pages 1 - 68)

To report the level of spending and exposure against the Council's Revenue budgets and reserves and balances for the first 10 months to 31 January 2024. The report also includes an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 – 2026/27.

3 BLACKPOOL COUNCIL ADULTS CARERS STRATEGY

(Pages 69 - 112)

To consider the proposed Blackpool Council Adult Carers Strategy.

Venue information:

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

Other information:

For queries regarding this agenda please contact Lennox Beattie, Executive and Regulatory Manager, Tel: (01253) 477157, e-mail lennox.beattie@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.

Report to:	EXECUTIVE
Relevant Officer:	Steve Thompson, Director of Resources
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting:	18 March 2024

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING AS AT MONTH 10 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 10 months to 31 January 2024. 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, Community and Environmental Services and Parking 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 10 months of 2023/24, i.e. the period to 31 January 2024, 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 an improvement 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 increase to a balance of **£5,868k** 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 10 forecast overspend of **£926k** for 2023/24 are summarised below:

Directorate	Service	Forecast Variance £000
Children’s Services	<p>An overspend of £6,863k is forecast. Children’s Social Care Placements is forecasting an overspend of £6,157k, 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 31 January 2024 is 74 with this forecast to reduce to 68 by 31 March 2024, whereas the plan suggested there would be 62 as at 31 January 2024 reducing to 60 by the end of March 2024.</p> <p>However, the number of Children in Care continues to reduce and currently sits at 532 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</p>	6,863

	<p>numbers of residential placements, from 84 to 70 as a result 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 2021/22 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> <p>Business Support and Resources is forecasting an overspend of £676k. There was an additional Children’s Services savings target of £1,924k, of which, only £1,165k is anticipated to be met this financial year, leaving a budget gap of £759k. There is expected to be a £83k underspend on staffing. Education is expected to be £143k overspent due to unachieved vacancy factor, additional back pay for employees on Soulbury grades and a SEND contract came in higher than originally planned. Early Help is expected to underspend by £113k due to the release of an unspent grant.</p>	
Adult Services	<p>An overspend of £1,298k is forecast. Adult Commissioning Placements is forecasting an overspend of £1,673k. 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 additional funding streams of £337K. There is a pressure of £1,570k in Supported Living due to additional packages of care including children’s transitions, along with £472k of pressures due to additional packages of short-term care linked to hospital discharge. £439k pressures relates to Out of Area Residential and Nursing Placements fee uplifts being significantly greater than forecast in addition</p>	1,298

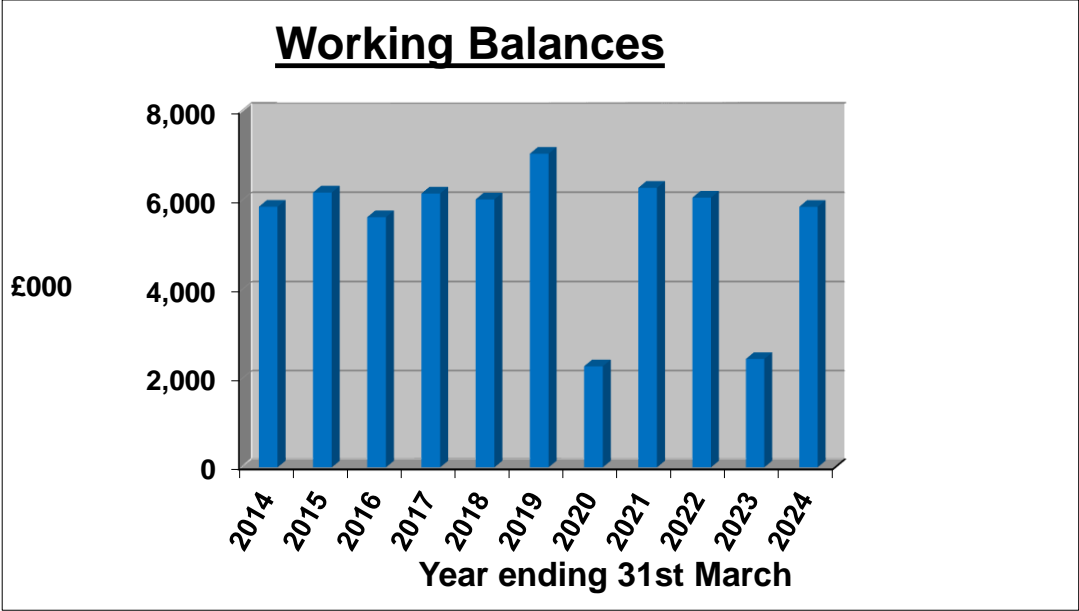
	<p>to a further £515k of pressures across this area of service offset by £2,791k additional client contributions. There is £602k in the forecast relating to the recently announced Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund which is being used to offset the residential/nursing top-ups and Out of Area fee rates. Savings of £58k have arisen within Supporting People due to additional grant contributions along with a further saving of £99k in Service Management. Direct payment pressures of £878k are resulting from a forecasted reduction in claw-backs based on year-to-date actuals and increased numbers of supported people.</p> <p>Adult Social Care and Care and Support are forecasting an underspend of £375k due to the level of vacant positions.</p>	
Community and Environmental Services	<p>An overspend of £690k is forecast. Business Services is reporting a pressure of £1,300k due to ongoing projects being carried out in year by the service. Savings have been identified within the Directorate to deliver these projects. Children’s Transport Services is reporting an overspend of £690k due to an increase in demand for Special Educational Needs transport relating to a growth in Education Health and Care Plans. Public Protection is currently forecasting a saving of £50k due to staff vacancies. There are pressures within Licencing, where the income forecast is currently under budget, however, savings have been identified within other areas of Public Protection which will mitigate this. Leisure Services is forecasting a saving of £150k due to savings within staffing and increased income within the Learn to Swim scheme. Catering is facing a pressure due to the increased cost of provisions, but this is expected to be met through reserves. Waste Services are forecasting savings of £200k. An inflationary uplift has been applied to the contract in Public Conveniences, however, Trade Waste income is forecasting an increase against budget to offset this pressure. Highways and Traffic Management Services is currently forecasting an underspend of £400k due to staffing vacancies within Highways & Engineering and the capitalisation of staff costs. Coastal and Environmental Partnerships is currently forecasting a saving of £500k due to additional Coastal income being received.</p>	690
Communications and Regeneration	<p>An overspend of £26k is forecast. Tourism and Communications is forecasting a pressure of £66k due to</p>	26

	increased costs of £50k in Visit Blackpool and a £16k pressure in Illuminations due to storm damage to the display. Economic Development and Cultural Services is currently forecasting an underspend of £40k due to vacant posts.	
Strategic Leisure Assets	Strategic Leisure Assets is forecasting an underspend of £636k 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 7 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 £8,634k. 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.	Nil
Growth and Prosperity	A break-even position is forecast. This figure has reduced from period 9 due to a revised expectation of the proceeds likely to be raised by the current work programme and a higher than predicted borrowing cost. The Executive at its meeting on 8 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 re-investment. 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 remain at £10,125k.	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 £32k is forecast. Corporate Legal Services is forecasting a £50k 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. Life Events and Democratic Governance are forecasting an underspend of £45k due to staff turnover.	(32)

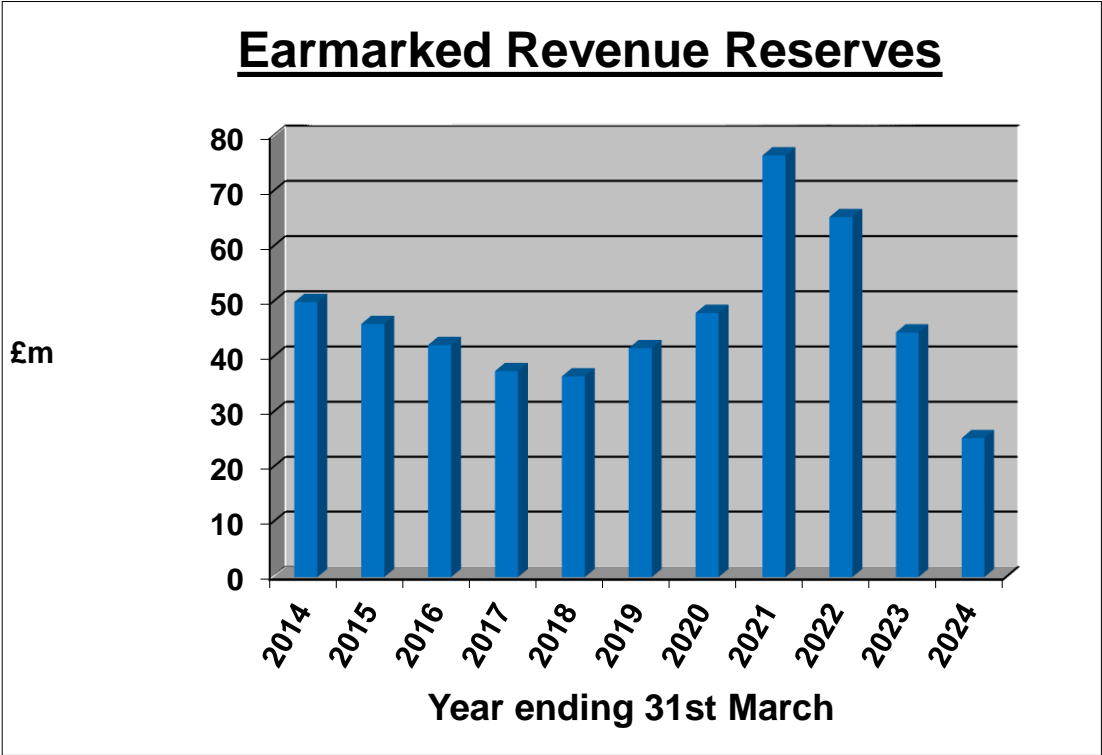
Chief Executive	An underspend of £200k is forecast due to a release of a reserve now deemed as no longer required. Housing is currently forecasting a break-even position. However pressures in Homelessness Services to support people to whom a responsibility is owed are, along with other authorities, high and continue to rise. Despite successful work in year to reduce the number of households requiring emergency temporary accommodation and reducing the time spent in B&B for those for whom another option is not available, the service is projecting to spend over £1m on this accommodation this year alone.	(200)
Resources	An underspend of £320k is forecast. Savings across the Directorate relate to staff vacancies, dis-establishment of posts, additional income from HMRC and other income generation opportunities.	(320)
Budgets Outside the Cash Limit	An underspend of £1,344k is forecast. Parking Services is currently forecasting a £500k overspend due to lower than budgeted income. The position has deteriorated this month due to the delay in opening of the multi-storey carpark. The ability to maintain this position depends on the impact of the cost of living crisis, the quality of the Easter holiday season, the impact of dynamic parking and the availability of parking due to regeneration projects within the town. Treasury Management is forecasting an underspend of £1,600k, which includes £2,581k 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 £660k. Offset against this is £1,606k 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 an overspend of £35k as new business loans have been awarded at higher repayment rates than originally forecast for 2023/24.	(1,344)

	<p>The position has worsened since M9 as interest rates have been increased from 4.5% to 5% in the forecast and there have been changes in drawdown amounts and dates for certain loans which has resulted in an overspend in year. Following a review of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), which was approved by the Executive on 8 February 2021, a saving of £5,158k is forecast to be achieved in 2023/24. Subsidiary Companies is forecasting a £114k saving due to a reduction in charges, mainly relating to debt management and an increase in rental income. Concessionary Fares is forecasting a £130k saving due to concessionary passenger numbers being 42% lower than pre-Covid levels, though the Council remains committed to paying at a minimum of a 70% safety net level in line with Department for Transport guidance until March 2024. All other services within Budgets Outside the Cash Limit are forecasting no in-year pressures in 2023/24.</p>	
Contingencies and Reserves	<p>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. There is an overspend of £388k relating to Single Persons Discount. Non-pay inflation is expected to underspend by £804k and there are various minor underspends totalling £352k. 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. The NNDR levy account redistribution Final Settlement is £405k and the Green Plant and Machinery Final Settlement is £65k. The overall net impact is therefore an underspend of £2,943k. A Capital Reserve of £3,112k has been released into Working Balances as it is no longer needed.</p>	(6,055)
Total		926

The graph overleaf 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 31 March 2024, is shown below:



Provisional Available Earmarked Reserves	£m
Provisional Balance at 1 April 2023	47.623
Less: Savings target	(9.946)
Add: Growth and Prosperity Reserve	-
Add: Strategic Leisure Assets Underspend	0.636
Less: Savings targets in services to be transferred from reserves	(0.440)
Less: Transfer in 2022/23 to be used in 2023/24	(3.112)
Less: Estimated other movements in 2023/24	<u>(9.394)</u>
Forecast Available Earmarked Revenue Reserves as at 31 March 2024	<u>25.367</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 31 January 2024 74% of the 2023/24 recurrent savings target has been delivered. The full-year forecast predicts that 88% will be achieved by the year-end. All of the saving has now 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 £58.2m and the collection rate **83.7%** at the end of month 10. This compares to £54.5m and 83.9% at the same point in 2022/23. The amount collected has risen by £3.7m, 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 1 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 23 January 2023 to ensure that Council Tax support is available to pensioners and the working aged based upon a means test.

At the end of month 10 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 £2.2m and the collection rate was **62.5%**. This compares to £2.7m and 66.6% 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 £32.5m and the collection rate **87.0%** at the end of month 10. This compares to £37.0m and 86.7% 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 10 months to the end of January 2024 - 917 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 6 February 2023. The month 10 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.

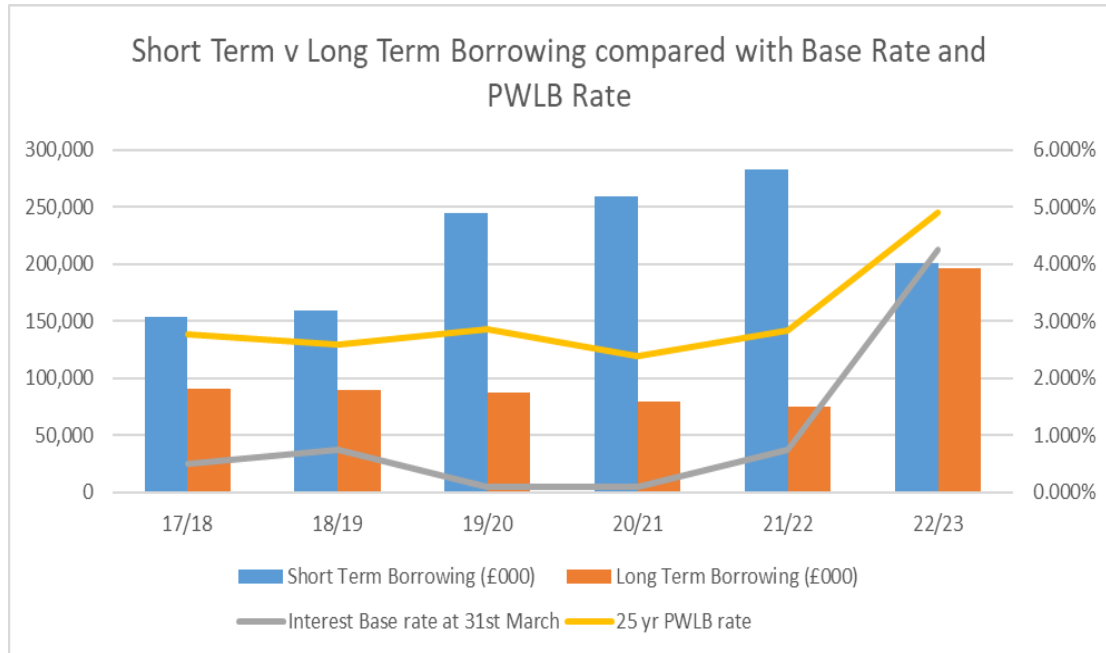
The economic climate remains challenging. High inflation, rising interest rates, supply chain issues (particularly in relation to steel) and a lack of labour are leading to increased costs, primarily on capital schemes that are likely to span a number of years. An ongoing review of capital schemes is 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 10 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 demonstrates 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 10. 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. Paragraph 64 of IAS 19 limits the measurement of a net defined benefit asset to the lower of the surplus in the defined benefit plan and the asset ceiling. This calculation has now been received from the actuary and £42m has been recognised in the balance sheet as a pension asset.

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 accounts were not signed off until November 2023. This has meant that the completion of the audits for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 accounts have been delayed. As the audits are still ongoing the balance sheet as at 31 March 2023 may require amendment, therefore the figures should be treated as draft.

Over the 10-month period there has been an increase in Property, Plant and Equipment of £78.6m due to capital expenditure which is in line with the Council’s approved capital programme for 2023/24. Infrastructure assets have decreased by £7.2m which is the net effect of spend to date less depreciation at month 10. Long-term debtors has increased by £6.7m due to new approved business loans. Cash and cash equivalents have increased by £28.7m and short-term borrowing has increased by £65.4m 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 8 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 were 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 including the announcements in the Autumn Statement, the Provisional and Final Settlements 2024/25 and the Office of Budgetary Responsibility (OBR) CPI forecasts is given below:

Medium Term Financial Plan v1.7		
2024/25 £m	Budget Gap 2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m
16.3	14.8	6.0

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 £m	Est Balance 31/03/23 £m	Est Balance 31/03/24 £m	Est Balance 31/03/25 £m	Est Balance 31/03/26 £m	Est Balance 31/03/27 £m
Total	(65.4)	(47.6)	(25.4)	(19.7)	(20.4)	(22.4)

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 March 2023 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 £1,410k at the end of the financial year; still ahead of its minimum agreed level of £1m.

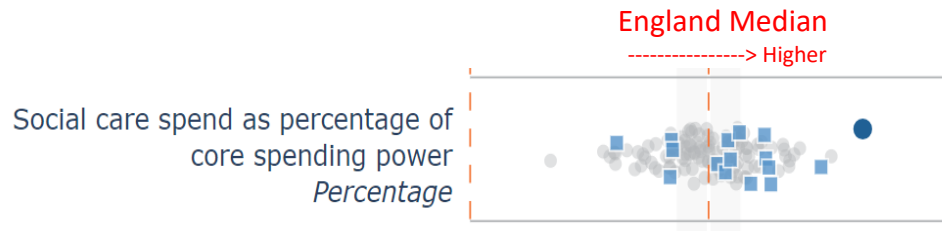
6.10 **Central Government Monitoring and Oversight**

Local government finance is clearly in a fragile and precarious position. There are at least 37 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 771 external audits outstanding in England between 2015/16-2022/23 at the last count. On top of this central government does require 29 financial monitoring returns from local authorities each year.

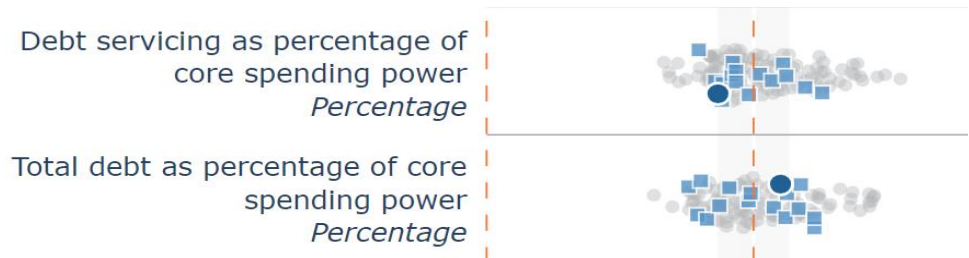
As a result of this perilous climate the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities launched the Office for Local Government (Oflog) in July this year, whose purpose is to increase transparency, foster accountability and use data to further improve performance and help identify problems at 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 31 March 2024 rising to £8m by 31 March 2025. Earmarked revenue reserves at the start of the financial year stood at £47.6m, though with known in-year commitments against this the balance will fall to an estimated £25.4m 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 neither 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 2 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

Blackpool Council

Revenue summary - budget, actual and forecast:

BLACKPOOL COUNCIL							2022/23 (UNDER)/OVER SPEND B/FWD £000
FORECAST GENERAL FUND POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2024							
SUMMARY							
APP.	GENERAL FUND NET REQUIREMENTS	BUDGET	EXPENDITURE			VARIANCE	
		ADJUSTED CASH LIMITED BUDGET £000	EXPENDITURE APR - JAN £000	2023/24 PROJECTED SPEND £000	FORECAST OUTTURN £000	F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000	
2(b)	CHIEF EXECUTIVE	1,854	250	1,404	1,654	(200)	-
2(c)	GOVERNANCE & PARTNERSHIP SERVICES	2,250	2,301	(83)	2,218	(32)	-
2(c/d)	WARD BUDGETS	269	(5)	274	269	-	-
2(e)	RESOURCES	4,372	7,870	(3,818)	4,052	(320)	-
2(f)	COMMUNICATIONS AND REGENERATION	4,256	3,495	787	4,282	26	-
2(g)	STRATEGIC LEISURE ASSETS	1,976	4,851	(3,511)	1,340	(636)	-
	STRATEGIC LEISURE ASSETS - TRANSFER TO/(FROM) RESERVES	-	-	636	636	636	-
2(h)	GROWTH & PROSPERITY	(7,806)	2,385	(10,191)	(7,806)	-	-
	GROWTH & PROSPERITY - TRANSFER TO/(FROM) RESERVES	-	-	-	-	-	-
2(i)	COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	52,480	43,169	10,001	53,170	690	-
2(j)	ADULT SERVICES	64,515	51,382	14,431	65,813	1,298	-
2(k)	CHILDREN'S SERVICES	69,428	57,235	19,056	76,291	6,863	-
2(l)	PUBLIC HEALTH	3	(9,831)	9,834	3	-	-
2(m)	BUDGETS OUTSIDE THE CASH LIMIT	17,564	(281)	16,501	16,220	(1,344)	-
	CAPITAL CHARGES	(30,209)	(25,174)	(5,035)	(30,209)	-	-
	NET COST OF SERVICES:	180,952	137,647	50,286	187,933	6,981	-
	CONTRIBUTIONS:						
	- TO / (FROM) RESERVES	(13,102)	(11,638)	(4,576)	(16,214)	(3,112)	-
	- 2022/23 SERVICE OVER/(UNDERSPENDS)	-	-	-	-	-	-
	- REVENUE CONSEQUENCES OF CAPITAL OUTLAY	500	-	500	500	-	-
	CONTINGENCIES	3,076	(580)	713	133	(2,943)	-
	LEVIES	457	74	383	457	-	-
	CONTRIBUTIONS, etc.	(9,069)	(12,144)	(2,980)	(15,124)	(6,055)	-
	TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE TO BE MET FROM PUBLIC FUNDS	171,883	125,503	47,306	172,809	926	-
	ADDED TO/(TAKEN FROM) BALANCES	4,335	-	3,409	3,409	(926)	-
	NET REQUIREMENT AFTER WORKING BALANCES	176,218	125,503	50,715	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							(926)
ESTIMATED UNEARMARKED WORKING BALANCES AS AT 31st MARCH 2024							5,868

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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
	2023/24					
	ADJUSTED CASH LIMITED BUDGET £000	EXPENDITURE APR - JAN £000	PROJECTED SPEND £000	FORECAST OUTTURN £000	F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000	
CHIEF EXECUTIVE NET EXPENDITURE						
CHIEF EXECUTIVE	647	644	3	647	-	-
HUMAN RESOURCES, ORGANISATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	85	(365)	450	85	-	-
CHIEF EXECUTIVE TOTAL	732	279	453	732	-	-
CORPORATE DELIVERY UNIT	93	(1,370)	1,263	(107)	(200)	-
HOUSING	1,029	1,341	(312)	1,029	-	-
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE	1,122	(29)	951	922	(200)	-
TOTALS	1,854	250	1,404	1,654	(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 10 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. However pressures in Homelessness Services to support people to whom a responsibility is owed are, along with other authorities, high and continue to rise. Despite successful work in year to reduce the number of households requiring emergency temporary accommodation and reducing the time spent in B&B for those for whom another option is not available, the service is projecting to spend over £1m on this accommodation this year alone.

Budget Holder – Mr N Jack, Chief Executive

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 - JAN £000	PROJECTED SPEND £000	FORECAST OUTTURN £000	F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000	
GOVERNANCE & PARTNERSHIP SERVICES						
NET EXPENDITURE						
DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE	2,429	2,314	95	2,409	(20)	-
CORPORATE LEGAL SERVICES	31	(268)	349	81	50	-
INFORMATION GOVERNANCE	102	(19)	84	65	(37)	-
LIFE EVENTS	(312)	274	(611)	(337)	(25)	-
GOVERNANCE & PARTNERSHIP SERVICES	2,250	2,301	(83)	2,218	(32)	-
WARDS	269	(5)	274	269	-	-
TOTALS	2,519	2,296	191	2,487	(32)	-

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 10 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 now forecasting an underspend of £20k due to staff turnover.

Corporate Legal Services

This service is forecasting a £50k overspend due to increasing 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 10

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 <u>Approved</u> Schemes	Remaining 2023-24 Budget
Anchorsholme Ward 61008/61030	Cllr. Galley Cllr. Cooper	1 1	1 1	0 0	1 1	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£282.00 £282.00	£6,718.00 £6,718.00
Bispham Ward 61009/61031	Cllr. Warne Cllr. Wilshaw	0 1	0 1	0 0	0 1	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£0.00 £449.00	£7,000.00 £6,551.00
Bloomfield Ward 61010/61032	Cllr. Fenlon Cllr. Hobson	6 12	6 12	0 0	5 10	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£746.41 £2,272.26	£6,253.59 £4,727.74
Brunswick Ward 61033/61011	Cllr. Marshall Cllr. Thomas	5 4	5 4	0 0	3 3	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£2,705.42 £2,692.35	£4,294.58 £4,307.65
Claremont Ward 61012/61034	Cllr. Taylor Cllr. L. Williams	7 6	7 6	0 0	5 4	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£4,321.77 £4,156.77	£2,678.23 £2,843.23
Clifton Ward 61035/61013	Cllr. Burdess Cllr. Humphries	8 6	8 6	0 0	7 5	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£4,570.17 £4,384.16	£2,429.83 £2,615.84
Greenlands Ward 61014/61036	Cllr. Flanagan Cllr. Jones	0 2	0 2	0 0	0 0	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£0.00 £1,173.00	£7,000.00 £5,827.00
Hawes Side Ward 61015/61037	Cllr. N Brookes Cllr. Critchley	4 4	4 4	0 0	3 3	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£1,397.47 £1,396.47	£5,602.53 £5,603.53
Highfield Ward 61038/61016	Cllr. Hunter Cllr. B Mitchell	3 0	3 0	0 0	1 0	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£5,970.00 £0.00	£1,030.00 £7,000.00
Ingthorpe Ward 61017/61039	Cllr. Bamborough MBE Cllr. Farrell	5 6	5 6	0 0	3 5	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£1,799.57 £1,851.19	£5,200.43 £5,148.81
Layton Ward 61018/61040	Cllr. Benson Cllr. Boughton	12 11	12 11	0 0	9 9	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£3,916.06 £3,898.05	£3,083.94 £3,101.95
Marton Ward 61019/61041	Cllr. S Brookes Cllr. S Smith	1 2	1 2	0 0	1 1	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£321.00 £1,571.00	£6,679.00 £5,429.00
Norbreck Ward 61020/61042	Cllr. Ellison Cllr. Sloman	3 1	3 1	0 0	3 1	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£1,151.00 £1,075.00	£5,849.00 £5,925.00
Park Ward 61021/61043	Cllr. Campbell Cllr. Hoyle	2 1	2 1	0 0	2 1	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£2,426.00 £1,176.00	£4,574.00 £5,824.00
Squires Gate Ward 61022/61044	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 61023/61045	Cllr. Baker Cllr. Roberts	0 1	0 1	0 0	0 1	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£0.00 £1,926.00	£7,000.00 £5,074.00
Talbot Ward 61024/61046	Cllr. Hugo Cllr. M Smith	10 10	10 10	0 0	4 4	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£3,814.38 £3,814.37	£3,185.62 £3,185.63
Tyldesley Ward 61047/61025	Cllr. Webb Cllr. Roe	5 5	5 5	0 0	4 4	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£751.70 £751.70	£6,248.30 £6,248.30
Victoria Ward 61026/61048	Cllr. Jackson Cllr. P Brookes	4 4	4 4	0 0	3 3	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£430.70 £430.70	£6,569.30 £6,569.30
Warbreck Ward 61027/61049	Cllr. D Scott Cllr. Mrs M Scott	9 9	9 9	0 0	8 8	£7,000.00 £7,000.00	£5,545.30 £5,545.30	£1,454.70 £1,454.70
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	171	171	0	126	£294,000.00	£78,994.27	£215,005.73
Unallocated Budget	-	-	-	-	(£25,000.00)	£0.00	(£25,000.00)
Income Budget	-	-	-	-	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Area Ward Totals	171	171	0	126	£269,000.00	£78,994.27	£190,005.73

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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
	ADJUSTED CASH LIMITED BUDGET £000	2023/24		FORECAST OUTTURN £000	F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000	
		EXPENDITURE APR - JAN £000	PROJECTED SPEND £000			
RESOURCES						
NET EXPENDITURE						
PROCUREMENT & EXCHEQUER SERVICES	85	41	(55)	(14)	(99)	-
BENEFITS	(1,393)	2,129	(3,522)	(1,393)	-	-
REVENUES SERVICES	1,862	2,318	(456)	1,862	-	-
CUSTOMER FIRST	88	35	45	80	(8)	-
ICT SERVICES	861	1,436	(576)	860	(1)	-
ACCOUNTANCY	221	133	(5)	128	(93)	-
RISK SERVICES	50	(98)	81	(17)	(67)	-
PROPERTY SERVICES (Incl. INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO)	2,597	1,902	641	2,543	(54)	-
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	1	(26)	29	3	2	-
TOTALS	4,372	7,870	(3,818)	4,052	(320)	-

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 10 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 £99k. 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 January was 22 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 underspend of £8k against a gross budget of £1.19m, this is due to unfilled vacancies and additional SLA income has been achieved in year.

ICT Services

ICT is forecasting an underspend of £1k and a contribution to the ICT Infrastructure reserve of £24k on a gross budget of £5.95m. The budget is currently under pressure from inflationary increases in software licences and the hardware supply chain, this is being offset with additional income generation and staff turnover.

Accountancy

Accountancy is forecasting an underspend of £93k due to freezing of vacant posts and additional income from HMRC.

Risk Services

Audit and Risk Services are forecasting an underspend of £67k. The majority of the movement relates to staffing slippage due to recruitment struggles and also the generation of additional income.

Property Services (incl. Investment Portfolio)

Property Services are forecasting an underspend of £54k against a gross budget of £14.28m, savings arising from staff vacancies across the service.

Equality and Diversity

Equality and Diversity are forecasting an overspend of £2k on a gross budget of £198k.

Summary of the revenue forecast

After 10 months of the financial year Resources are forecasting a £320k 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 - JAN £000	PROJECTED SPEND £000	FORECAST OUTTURN £000	F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000	
COMMUNICATIONS & REGENERATION						
NET EXPENDITURE						
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & CULTURAL SERVICES	785	1,179	(434)	745	(40)	-
PLANNING	582	(145)	727	582	-	-
TOURISM AND COMMUNICATIONS	2,889	2,461	494	2,955	66	-
TOTALS	4,256	3,495	787	4,282	26	-

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 10 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 £66k pressure. This is made up of a £50k pressure in Tourism and Communications due to increased costs in Visit Blackpool as well as a £16k pressure in Illuminations due to storm damage to the display.

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 - JAN £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	1,976	4,851	(3,511)	1,340	(636)	-
TOTALS	1,976	4,851	(3,511)	1,340	(636)	-

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 10 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 10 Strategic Leisure Assets is forecasting an £636k underspend. 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 7 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 £8,634k.

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 - JAN £000	2023/24		F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000	
			PROJECTED SPEND £000	FORECAST OUTTURN £000		
GROWTH & PROSPERITY NET EXPENDITURE						
GROWTH & PROSPERITY	(7,806)	2,385	(10,191)	(7,806)	-	-
TOTALS	(7,806)	2,385	(10,191)	(7,806)	-	-

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 10 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 10, the service is forecasting a break-even position. This figure has reduced from period 9 due to a revised expectation of the proceeds likely to be raised by the current work programme and a higher than predicted borrowing cost.

The Executive, at its meeting on 8 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. 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 remain at £10,125k.

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 - JAN £000	PROJECTED SPEND £000	FORECAST OUTTURN £000	F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000	
COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES						
NET EXPENDITURE						
BUSINESS SERVICES	(866)	1,069	(635)	434	1,300	-
LEISURE AND CATERING	4,729	3,552	1,027	4,579	(150)	-
PUBLIC PROTECTION	1,950	1,257	643	1,900	(50)	-
HIGHWAYS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SERVICES	17,639	13,318	3,921	17,239	(400)	-
STREET CLEANSING AND WASTE	19,815	13,457	6,158	19,615	(200)	-
COASTAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS	6,249	6,405	(656)	5,749	(500)	-
INTEGRATED TRANSPORT	2,964	4,111	(457)	3,654	690	-
TOTALS	52,480	43,169	10,001	53,170	690	-

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 £690k is based upon actual financial performance for the first 10 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

There is a pressure within Business Services of £1,300k due to ongoing projects being carried out in year by the service. Savings have been identified within the Directorate to deliver these projects.

Leisure and Catering

Leisure and Catering is currently forecasting a saving of £150k. Leisure is reporting a saving of £150k due to savings within staffing and increased income within the Learn to Swim scheme. Catering is facing a pressure due to the increased cost of provisions, but this is expected to be met through reserves.

Public Protection

The service is currently forecasting a saving of £50k due to staff vacancies within Public Protection. There are pressures within Licencing, where the income forecast is currently under budget, however, savings have been identified within other areas of Public Protection which will mitigate this.

Highways and Traffic Management Services

This service is currently forecasting an underspend of £400k due to staffing vacancies within Highways & Engineering and the capitalisation of staff costs.

Street Cleansing and Waste

Waste Services are reporting a saving of £200k. Trade Waste income is expected to be £300k better than budget. There is, however, a £100k pressure within Public Conveniences, where an inflationary uplift has been applied to the contract.

Coastal and Environmental Partnerships

This service is currently forecasting a saving of £500k due to additional Coastal income being received.

Integrated Transport

This service is currently forecasting an overspend of £690k. Childrens Transport Services is reporting an overspend of £690k, due to an increase in demand for Special Educational Needs transport relating to a growth in Education Health and Care Plans.

Conclusion – Community and Environmental Services financial position

At the end of January 2024, the Community and Environmental Services Directorate is forecasting an overspend of £690k. The major pressure is within Integrated Transport where the Childrens Transport Service is forecasting a pressure of £690k. 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 - JAN £000	2023/24		F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000	
			PROJECTED SPEND £000	FORECAST OUTTURN £000		
ADULT SERVICES						
NET EXPENDITURE						
ADULT SOCIAL CARE	9,697	8,073	1,364	9,437	(260)	-
CARE & SUPPORT	4,460	3,835	510	4,345	(115)	-
ADULT COMMISSIONING PLACEMENTS	50,282	39,437	12,518	51,955	1,673	-
ADULT SAFEGUARDING	76	37	39	76	-	-
TOTALS	64,515	51,382	14,431	65,813	1,298	-

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 10 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 £260k at month 10 due to a high volume of vacant positions.

Adult Commissioning Placements (Social Care Packages)

The Adult Commissioning Placements budget is forecasting an overspend of £1,673k. 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 additional funding streams of £337k. There is a pressure of £1,570k in Supported Living due to additional packages of care including children's transitions, along with £472k of pressures due to additional packages of short-term care linked to hospital discharge. £439k pressures relates to Out of Area Residential and Nursing Placements fee uplifts being significantly greater than forecast in addition to a further £515k of pressures across this area of service offset by £2,791k additional client contributions. 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. Savings of £58k have arisen within Supporting People due to additional grant contributions along with a further saving of £99k in Service Management. Direct payment pressures of £878k are resulting from a forecasted reduction in claw-backs based on year-to-date actuals and increased numbers of supported people.

Care and Support

Care and Support is forecasting an underspend of £115k at month 10 due to slippage on vacant positions.

Adults Safeguarding

Adults Safeguarding is forecasting a break-even position at month 10.

Summary of the Adult Services financial position

As at the end of January 2024 the Adult Services Directorate is forecasting an overall overspend of £1,298k for the financial year to March 2024 on a gross budget of £107m.

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 - JAN £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	18,409	1,703	20,112	-	-
LOCAL SCHOOLS BUDGET - NON DELEGATED	281	161	72	233	(48)	-
EDUCATION	27,385	14,390	13,786	28,176	791	-
EARLY HELP FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES	182	152	30	182	-	-
BUSINESS SUPPORT AND RESOURCES	9,330	5,480	3,852	9,332	2	-
DEDICATED SCHOOL GRANT	(57,977)	(40,162)	(17,815)	(57,977)	-	-
CARRY FORWARD OF DSG UNDER/(OVER) SPEND	687	-	(58)	(58)	(745)	-
TOTAL DSG FUNDED SERVICES	-	(1,570)	1,570	-	-	-
CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPRECIATION	1,748	-	1,748	1,748	-	-
EDUCATION	2,061	2,200	4	2,204	143	-
EARLY HELP FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES	6,402	2,655	3,634	6,289	(113)	-
CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE	59,556	51,363	14,350	65,713	6,157	-
BUSINESS SUPPORT AND RESOURCES	(155)	2,587	(2,066)	521	676	-
LOCAL SERVICES SUPPORT GRANT	(18)	-	(18)	(18)	-	-
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANT	(166)	-	(166)	(166)	-	-
TOTAL COUNCIL FUNDED SERVICES	69,428	58,805	17,486	76,291	6,863	-
TOTALS	69,428	57,235	19,056	76,291	6,863	-

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 10 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

Children’s Social Care Placements is forecasting an overspend against the budget of £6,157k, 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 31 January 2024 is 74 with this forecast to reduce to 68 by 31 March 2024, whereas the plan suggested there would be 62 as at 31 January 2024 reducing to 60 by the end of March 2024.

However, the number of Children in Care continues to reduce and currently sits at 532 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 70 as a result 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.

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 £676k. There was an additional Children's Services savings target of £1,924k, of which, only £1,165k is anticipated to be met this financial year, leaving a budget gap of £759k. There is expected to be a £83k underspend on staffing.

Education

Education is expected to be £143k overspent due to unachieved vacancy factor, additional back pay for employees on Soulbury grades and a SEND contract came in higher than originally planned.

Early Help

Early Help is expected to underspend by £113k due to an unspent grant released in M10.

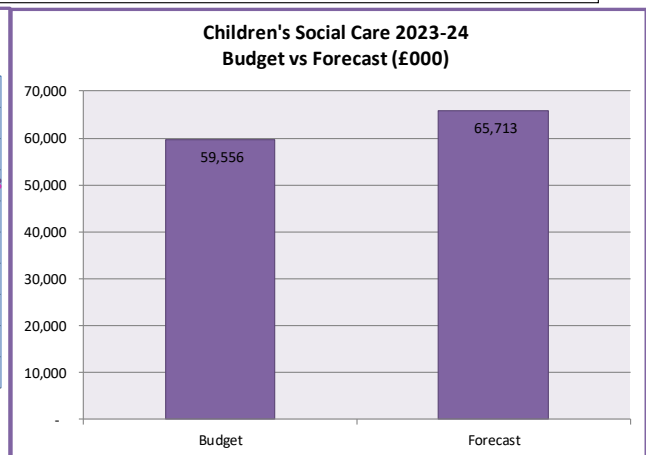
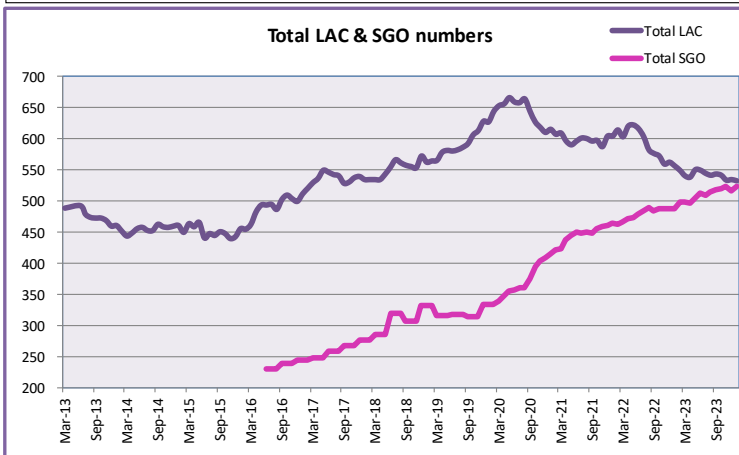
Summary of the Children's Services financial position

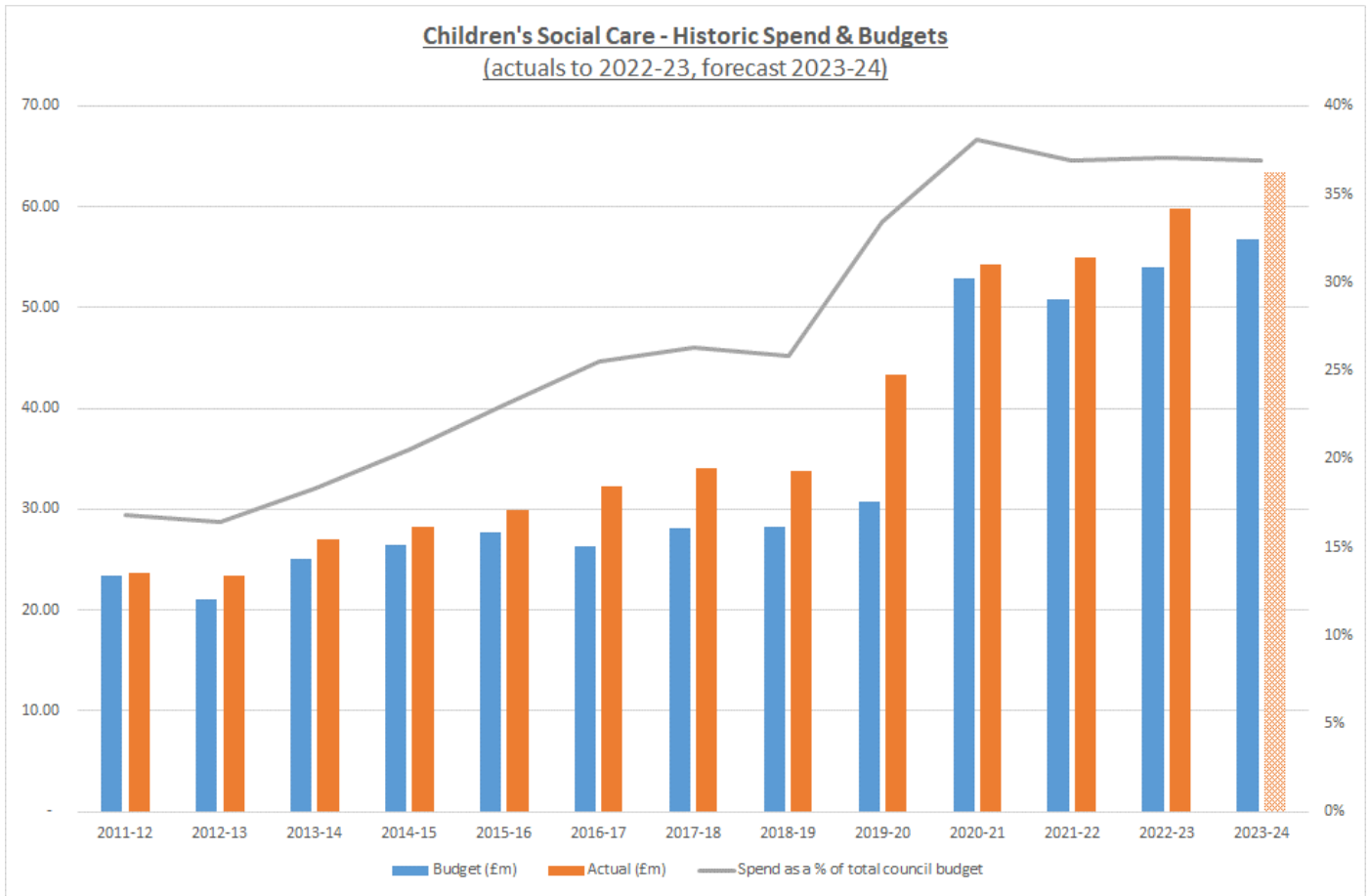
As at the end of January 2024 the Children's Services Directorate is forecasting an overspend of £6,863k for the financial year to March 2024.

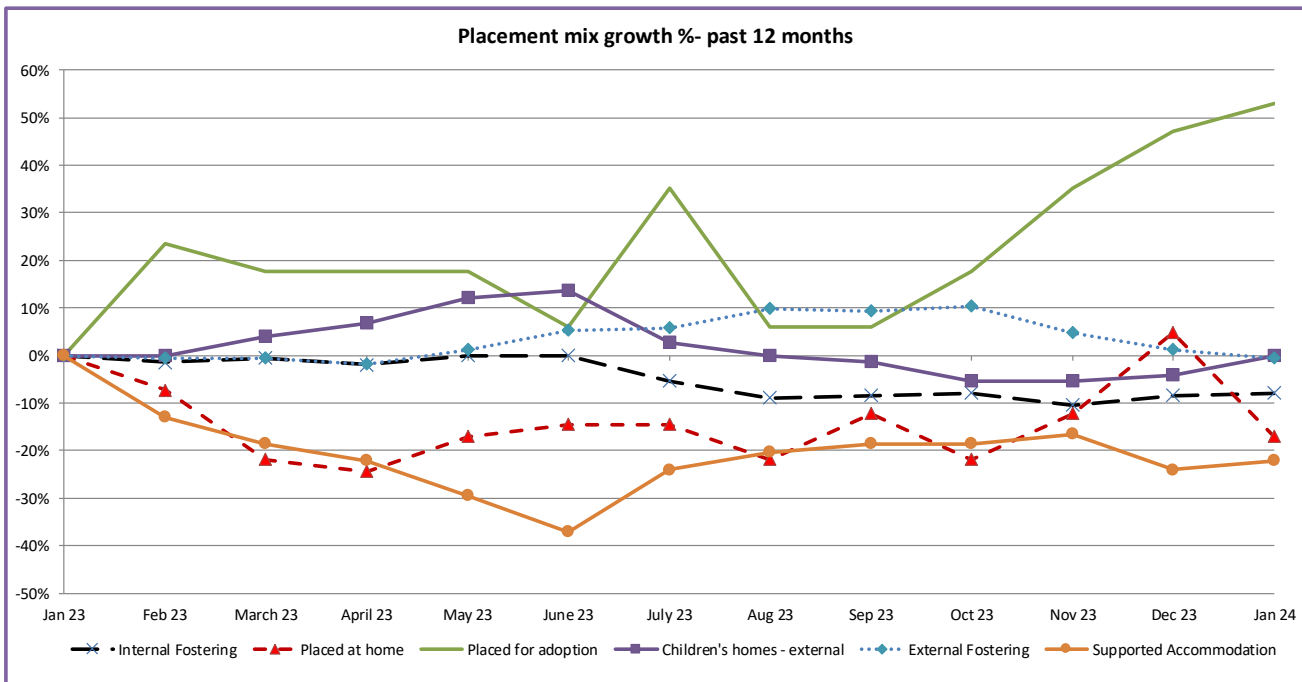
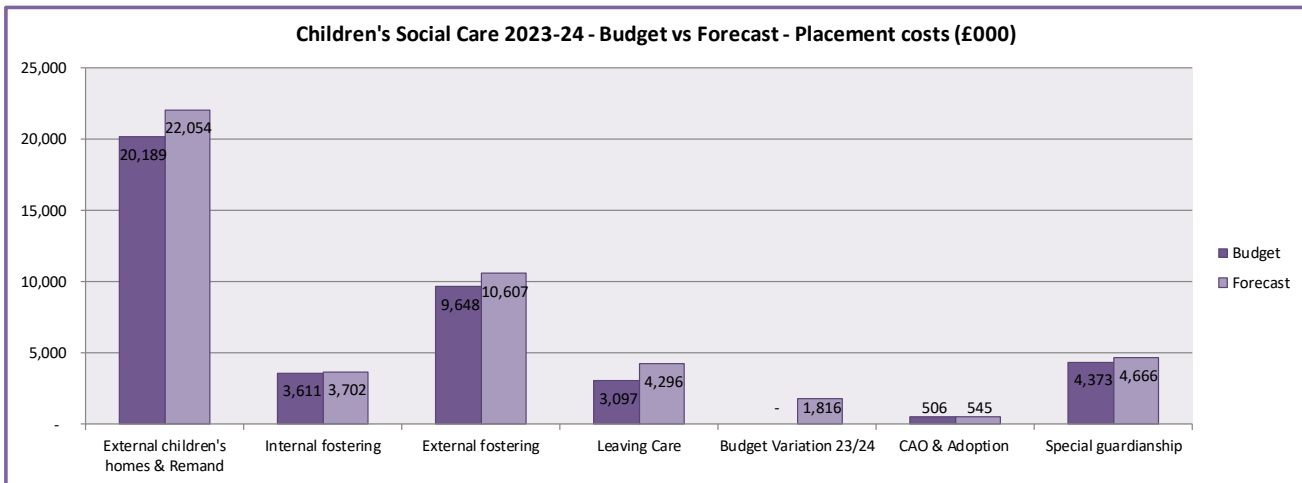
Children's Social Care Trends

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
Jun-23	84	15%	287,055	181	33%	56,473	201	37%	19,532	34	6%	75,503	549	513	8,873
Sep-23	73	13%	296,811	188	35%	56,747	184	34%	19,615	44	8%	71,339	543	519	8,921
Dec-23	71	13%	290,033	174	33%	59,151	184	34%	19,711	41	8%	70,539	534	517	9,059
Jan-24	74	14%	288,560	171	32%	59,651	185	35%	19,870	42	8%	73,609	532	523	9,052

Note: The variance between the current total number of Looked After Children (532) and the total internal fostering and external placement numbers (472) 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 - JAN £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	688	885	(197)	688	-	-
NHS HEALTH CHECKS - MANDATED	100	(91)	191	100	-	-
CHILDREN (5-19) - PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMMES	628	523	105	628	-	-
CHILDREN'S 0-5 SERVICES	2,499	2,025	474	2,499	-	-
TOBACCO CONTROL	363	355	8	363	-	-
MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	15	15	-	15	-	-
SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES - MANDATED	1,785	1,176	609	1,785	-	-
SUBSTANCE MISUSE (DRUGS AND ALCOHOL)	2,790	2,447	343	2,790	-	-
HARM REDUCTION (SEXUAL HEALTH, DRUGS AND ALCOHOL)	783	716	67	783	-	-
HEALTHY WEIGHT/WEIGHT MANAGEMENT	120	95	25	120	-	-
MISCELLANEOUS PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES	10,090	1,881	8,209	10,090	-	-
GRANT	(19,858)	(19,858)	-	(19,858)	-	-
TOTALS	3	(9,831)	9,834	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 10 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 January 2024, 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 - JAN £000	PROJECTED SPEND £000	FORECAST OUTTURN £000	F/CAST FULL YEAR VAR. (UNDER) / OVER £000	
BUDGETS OUTSIDE THE CASH LIMIT						
NET EXPENDITURE						
TREASURY MANAGEMENT	16,282	249	14,433	14,682	(1,600)	-
PARKING SERVICES	(5,331)	(3,914)	(917)	(4,831)	500	-
CORPORATE SUBSCRIPTIONS	135	108	27	135	-	-
HOUSING BENEFITS	1,849	1,550	299	1,849	-	-
COUNCIL TAX & NNDR COST OF COLLECTION	1,894	1,575	319	1,894	-	-
SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES	(926)	(1,185)	145	(1,040)	(114)	-
LAND CHARGES	(50)	(16)	(34)	(50)	-	-
CONCESSIONARY FARES	4,064	1,654	2,280	3,934	(130)	-
EMPLOYERS PREVIOUS YEARS' PENSION LIABILITY	(331)	(280)	(51)	(331)	-	-
NEW HOMES BONUS	(22)	(22)	-	(22)	-	-
TOTALS	17,564	(281)	16,501	16,220	(1,344)	-

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 10 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 £1,600k. This figure includes £2,581k 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 £660k. Offset against this is £1,606k 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 an overspend of £35k as new business loans have been awarded at higher repayment rates than originally forecast for 2023/24. The position has worsened since M9 as interest rates have been increased from 4.5% to 5% in the forecast and there have been further changes in drawdown amounts and dates for certain loans which has resulted in an overspend in year.

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 £500k overspend position for 2023/24. This pressure is due to lower than budgeted income. The position has deteriorated this month due to the delay in opening of the multi-storey carpark. The service's ability to hold this position will depend on the impact of the cost of living crisis, the quality of the Easter holiday season, the impact of dynamic parking and the availability of parking due to regeneration projects within the town.

As at Week 46 (w/e 11th February) parking income is at £5.4m with patronage at 1,086,249. Car Park patronage is down by 14,540 and income up by £63k on 2022/23. On-Street Pay and Display patronage is down by 5,197 and income up by £7k.

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 £114k saving due to a reduction in charges, mainly relating to debt management and an increase in rental income.

Land Charges

This service is forecasting a break-even position.

Concessionary Fares

The Concessionary Fares Service is currently forecasting a saving of £130k. This is due to concessionary passenger numbers being 42% lower than pre-Covid levels, though the Council remains committed to paying at a minimum of a 70% safety net level in line with Department for Transport guidance until March 2024.

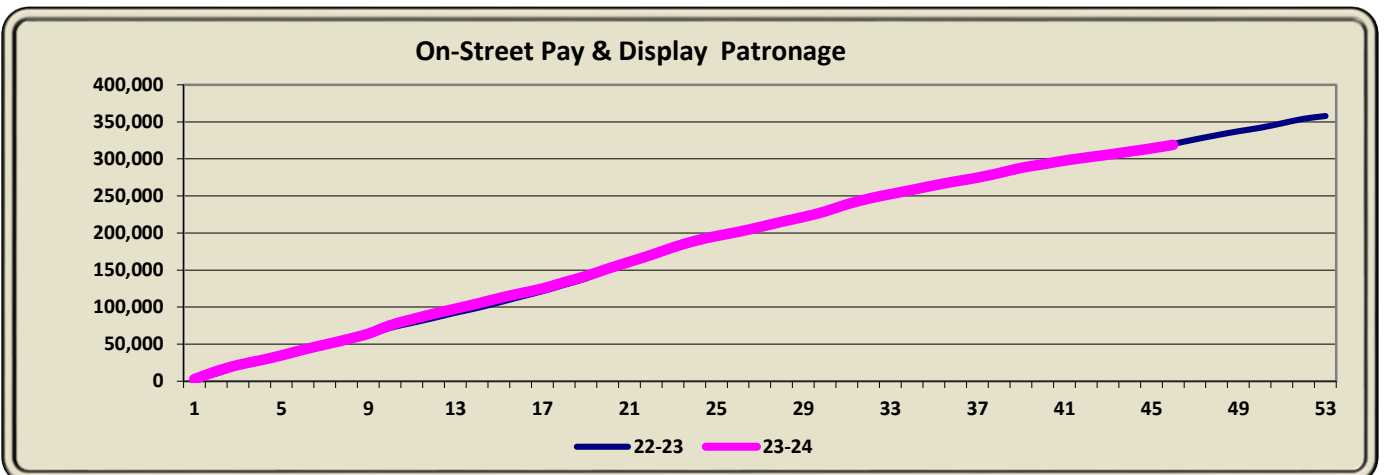
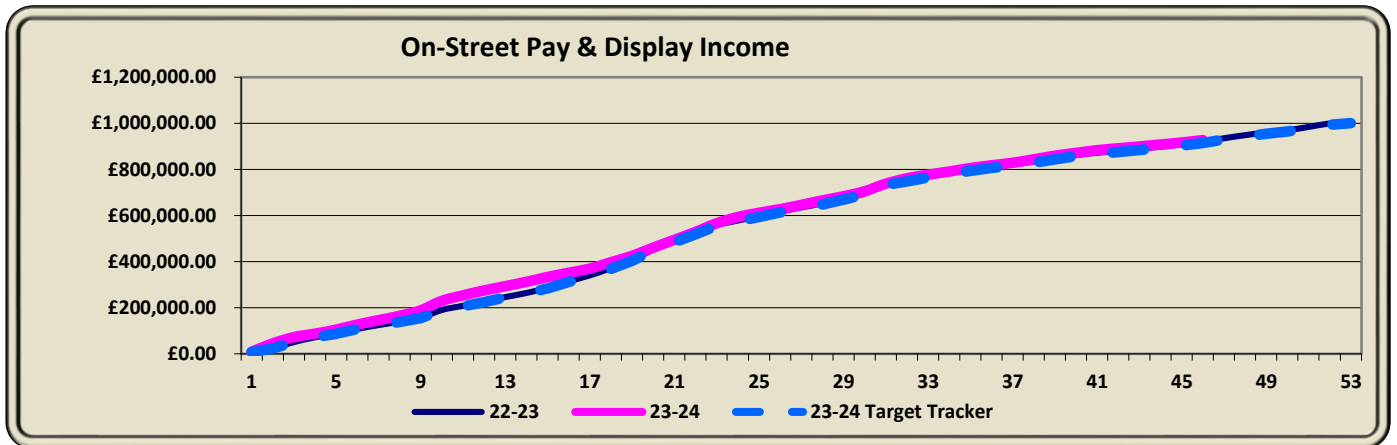
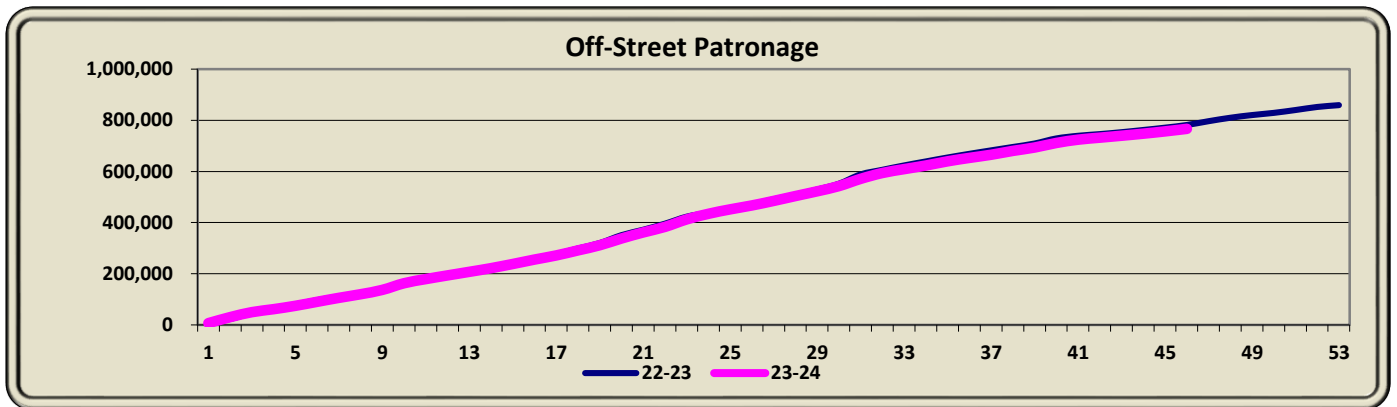
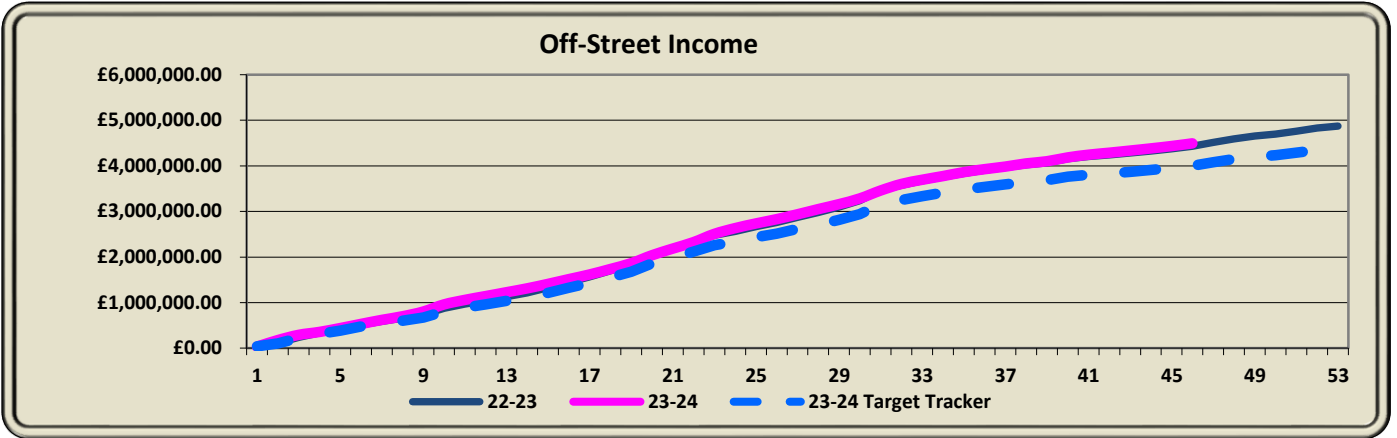
New Homes Bonus

This service is forecasting break-even position.

Summary of the revenue forecasts

After 10 months of the financial year, the Budgets Outside the Cash Limit services are forecasting a £1,344k underspend.

Car Parking Trends



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HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Appendix 2 (n)

BUDGET MONITORING MONTH 10 2023/2024

FUNCTIONS	2023/2024 BUDGET MONTH 10 £000	2023/2024 ACTUAL MONTH 10 £000	2023/2024 VARIANCE MONTH 10 £000	2023/2024 FULL YEAR BUDGET £000	2023/2024 PROJECTED OUTTURN £000	2023/2024 VARIATION £000
RENT & SERVICE CHARGE INCOME DUE						
Rental Income	16,248	16,171	(77)	19,497	19,428	(69)
Sheltered Housing	612	611	(1)	734	733	(1)
Emergency Housing	552	585	33	668	784	116
Resilience Housing	203	237	34	542	789	247
Other Supported Housing	170	138	(32)	204	165	(39)
Satellite Television Systems	67	66	(1)	80	80	-
Community Cleaning	23	22	(1)	27	27	-
Community Lighting	28	28	-	33	33	-
Door Entry Systems	8	7	(1)	9	9	-
Gardening Scheme	56	55	(1)	67	67	-
Grounds Maintenance	211	211	-	253	253	-
OTHER RENTS & CHARGES						
Garages	72	73	1	86	86	-
Leasehold	189	171	(18)	189	171	(18)
Commercial/Other Rents	60	64	4	72	72	-
Other Income	100	222	122	120	222	102
INTEREST INCOME						
Interest on Revenue Balances	-	-	-	185	185	-
TOTAL INCOME	18,599	18,661	62	22,766	23,104	338
MANAGEMENT FEE	9,855	9,855	-	11,826	12,206	380
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	9,855	9,855	-	23,035	23,415	380
CONTRIBUTION TO / (FROM) WORKING BALANCES	8,744	8,806	62	(269)	(311)	(42)

WORKING BALANCES	2023/2024 FULL YEAR BUDGET £000	2023/2024 PROJECTED OUTTURN £000	2023/2024 VARIATION £000
BALANCE AT 1ST APRIL	1,399	1,721	322
CONTRIBUTION TO / (FROM) WORKING BALANCES	(269)	(311)	(42)
BALANCE AT 31ST MARCH	1,130	1,410	280

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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. £2.35m 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.

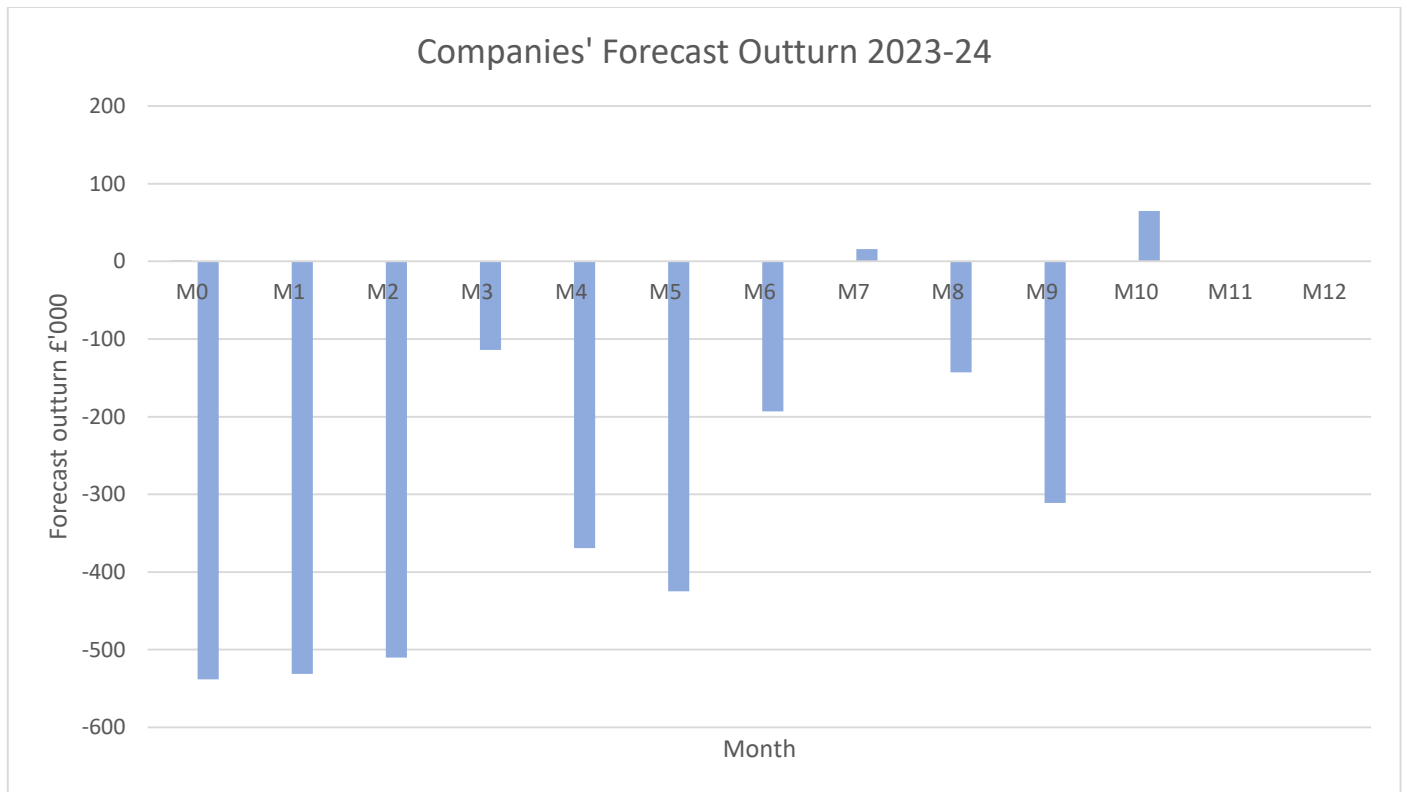
Non Covid-related loan support to WOCs

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 £47.82m.

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 10 2023/24

The consolidated forecast financial position of the Council's wholly-owned subsidiary companies is a profit of £65k based on their Month 10 financial monitoring reports. This represents an improvement of £376k from the position reported at Month 9. The major factors contributing to this improvement are reforecast costs, including staffing costs following an overstatement at Month 9, coupled with falling diesel prices and some additional income.



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 31 January 2024.

	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	(12,387)	588	0	588	0
Adult Services	3,337	(2,325)	1,012	0	1,012	0
Chief Executive	159	(159)	0	0	0	0
Children's Services	2,044	0	2,044	(1,278)	766	0
Governance & Partnership Services	507	(493)	14	(14)	0	0
Community & Environmental Services	367	0	367	(367)	0	0
Outside Cash Limit	1,349	(949)	400	0	400	0
Public Health	0	0	0	0	0	0
Communications & Regeneration	497	(316)	181	(115)	66	0
Growth & Prosperity	1,510	0	1,510	(1,510)	0	0
Resources	650	(583)	67	(67)	0	0
Recurrent Saving	23,395	(17,212)	6,183	(3,351)	2,832	0

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**2023/24 CAPITAL MONITORING
MONTH 10**

Key:
Forecast scheme variance undeterminable at this stage

	Total Scheme Budget	Spend as at 31/3/23	Budget Brought Forward 2022/23	Capital Programme 2023/24	Total Available Budget 2023/24	Spend to Date April - January	Forecast to Year End	Forecast Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£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	307	617	-
Core CCTV Replacement	2,000	1,179	821	-	821	192	629	-
Finance, HR, Payroll System	3,225	2,535	187	503	690	532	158	-
Central Library/ Grundy Gallery Roof	525	188	337	-	337	279	58	-
South King Street	597	320	277	-	277	288	(11)	-
Other Resources Schemes	828	-	208	620	828	353	475	-
Total Resources	48,531	42,364	4,120	2,047	6,167	1,951	4,216	-
Director Responsible for Adult Services								
Support to Vulnerable Adults - Grants	2,384	-	398	2,159	2,557	1,827	730	-
I-Switch	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Adult Services Schemes	2,561	1,233	770	558	1,328	607	721	-
Total Adult Services	4,945	1,233	1,168	2,717	3,885	2,434	1,451	-
Director Responsible for Community and Environmental Services								
Anchorsholme Seawall	30,966	26,632	4,334	-	4,334	10	4,324	-
Coastal Protection Strategy 2021-2025	61,265	1,206	94	7,790	7,884	6	-	-
Coastal Protection Studies	4,520	3,562	958	-	958	115	843	-
Beach Nourishment	57,010	-	-	500	500	17	483	-
Stanley Park 3G Pitches	500	-	-	500	500	486	14	-
Others	1,248	498	543	354	897	668	229	-
Total Community and Environmental Services	155,509	31,898	5,929	9,144	15,073	1,302	5,893	-

**2023/24 CAPITAL MONITORING
MONTH 10**

	Total Scheme Budget	Spend as at 31/3/23	Budget Brought Forward 2022/23	Capital Programme 2023/24	Total Available Budget 2023/24	Spend to Date April - January	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)	13	(687)	-
Work towards Decent Homes Standard	5,929	-	-	5,929	5,929	4,256	1,673	-
Queens Park Redevelopment Ph2	13,453	13,453	-	-	-	(328)	328	-
Troutbeck Redevelopment	11,970	11,675	295	-	295	(31)	326	-
Grange Park	24,206	11,776	190	12,240	12,430	9,107	3,323	-
Dunsop Court	1,233	1,227	6	113	119	115	4	-
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	-	-	-	-	-	-
Acquisition and Refurbishment	4,871	1,775	3,096	-	3,096	33	-	-
Argosy Avenue	-	-	-	549	549	511	38	-
Hornby Road	-	-	-	233	233	1	232	-
Clare Street	-	-	-	318	318	117	201	-
Others	7,101	-	-	6,073	6,073	101	-	-
Total Chief Executive	88,367	57,185	5,782	25,585	31,367	13,895	8,437	-

**2023/24 CAPITAL MONITORING
MONTH 10**

	Total Scheme Budget	Spend as at 31/3/23	Budget Brought Forward 2022/23	Capital Programme 2023/24	Total Available Budget 2023/24	Spend to Date April - January	Forecast to Year End	Forecast Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
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	808	1,425	-
Tower Steel Replacement	11,000	-	-	3,500	3,500	963	2,537	-
Conference Centre	30,562	31,025	(463)	-	(463)	13	-	-
CBD Phase 2 - Hotel	28,300	24,213	4,087	-	4,087	6,072	(1,985)	-
CBD Phase 3	99,750	14,631	85,119	-	85,119	29,477	13,000	-
Land Release Fund	3,204	845	2,359	-	2,359	692	1,667	-
Enterprise Zone	29,720	15,123	14,597	-	14,597	935	700	-
Town Centre Parking Strategy	16,000	1,889	14,111	-	14,111	526	700	-
Museum	9,653	8,016	1,637	-	1,637	2,243	1,300	-
Abingdon Street Market	3,914	4,067	(153)	-	(153)	356	(509)	-
HoundsHill Ph2	20,190	13,879	6,311	-	6,311	5,674	637	-
Heritage Action Zone	1,566	1,179	387	-	387	181	206	-
Devonshire Road Hospital Land	1,447	1,447	-	-	-	-	-	-
Town Deal	57,190	5,888	51,302	40,000	91,302	7,640	10,000	-
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)	-	-
Multi-Storey Car Park	1,782	-	-	1,782	1,782	1,910	(128)	-
Ribble House Acquisition	14,750	-	-	14,750	14,750	14,695	55	-
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	1,648	629	-
Local Transport Plan Project 30 2022/23	223	223	-	-	-	-	-	-
Local Transport Plan 2023/24	2,690	-	-	2,690	2,690	337	2,353	-
Local Transport Plan Project 30 2023/24	223	-	-	223	223	163	60	-
Blackpool/Fleetwood Tramway	99,990	99,990	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tramway Extension	17,054	16,780	274	-	274	753	(479)	-
Tramway Refurbishment	1,053	713	340	-	340	-	340	-
Total Communications and Regeneration	601,638	381,186	189,907	63,045	252,952	74,990	32,201	-

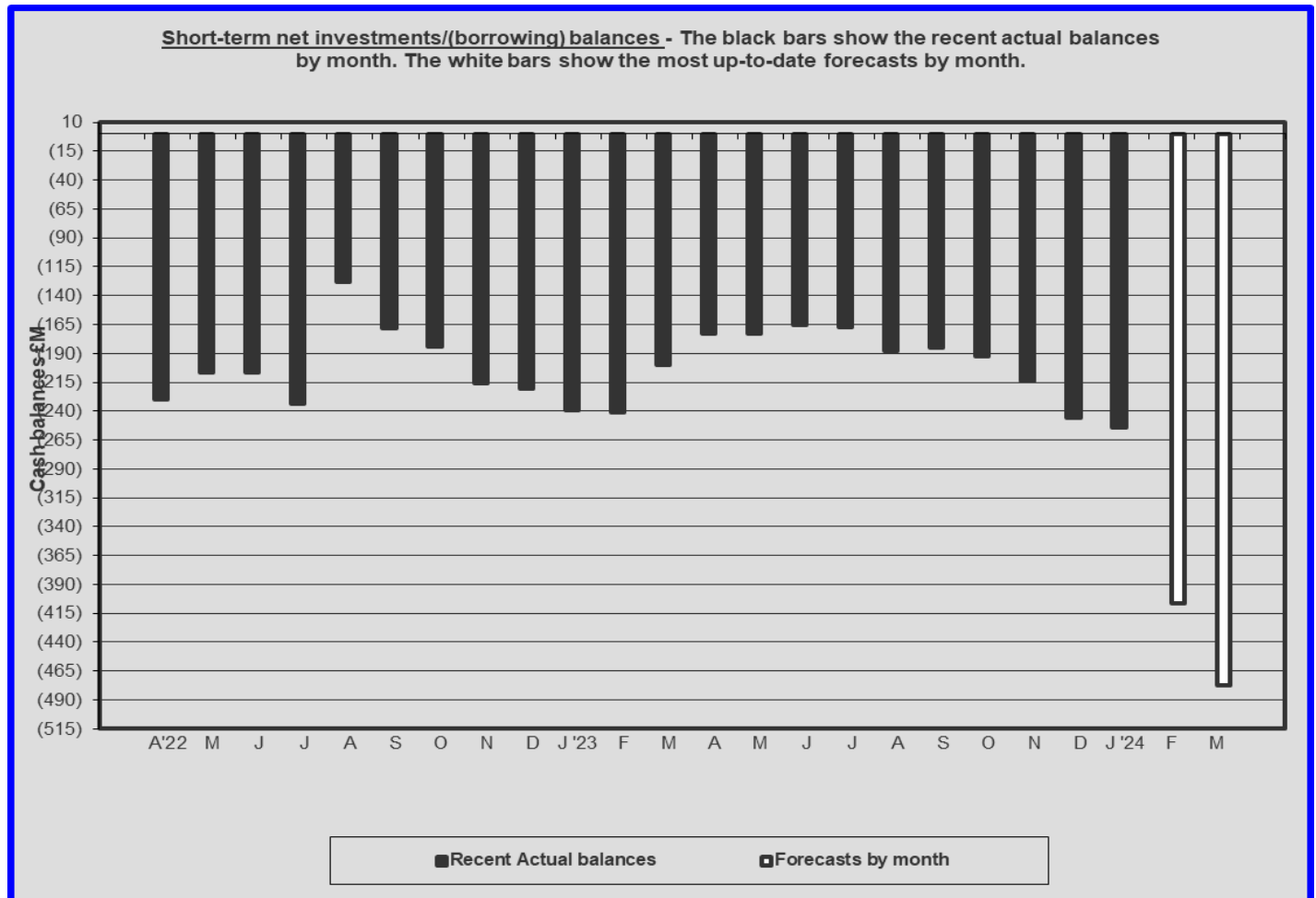
**2023/24 CAPITAL MONITORING
MONTH 10**

	Total Scheme Budget	Spend as at 31/3/23	Budget Brought Forward 2022/23	Capital Programme 2023/24	Total Available Budget 2023/24	Spend to Date April - January	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	60	75	-
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	767	584	-
Highfurlong Expansion	4,800	-	-	4,800	4,800	1,269	3,531	-
Pegasus Expansion	800	9	791	-	791	-	791	-
Others	1,852	152	611	1,089	1,700	366	1,334	-
Total Children's Services	12,095	1,814	3,513	6,768	10,281	2,462	7,819	-
CAPITAL TOTAL	911,085	515,680	210,419	109,306	319,725	97,034	60,017	-

Blackpool Council

Cash summary - budget, actual and forecast:

CASH FLOW - SUMMARY - 23/24							
FULL YEAR CASH FLOW ORIGINAL BUDGET (*)	APR-JAN CASH FLOW ORIGINAL BUDGET (*)	APR-JAN CASH FLOW ACTUAL	FEB-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-JAN MORE / (LESS) CASH ACTUAL vs ORIGINAL BUDGET	FEB-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	34	38	7	Housing Benefit & Subsidy	4	(1)	3
118	106	91	10	Council tax and NNDR	(15)	(2)	(17)
22	19	21	9	VAT	2	6	8
46	38	95	7	RSG & BRR	57	(1)	56
136	113	136	27	Other Grants	23	4	27
149	125	136	25	Other Income	11	1	12
-	-	-	26	Money Market Transactions Received	-	26	26
25	25	725	70	Receipt of Loans	700	70	770
538	460	1,242	181	RECEIPTS - NORMAL ACTIVITIES	782	103	885
				PAYMENTS			
13	11	12	3	Police & Fire	(1)	(1)	(2)
421	350	432	94	General Creditors	(82)	(23)	(105)
-	-	-	-	RSG & BRR	-	-	-
127	106	106	22	Salaries & wages	-	(1)	(1)
37	31	28	6	Housing Benefits	3	-	3
215	145	663	165	Money Market Transactions Paid Out	(518)	(95)	(613)
813	643	1,241	290	PAYMENTS - NORMAL ACTIVITIES	(598)	(120)	(718)
(275)	(183)	1	(109)	NET CASH FLOW IN/(OUT)	184	(17)	167
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 10 months of the financial 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 31 March 2024. Due to the high levels of interest it is likely that the council will fund this expenditure through short-term borrowing until interest rates have fallen.

Blackpool Council

Balance Sheet / Working Capital:

BALANCE SHEET 2023/24				
LAST Y/END		CURRENT	CHANGE	NEXT Y/END
Draft Unaudited 31 Mar 23		31 Jan 24	Movement since	31 Mar 24
£000s		Actual £000s	31 Mar 23 £000s	Forecast £000s
587,812	Property, Plant and Equipment	666,447	78,635	717,723
279,731	Infrastructure Assets	272,530	(7,201)	279,512
8,540	Heritage Assets	8,540	-	8,600
2,401	Intangible Assets	2,228	(173)	2,171
27,399	Long-term Investments	29,399	2,000	29,650
77,306	Long-term Debtors	84,001	6,695	87,000
42,000	Pension Asset	42,000	-	42,000
	Current Assets			
76,409	Debtors	76,350	(59)	78,000
836	Inventories	598	(238)	850
14,284	Cash and cash equivalents	42,935	28,651	15,000
1,116,718	Total Assets	1,225,028	108,310	1,260,506
	Current Liabilities			
(200,475)	Borrowing Repayable within 12 months	(265,900)	(65,425)	(203,256)
(81,773)	Creditors	(81,850)	(77)	(82,000)
	Long-term Liabilities			
(196,052)	Borrowing Repayable in excess of 12 months	(196,052)	-	(192,796)
(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)
(2,566)	Other Long-term Liabilities	(2,566)	-	(62)
488,209	Total Assets less Liabilities	530,971	42,762	648,161
(83,614)	Usable Reserves	(67,548)	16,066	(72,239)
(404,595)	Unusable Reserves	(463,423)	(58,828)	(575,922)
(488,209)	Total Reserves	(530,971)	(42,762)	(648,161)

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 10. 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. Paragraph 64 of IAS 19 limits the measurement of a net defined benefit asset to the lower of the surplus in the defined benefit plan and the asset ceiling. This calculation has now been received from the actuary and £42m has been recognised in the balance sheet as a pension asset.

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 accounts were not signed off until November 2023. This has meant that the completion of the audits for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 accounts have been delayed. As the audits are still ongoing the balance sheet as at 31 March 2023 may require amendment, therefore the above figures should be treated as draft.

Over the 10-month period there has been an increase in Property, Plant and Equipment of £78.6m due to capital expenditure which is in line with the Council's approved capital programme for 2023/24. Infrastructure assets have decreased by £7.2m which is the net effect of spend to date less depreciation at month 10. Long-term debtors has increased by £6.7m due to new approved business loans. Cash and cash equivalents have increased by £28.7m and short-term borrowing has increased by £65.4m due to the timing of capital and revenue grants.

Report to:	EXECUTIVE
Relevant Officer:	Karen Smith, Director of Adult Services
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Neal Brookes, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Date of Meeting:	18 March 2024

BLACKPOOL COUNCIL ADULTS CARERS STRATEGY

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the proposed Blackpool Council Adult Carers Strategy.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To approve the Adult Carers Strategy and associated Action Plan for the period until 31 December 2028.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 The need for this strategy is driven by the following:
- To update the current strategy which expired in 2015;
 - To ensure that the council achieves compliance with the relevant aspects of the
 - Care Act 2014 and associated Guidance;
 - To develop an action plan that will help identify carers at an early stage, improve carers' support and services, deliver a more coordinated approach, and to enable carers to lead fulfilled, independent lives.

The strategy as submitted has been informed consultation with stakeholders. The strategy was also supported by the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 28 September 2023.

- 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 To not have a Carers Strategy this would mean that the Council would therefore not comply with the Care Act 2014, putting carers and their loved ones at risk from lack of co-ordinated support and risking budget pressure due to increase need for packages of care and increased stays in acute and long-term care settings and could leave the Council open to risk of litigation.

5.0 Council priority:

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

Supporting carers in their caring role significantly benefits the community. Carers provide an incredible amount of support to: those they care for, their friends and family, the wider health and social care system, and to society. Therefore, it is in the best interest of communities that carers are and feel supported in their caring role.

This strategy outlines a clear vision and set of key priorities around how the Council, working together with key stakeholders, is going to help support Blackpool Adult Carers as much as possible in their caring role so that carers can continue providing care whilst also leading fulfilled, independent lives.

6.0 Background information

- 6.1 National figures estimate there are approximately, 13.6 million unpaid carers in the UK, equating to around 1 in 4 people. There are approximately 16,000 carers in Blackpool. Unpaid carers provide an incredible amount of support to those they care for, to their friends and family, to the wider health and social care system, and to society. The financial value of the contribution by unpaid carers in the UK, is estimated to be £139 billion per year.
- 6.2 Additionally, many carers do not see themselves as carers and can be unrecognised as such by others. This is because carers may feel that providing care is a normal duty of being a family member or friend and as result many carers do not, or struggle to, access support. Under Section 10 of the Care Act 2014, local authorities have a responsibility to identify carers and are required to assess whether the carer does have needs for support (or is likely to do so in the future), and, if the carer does, what those needs are (or are likely to be in the future). As a result, it is necessary that the Council has a strategy in place to identify carers and encourage them to recognise their role and rights.

- 6.3 A Carers Week report estimated that 4.5 million people in the UK became unpaid carers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This figure is in addition to the 9.1 million unpaid carers who were already caring before the start of the pandemic. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic many carers had to continue without the same level of support. It is important that the Council understands and addresses the impact of COVID-19 on carers to better support carers moving forward and this strategy seeks to do that in its priorities and action plan.
- 6.4 Furthermore, individuals and families across the UK are currently facing significant financial pressures as result of the cost of living crisis. Carers already face several additional costs such extra costs from equipment, care, travel and food. For example, almost two-thirds (63%) of carers are spending their own money on care or support services or products for the person they care for. At the same time, a carer's capacity to work to earn money is reduced, with carers working below their potential or having to give up work entirely in order to care. It is vital that information on the services and support available to carers is accurate and up to date, as well as being available in a range of accessible formats and through a range of channels.
- 6.5 A detailed review of local, regional and national evidence available and analysis was undertaken as part of the strategy development process.
- 6.6 This strategy was presented to the Adults, Health and Social Care Committee by Karen Smith, Director of Adult Services and Nigel McMurdo, Operations Director at Blackpool Carers Centre on the 28 September 2023. There were no changes required and the strategy was well received by all, the only request was to provide an update on any progress made on the actions.
- 6.7 Other additional research included:
- Desktop research of national, regional and intra-council plans and strategies to establish best practice and critical alignments.
 - Sessions with Carer Peer Groups from Blackpool Carers Centre to understand what is working and not working or them, their preferences and how needs can best be met and what potential gaps in current services there may be.
- 6.8 The attached strategy at Appendix 3a identifies 5 key priority areas: Identifying Carers, Working with Carers, Communication: Information and Advice, Partnership and Collaboration (Internal and External), and Health and Wellbeing of Carers. These priorities will be delivered through the identified action plan and progress will be monitored additionally through identified key performance indicators and continued monitoring of the feedback received through the Survey of Adult Carers in England.
- 6.9 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 3a: Proposed Carers Strategy

7.2 Appendix 3b: Equalities Impact Analysis Assessment

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 The commissioning contract for external carers services is currently managed by the Integrated Care Board with an agreed financial contribution passported across from the Adult Social Care budget to the Integrated Care Board. The Council's Adult Social Care teams also facilitate funding for a carers support worker in the Transfer of Care Hub.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 The strategy has been developed with reference to the Care Act 2014 and associated guidance.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 The following risk considerations were evaluated, however regular monthly meetings between the Director of Adult Social Services, Carers Lead in Commissioning and the Management at Blackpool Carers Centre will ensure any concerns can be dealt with in a timely manner.

- A lack of buy-in from other Council services and partners.
- A change/decline in funding for the service will have a major influence on the course of the plan.
- A lack of buy-in from carers.

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

11.1 The Head of Equality and Diversity noted that the Equality Analysis attached at Appendix 3b provided a comprehensive analysis.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 The Council will work together with key stakeholders to better support carers and at the same time supporting the carbon emissions reduction agenda. Examples could include encouraging service providers to adopt a sustainable travel hierarchy to encourage take up of the least polluting travel methods to minimise emissions. Another example could be to

promote low-carbon impact activities through green prescribing or encouraging outdoor respite care.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 The development of the strategy involved engagement with a range of local health and social care practitioners, commissioners and carers to gather information on what local stakeholders are currently doing to support carers in Blackpool, and how the council can work together with these stakeholders to better identify carers and improve the services and support offered to carers in Blackpool.

Key stakeholders consulted included:

- Blackpool Carers Centre – Discussions with Management team and Staff.
- Carers peer support groups - Face to Face engagement sessions with Mental Health Carers, Dementia and older adult carers.
- Wider public engagement – Via social media
- Current carers engaged with the Authority - Feedback through the Survey of Adult Carers England and Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework Surveys 21/22.
- Adult Social Care – Discussions with carer support workers, and regular meetings with the Senior Management Team.
- Integrated Care Board for Lancashire and South Cumbria – Shared knowledge and best practice.
- Health watch – Shared information from previous engagement campaigns.
- NHS Commitment to Carers Programme North West Carers Leads - Shared knowledge.
- Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, North West Carers Leads – Shared knowledge.
- Current Day Service Providers – Liaison with Director of Adult Services.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

15.0 Key decision information:

15.1	Is this a key decision?	Yes
15.2	If so, Forward Plan reference number:	10/2023
15.3	If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days?	No

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

16.0 Call-in information:

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

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

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: 8 March 2024 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 in attendance:

25.1

26.0 Call-in:

26.1

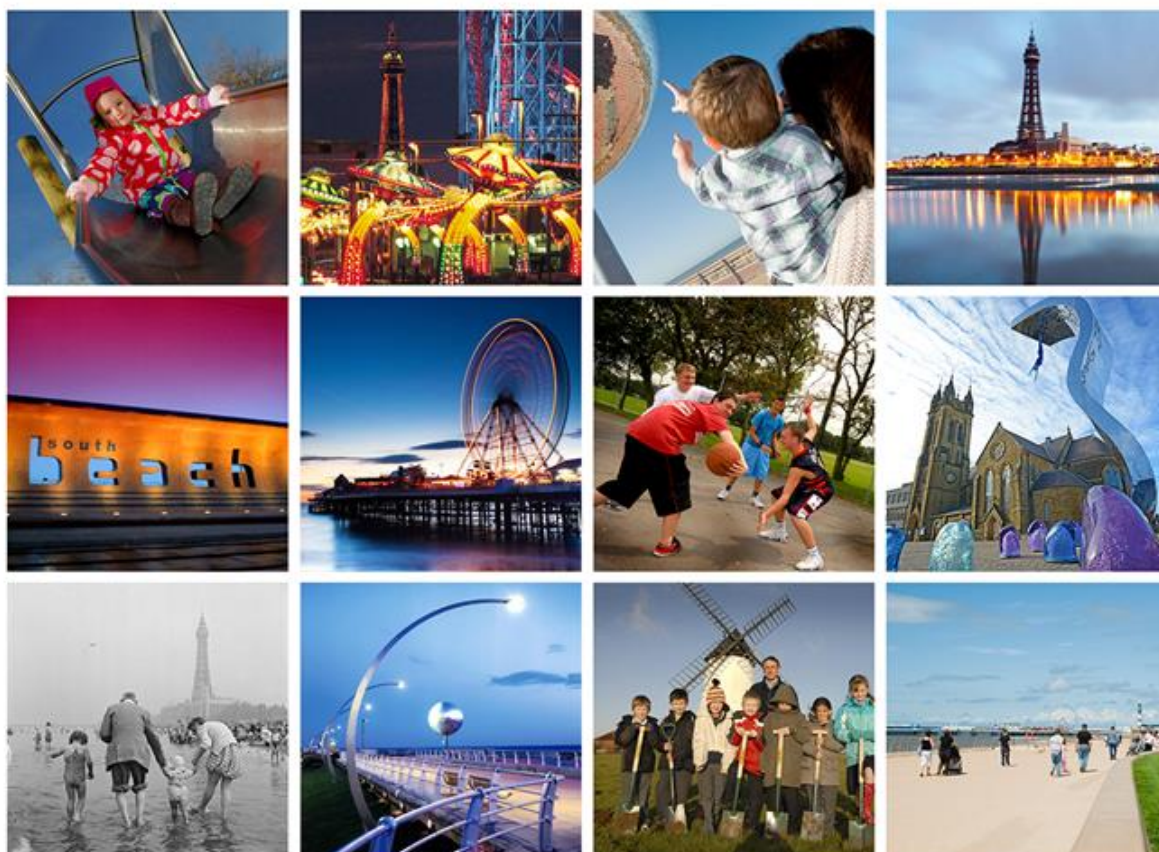
27.0 Notes:

27.1

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Blackpool Adult Carers Strategy

2023-2028



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Executive Summary

Carers play a vital role in our communities. They are the people who provide unpaid care, help and support to either a family member or friend who would not be able to manage without them. Unpaid carers provide an incredible amount of support to: those they care for, their friends and family, the wider health and social care system, and to society. In Blackpool, more than 16,000 people provide unpaid care for another personⁱ.

Carers are often the unsung heroes in our communities who provide essential support to those they care for, without any support for themselves. Many carers do not see themselves as carers and can be unrecognised as such by others, this is because they feel that providing care is a normal duty of being a family member or friend. Despite initiatives to identify carers and their needs, many carers remain unidentified and do not access the support they need.

Caring can place a real strain on individuals – emotionally, physically and financially. The negative impacts of caring have only been exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and current cost of living crisis. Therefore, it is now more important than ever that we are able to successfully identify, offer information and advice, and provide support to all those who provide unpaid care.

This strategy covers Adult Carers in Blackpool. An Adult Carer is adult who provides or intends to provide care for another adult. This document sets out how Blackpool Council will work together with key stakeholders over the next five years to: identify and support all unpaid carers across Blackpool; address gaps in current support for carers, reducing the pressures of caring by encouraging carers to take breaks and enabling carers to lead fulfilled, independent lives.

This strategy has been developed based on inputs and feedback from a wide range of carers and relevant stakeholders in order to deliver on the priorities and outcomes most important to carers.

Vision

Over the course of this five year strategy our vision is to enable Carers across Blackpool to feel recognised, valued and supported to lead fulfilled, independent lives alongside their caring role.

The Carers Strategy 2023-2028 has been developed based on inputs and feedback from a wide range of stakeholders including:

- Blackpool Carers Centre
- Carers peer support groups
- Current carers engaged with the Authority
- Adult Social Care
- Health Watch
- Integrated Care Board for Lancashire and South Cumbria
- NHS Commitment to Carers Programme North West Carers Leads
- Association of Directors of Adult Social Services North West Carers Leads
- Current Day Service Providers.

Priorities

To achieve our vision, there are five key priorities which we will aim to deliver:

1. Identifying Carers
2. Working with Carers
3. Communication: Information and advice
4. Partnership and Collaboration (Internal and External)
5. Health and Wellbeing of Carers

These priorities will be delivered through an action plan (see Appendix 1).

Measuring Progress

The deliverables within this strategy will be monitored through:

- Monitoring actions in the action plan
- Monitoring Key Performance Indicators associated with the priorities.
- Monitoring feedback from the Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE).

Introduction

Who is a Carer?

The definition of a Carer is:

*'A carer is anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support, the care they give is unpaid'*ⁱⁱ.

Within this definition, there are three types of carers:

1. **Adult Carers:** *'An adult who provides or intends to provide care for another adult (an "adult needing care")'*ⁱⁱⁱ.
2. **Young Carers** - *'A person under 18 who provides or intends to provide care for another person'*^{iv}.
3. **Parent Carers** - *'A person aged 18 or over who provides or intends to provide care for a disabled child for whom the person has parental responsibility'*^v.

While anyone can become a Carer, the role of a 'Carer' should not be confused with 'care worker' or 'care staff' who are either undertaking a caring role as part of paid employment or as volunteers attached to a voluntary organisation.

Many carers do not see themselves as carers and can be unrecognised as such by others. This is because Carers may feel that providing care is a normal duty of being a family member or friend.

Who do Carers care for?

Carers provide vital unpaid support to a family member or friend who could not manage to live independently or whose health or wellbeing would deteriorate without their help.

Someone can be a carer for more than one person at a time. The cared for may be affected by the following:

- A physical, learning or sensory disability;
- Frailty;
- Mental health condition;
- Drug and/or alcohol issues;
- Another long term and/or fluctuating illness.

What care do Carers provide?

Carers will often provide care whilst juggling other commitments such as education or paid employment. Examples of the types of care provided by Carers are:

- Personal care such as assistance with bathing, dressing and medication;
- Domestic tasks such as cooking, shopping and cleaning;
- Accompanying to appointments;
- Transportation;
- Help managing finances;
- Emotional support.

It is important that carers are enabled to maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside caring. A carer does not need to be living with the person they care for.

Anybody can become a carer at any time in their life and person's caring role will often change over time. A caring role may last years, until the death or change of relationship with the cared for person. It may be temporary for a few days, weeks, or months, until the recovery of the cared for person.

Carer's Needs

Being a carer can be physically, emotionally and financially demanding. Many carers put their own needs last and there may be times when it is difficult for carers to take care of themselves. It is important that carers are supported to look after their physical, mental and financial wellbeing. Many carers find it easier to continue in their caring role if they can get some support. Any carer who appears to have needs for support has the right to a Carer's Assessment by the council.

National Context

Overview

Anyone, anytime can become a Carer. In 2020, there were approximately 13.6 million unpaid carers in the UK, equating to around 1 in 4 people^{vi}. In April 2021, more women (57%) provided unpaid care than men (43%)^{vii}. The majority of Carers (46%) are aged between 46-65^{viii}. As people are living longer and the population ages, the demand for care is projected to grow. There is a 65% likelihood that adults will provide care at some point in their lives^{ix}.

The 2011 Census reported that of the population providing unpaid care in England and Wales, 3.7 million people provide 1-19 hours per week, 775,000 provide 20-49 hours and 1.4 million provide 50 hours or more unpaid care^x.

Identifying Carers

Despite national figures, the real number of carers in the UK is likely to be considerably higher as they do not take into account 'hidden carers'. 'Hidden carers' refer to carers who do not see themselves as carers and can be unrecognised as such by others, and so do not, or struggle to, access support. Some people may not view themselves as a carer because:

- Becoming a carer can be a gradual process, and carers may not recognise the changing nature of their relationship with the person they support;
- Carers may prefer to continue identifying primarily as a husband, wife, partner, sibling, parent, child or friend, rather than as a carer;
- Carers often become engulfed by competing demands, including working and caring, and as a result may overlook their own needs as a carer and may not seek support;
- The person being supported may not accept that they have care and support needs;
- The carer does not live with the person or the person has moved away from home, for example into supported living or residential care.

The Value of Carers

Unpaid carers provide an incredible amount of support to those they care for, to their friends and family, to the wider health and social care system, and to society. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the financial value of the contribution by unpaid Carers in the UK is estimated to be £193 billion per year^{xi}. In the North of England alone, the estimated value of care provided since the beginning of the pandemic was £31.1 billion (£122 million per day during the pandemic)^{xii}.

Impact of COVID-19 and the challenges faced by Carers

A Carers Week report estimated that 4.5 million people in the UK became unpaid carers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic^{xiii}. This is in addition to the 9.1 million unpaid carers who were already caring before the start of the pandemic.

In the report, the most frequently chosen challenges by all unpaid carers were:

- Managing the stress and responsibility (71%);
- The negative impacts on their physical and mental health (70%);
- Not being able to take time away from caring (66%);
- The impact it has on other personal relationships (63%);
- The negative impact it has on their ability to do paid work (55%);
- The financial impact of the additional care costs (53%);
- Not having anyone to talk to about the challenges of caring (50%).

Breaks for Carers

Caring for a family member, friend, or neighbour can be challenging and often comes at significant personal cost. It is important that carers are regularly given the opportunity to have a meaningful break from caring.

A break could be provided by accessing care services such as replacement care, sitting services, a day service, or through support from family and friends providing either respite or essential care.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, many carers were already struggling to access meaningful breaks. For example, 40% of carers have reported that they had not had a day off for more than a year, and a quarter (25%) had not for more than five years^{xiv}. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic many carers have had to continue without the same level of support. In 2021, 75% of working carers have reported that they are exhausted as a result of caring and 55% are overwhelmed by their caring role^{xv}

The cost of living crisis

Individuals and families across the UK are currently facing significant financial pressures as result of the cost of living crisis. Inflation is at the highest rate for 30 years, which has seen soaring energy prices and increases in basic essentials such as food and fuel.

Carers already face several additional costs such extra costs from equipment, care, travel and food. Almost two-thirds (63%) of carers are spending their own money on care or support services or products for the person they care for^{xvi}. At the same time, their capacity to work to earn money is reduced, with carers working below their potential or having to give up work entirely in order to care.

Based on a 2022 survey of over 3,300 Carers, Carers UK has revealed that 45% of unpaid carers said they are currently unable to manage their monthly expenses and that any further increases in energy bills will negatively affect their own physical and mental health or that of the person they care for.

Many Carers are now taking difficult measures to manage their monthly expenses; 45% of carers are relying on their savings, 26% are using credit cards, and 14% are using bank overdrafts. 64% of Carers receiving Carer's Allowance or Carer Element of Universal Credit have cut back on heating and 24% are using foodbanks^{xvii}.

Support for Carers

Benefits

Carers are entitled to a range of benefits to help with the costs of caring. Those in receipt of the following benefits are still classed as an unpaid carer as these benefits only supports them in providing the care their loved ones require.

Carers may be entitled to one or more of the following state benefits:

- Carer's Allowance
- Carer's Credit
- Carer Premium
- Disability Living Allowance for children.

The Carer's Allowance is the main state benefit for carers and is £76.75 (2023) a week^{xviii}. Carers must spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone, and must not be in full-time education or have earnings of more than £139 per week after tax. This can create problems for those in paid work to receive additional paid support.

In November 2020, there were 1.3 million Carer's Allowance claimants in Great Britain. Women made up 68% of the total^{xix}.

The carer premium is payable with means-tested benefits such as Income Support, Pension Credit and Housing Benefit.

Carer's Credit is a National Insurance contribution to help ensure Carers do not lose out on some social security benefits, such as the State Pension, because of gaps in their NI record.

A parent carer of disabled child may be eligible for Disability Living Allowance for children which is between £24.45 and £156.90 per week (2022)^{xx}.

Legal and Policy Context

Care Act 2014 – Carer’s Assessment

Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities have a responsibility to identify carers and are required to assess:

- a) Whether the carer does have needs for support (or is likely to do so in the future), and;
- b) If the carer does, what those needs are (or are likely to be in the future).

A Carer’s Assessment aims to see what help Carers might need in their caring role, and must include an assessment of:

- a) Whether the carer is able, and is likely to continue to be able, to provide care for the adult needing care,
- b) Whether the carer is willing, and is likely to continue to be willing, to do so,
- c) The impact of the carer’s needs for support on the matters specified in section 1(2),
- d) The outcomes that the carer wishes to achieve in day-to-day life, and
- e) Whether, and if so to what extent, the provision of support could contribute to the achievement of those outcomes.

Children and Families Act 2014

Local authorities have a duty under section 96 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to ensure young carers and their families are identified and their needs for support are assessed. Adults and Children’s services have a joint responsibility to ensure that young carers have a transition assessment as they approach adulthood and whilst they are in transition.

The National Carers Strategy 2008-2018

The National Carers Strategy set out the vision that by 2018, carers will be universally recognised and valued as being fundamental to strong families and stable communities.

Carers Action Plan 2018-2020

The Carers Action Plan outlined the cross-government programme of work to support carers in England for the two year period. Building on the National Carers strategy, the Carers Action Plan was structured around the following themes:

- Services and systems that work for carers;
- Employment and financial wellbeing;
- Supporting young carers;
- Recognising and supporting carers in the wider community and society;
- Building research and evidence to improve outcomes for carers.

The NHS Long Term Plan 2019

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to identifying and supporting unpaid carers, particularly those from vulnerable communities. To help Carers identify GP services that can accommodate their needs, the Plan refers to Quality marks for carer-friendly GP practices to be developed with the Care Quality Commission.

The NHS also aims to encourage the national adoption of carer’s passports, which identify someone as a carer and enable staff to involve them in a patient’s care, and set out guidelines for their use. These will be complemented by developments to electronic health records that allow carers to share their caring status with healthcare professionals.

Health and Care Bill 2021-2022

The Health and Care Bill builds on the proposals for change set out by the NHS Long-Term Plan, while also incorporating lessons learnt from the pandemic. It introduces Integrated Care Boards and Integrated Care Partnerships which will be responsible for bringing together local NHS and local government to deliver joined up care for its local population. It is anticipated that the Bill will bring changes for carers in line with the Carers Action Plan. The Bill is due to be implemented during 2022.

Local Context

Blackpool has a total population of approximately 141,100 people^{xxi}. The latest available data (Census 2011) estimates there are approximately 16,319 people who provide unpaid care in Blackpool^{xxii}. This is a 5.7% rise in the number of Carers compared to 2001 census data (15,443). The current number of people registered with Blackpool Carers Centre is 10,992.

Carers UK estimates that nationally, each carer saves the economy by an average of £19,336 per year^{xxiii}. Using this figure and the latest available data on the number of unpaid carers in Blackpool, the combined annual savings from all unpaid carers in Blackpool is estimated to be £315.5 million a year.

The health of people in Blackpool is generally lower than the national average. The town records one of the lowest life expectancy rates nationally 74.1 years for males and 79.5 years for females^{xxiv}. Blackpool has a larger proportion of people aged 50+ than the national average. By 2030, the number of people aged 65+ who provide unpaid care in Blackpool is projected to rise from 4,164 to 4,836^{xxv}. Health priorities for Blackpool including alcohol and drug misuse, mental health, smoking and obesity. 33.6% of households have one member of household with a long term illness/disability.

Hours of care provided each week

See the table below for breakdown of hours of care provided by Carers in Blackpool each week^{xxvi}.

Hours of care provided	Number of people	% of resident population
1 to 19 hours unpaid care a week	8,635	6.1%
20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week	2,592	1.8%
50 or more hours unpaid care a week	5,092	3.6
Total	16,319	11.5%

Table 2: Breakdown of hours of care provided by Carers in Blackpool each week.

Change in unpaid care

Change in unpaid care between the last two censuses (held in 2011 and 2021) are as follows^{xxvii}:

Unpaid care provision	2011	2021	Direction of Travel (DOT)
No unpaid care provision	87.8%	89.1%	↑
Up to 19 hours	6.4%	4.3%	↓
20-49 hours	1.9%	2.7%	↑
50 + hours	3.8%	3.9%	↑

Table 1: Change in unpaid care between 2021 and 2022

Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE)

The SACE is a national survey that takes place every other year and is conducted by Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities (CASSRs). The survey seeks the opinions of carers aged 18+, caring for a person aged 18+, on a number of topics that are considered to be indicative of a balanced life alongside their unpaid caring role. 1,029 Blackpool carers were included within the initial eligible population. After removing those that were no longer considered eligible, we had a cohort of 801 carers who went on to receive a postal copy of the survey. The 2021/22 response rate was 40%.

Carer Demographics

- 7 in 10 carers included in the eligible population were female and they accounted for 72% of responses.
- The majority of carers were aged 55 or above; half were between 55 and 74.
- 'Ethnic group' was either refused/undeclared/not known for 30% of carers in the eligible population.
- 9 in 10 carers included in the sample had received a carer assessment/reassessment in the last 12 months.
- A fifth of carers included in the eligible population received a direct payment.
- 50% cared for someone with a physical support need.
- 96% of carers were able to complete the questionnaire without the help of anyone else
- 4 in 5 carers live with the person that they care for.

Findings – Carer Satisfaction

There has been a decrease in the proportion of carers reporting that they were extremely or very satisfied with the care and support they receive in this year’s SACE. Carers reporting any level of dissatisfaction has increased from 6.6% in 2018/19 to 9.0% in 2020/21.

Carer Health

The majority of carers said that they felt tired, had disturbed sleep and/or general feelings of stress as a result of caring.

Almost half responding to this question said they felt depressed and/or short tempered/irritable; a third of carers experienced physical strain; a fifth said it made an existing condition worse or that they had developed a new or additional health condition. 57 carers reported a loss of appetite which they attributed to their caring role; 51 had to see their own GP.

Looking After myself

25% of carers say that they are not always able to look after themselves as well as they would like; 1 in 5 responded to said they were not able to spend enough time looking after themselves and they felt they were neglecting themselves.

Social Contact

Fewer carers felt they had as much social contact as they wanted this year with a reduction reported from 31% in 2018/19 to 26% in 2021/22. 20% said they felt socially isolated in comparison to 17% last time the SACE was undertaken.

Encouragement and Support

This year sees a reduction in the proportion of carers stating they felt they had encouragement and support in their caring role from 40% to 35%. Almost a quarter (23%) said they didn’t feel they had any; last time the SACE was undertaken, less than a fifth felt this way (18).

Information and Advice

Most carers who had tried to find information or advice about support, services or benefits said that they found it ‘fairly easy to find’. 1 in 5 said it was ‘very easy’; nearly 3 in every 10 people found it either ‘fairly’ or ‘very’ difficult to find. Of those accessing information and advice, 31% found it ‘very helpful’; 62% said it was ‘quite helpful’; 6% thought it was ‘quite unhelpful’ and 1% said it was ‘very unhelpful’.

Discussions and Consultations

A quarter of carers said that they had not been involved in any discussions about the support or services that are provided to the person they care for. Of those that had, 40% said they ‘always’ felt involved/consulted.

Financial Difficulties

During 2020/21, 42% of respondents said that caring had caused them financial difficulties. There has been no significant change since the survey was last undertaken in 2018/19, where the proportion was only slightly lower at 40%.

Declines can be seen in all but one of the derived Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) measures:

Description	2018-19	2021-22	DOT
Carer reported quality of life	7.6	7.2	↓
Proportion of carers who reported they had as much social contact as they would like	31.2%	25.9%	↓
Overall satisfaction of carers with social services	53.5%	46.9%	↓
The proportion of carers who report that they have been included or consulted in discussions about the person they care for	77.0%	70.1%	↓
The proportion of carers who find it easy to find information about services	71.4%	71.9%	↑

Table 3: Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) measures

Engagement

Engagement sessions with carer peer groups from Blackpool Carers Centre were held to understand what is working and not working for them, how needs can best be met and what potential gaps in current services there may be.

A total number of 17 carers were engaged in these sessions.

Issues with current services

Carers were asked to tell us their experience of issues with current services. Their responses fell into the following themes:

- Lack of joined-up working and communication between services e.g. Alcohol and mental health services.
- Repetitive questions asked by services.
- Lack of consistency of care workers.
- Not being recognised or valued as a carer.
- Not being involved in discussions and decisions about the cared for.
- Diagnostic labels and stigma.
- Difficultly navigating social care and services.

Improving services

Carers were asked to tell us what they would find helpful, and how could services be improved. Their responses fell into the following themes:

- Accountability.
- Consistency of care workers –need to maintain a familiar care worker with any changes notified in advance.
- Regular and open dialogue.
- Focus on prevention.
- Effective signposting and referrals to services.
- Clear information on services.
- Carer voice present in service delivery.
- Liaison between services.
- Support for staff.
- Encouragement and support for Carers.
- Recognise and value Carers.
- Learn and apply best practice examples from local authorities.
- Having a minimum service delivery standard.
- Information on benefits and financial support for carers.

Care Act Assessment

Carers were asked to tell us about their experiences of receiving a Carer's Assessment. Their responses fell into the following themes:

- An easy process.
- No follow-up.
- Would benefit from a Carers Assessment more than once, especially as the demands of the caring role increase.

Identifying as a Carer

Carers were asked to tell us their experience of identifying as a carer. Their responses fell into the following themes:

- Did not identify as a carer until recognised as such by others
- The newness of being a carer can be scary and overwhelming.
- Positive impact of identifying as a carer – emotional relief and reduce the feeling of isolation and burden of being a carer
- Fear and worry are a barrier for older carers identifying as a carer as they have a fear of losing their house, having to pay lots of money for care services and fear their loved one being removed for their home.

Carer Health and Wellbeing

Carers told us of the impact that caring has on their health and wellbeing: Their responses fell into the following themes:

- Unable to 'switch off'.
- Self-blame.
- No breaks.
- Find little time for themselves.
- Negative impact on mental health.
- Negative impact of physical health.

Positive Feedback

Carers were asked to provide positive feedback on current services. The following services received the following compliments:

- Adult Social Care in Blackpool are very responsive.
- Vitaline Blackpool (24 hour monitoring and emergency response services) is an excellent service.
- Dementia Awareness training provided by Blackpool Carers Centre was invaluable.

Support we provide for Carers

Blackpool Carers Centre receive funding via a contract managed by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Blackpool Council contributes an amount to the ICB for this contract.

Additionally the Authority is funding carers support workers from Blackpool Carers Centre based within the Transfer of Care Hub (TOCH) at Victoria Hospital and also a Young Carers Link worker. Blackpool Carers Centre also lever in additional funding from other sources and fundraising activities.

Carer's Assessment

Anyone who is an unpaid carer for a family member or friend has the right to a Carer's Assessment (joint or separately).

At a Carer's Assessment, the carer can discuss their own needs with the council, separate to the needs of the person they care for. Carers can discuss anything they think would help with their own health and wellbeing or with managing other aspects of their life, including their caring role. Carers are entitled to an assessment regardless of the amount or type of care they provide, their financial means or their level of need for support.

The council uses this information to support the carer and decide what help it can offer. The assessment is an ongoing, flexible process and includes any reviews undertaken.

The number of carers receiving and declining assessments is recorded on Blackpool's Referrals, Assessments and Package of Care (RAP) return. The following is a breakdown of Carer's Assessments for the period 2021/22:

- The Number of Carers receiving joint assessment/review: **216**
- The Number of Carers receiving separate assessment/review: **643**
- Number of Carers declining an assessment: **753**

16.6% declined assessment or review because they had one completed in the last 12 months.

The figures are based on those who view themselves as a carer. Please note where carers have received both a separate and a joint assessment (or have also declined an assessment/review); they appear in each relevant lines above.

Carer Friendly Workplace

Approximately, 1 in 7 people in every workplace juggle a caring role with their career^{xxviii}. The number of working carers is growing and given the stresses and strains that can result from balancing work and caring, it is unsurprising that 1 in 6 carers give up work or reduce their hours to care^{xxix}. Therefore, it is important that working carers feel supported by their organisation to help retain employees with caring responsibilities.

Blackpool Council is committed to supporting working carers by addressing, providing support and by raising awareness of informal carers both internally and externally. Support can be offered through several channels including:

- Policy and guidance, including flexible working and leave policies.
- Practical support such as allowing mobiles at desks, closer car parking in case of emergencies.
- Peer support including encouraging staff well-being groups and support sessions.
- Promoting support through positive links with carer organisations, occupational health teams and other professionals.
- Dedicated section for carers on the internal staff website 'The Hub',

Blackpool Council also encourage businesses and suppliers to consider carers within their workforce. This is included in the council's social value guide for suppliers which states: *'As employers, we need to provide the best support we can offer to our employees, particularly if they are experiencing challenges outside of work that impact their wellbeing in the workplace. This should be reflected wherever possible in the values and culture of all our organisations.'*

Priorities

Priority 1 - Identifying Carers

Objective: Carers are identified and encouraged to recognise their role and rights.

Many carers do not see themselves as carers and can be unrecognised as such by others. This means carers often do not, or struggle to, access support. It is important that carers are identified and encouraged to access support in order to prevent the escalation of their own needs, and those of the person they look after.

It is important that we use every opportunity to identify carers as early as possible, including GP appointments, flu jab appointments, home visits, outpatient appointments, transfer to and from hospital, social care and other needs assessments, including admission and discharge assessments and planning meetings.

To improve the identification of carers we aim to:

- Ask people with care and support needs whether anyone gives them help or support, apart from paid practitioners.
- Ask people 'does someone rely on you?' to support people to identify as a carers
- Avoid making assumptions about who might be providing care, taking into account that carers may not be family members or may not live with the person
- Train professionals to identify carers in the course of their work.
- Record details about carers who have been identified (with their consent).
- Develop a publicity campaign to help people to self-identify as a carer and explain the benefits for both them and the cared for.
- Use opportunities such as Carers Week to help people to self-identify as a carer.

What does success look like?

- Increase in the number of identified carers.
- Increase in the number of Carers Assessments offered.

Priority 2 – Working with Carers

Objective: Carers are valued, respected and listened to and will be supported to actively be involved in decision making and care planning for the person they care for.

Carers play a vital role in our communities and so it is important that carers are recognised and valued for the work they do. Carers have valuable knowledge about the person they care for and are often key to understanding the person's needs and preferences. Providing the person gives consent and their wishes remain central, carers should be supported to actively participate in decision making and care planning for the person they care for, in order to help practitioners provide the right type of care and support.

To ensure carers are valued and supported to actively participate in decision making and care planning for the person they care for, we aim to:

- Recognise carers as essential contributors to the assessment of the person they care for.
- Check if the person being cared for gives consent for the carer to be involved.
- When consent is given, ensure that care plans include evidence of the carer's contribution.
- Ensure timely communication, in a suitable language, with Carers during and post assessment of the cared for person.
- Maintain a dialogue with carers to ensure the needs of the cared for person are met.
- Ensure that we involve carers in reviews, design and redesign of social care services so that user experience is taken into account through coproduction.

What does success look like?

- Increase in the number of carers who report they have been involved in any discussions about the support or services that are provided to the person they care for.

Priority 3 – Communication: Information and Advice

Objective: Carers have access to a range of good quality information and advice which is clear, relevant and readily available.

Access to clear, relevant and timely information and advice enable carers to take control of, and make well-informed choices about the care and support for the person they care for, as well as themselves. Not only does information and advice help to promote people's wellbeing by increasing their ability to exercise choice and control, it is also a vital component of preventing, reducing and delaying the need for care and support.

To improve the communication of information and advice to carers, we aim to:

- Maintain up to date signposting and referral points for carers, including financial services.
- Review the information and advice available for carers to ensure that it is informative, accessible, in a range of formats (online and offline) and consistency across all organisations that support carers.
- Inform carers of where they can get help and speak to someone in the event of a crisis.
- Develop online and offline awareness on current financial support and benefits offered to carers and how to access them.
- Work with partners to review how information can be made available more widely.
- Inform carers when changes are made to services and what this means.
- Map out pathways into carers services and where possible establish less complex pathways to services.

What does success look like?

- Increase the number of carers who report that they find information or advice about support, services or benefits easy to find and helpful.

Priority 4– Partnership and Collaboration (Internal and External)

Objective: Services are joined up to meet the needs, choices and aspirations of the service user.

The success of implementing the strategy lies firmly in a collaborative and joined up approach. Carers may not be fully aware of services available to them and may find it difficult to navigate fragmented services, thereby creating unnecessary additional demands for the carer. Service users have told us that they want services to be joined up. Therefore, it is important that the council works collaboratively and in partnership with other services and organisations to ensure that our services work seamlessly for people.

To improve the integration of services, we aim to:

- Ensure continuity of care, including when people move between different services, settings or areas.
- Ensure that the transition from children's to adult services is as seamless as possible by using an agreed approach to working across social care teams.
- Consider opportunities for closer working between services and organisations at appropriate points in service reviews.
- Work collaboratively with services and organisations to avoid duplication of support.
- Develop best practices for inclusion in commissioned services to improve (as necessary) information between professionals, providers and services in accordance with GDPR guidance.

What does success look like?

- Increase in the number of carers who are satisfied with the care and support they receive.
- Increase in the overall satisfaction of carers with social services.

Priority 5 – Health and Wellbeing of Carers

Objective: To support and maintain the health and wellbeing of carers in Blackpool

Many carers struggle to maintain their own health and wellbeing and often overlook their own needs because of their caring responsibilities. It is important carers are offered a Carer's Assessment by the council to discuss their own needs, separate to the needs of the person they care for. At a Carer's Assessment, carers can discuss anything they think would help with their own health and wellbeing or with managing other aspects of their life, including their caring role.

It is also important that carers are regularly reminded of the value of having a break from caring and the options available to them. Taking a break will help improve carers' health and wellbeing and help them to continue in their caring role. By supporting carers to manage their health and wellbeing, they can maximise their independence, choice and control, live healthier lives, and where possible reduce their future needs for care and support.

To support and maintain the health and wellbeing of carers in Blackpool, we will:

- Inform carers of their right to a Carer's Assessment, what this is, the benefits of having one, how to obtain one, and that they can still access community support without a formal assessment.
- Advise of the outcome of the Carer's Assessment as soon as possible following the Assessment date (including providing a copy of the Assessment).
- Ensure carers having a Carer's Assessment are given the opportunity to discuss what matters most to them, including their own health, wellbeing and social care needs, including work, education or training.
- Review the Carer's Assessment process to identify where improvements can be made to ensure that this process enables carers to have the right support to plan for the future.

- Ensure carers are regularly given the opportunity to discuss the value of having a break from caring and the options available to them.
- Review the Council's HR Policies in relation to employees who are carers and produce a catch-all guidance document for employers to set a good example.
- Work with partners to review the current training offered to carers and engage with carers to understand their training needs and requirements.
- Produce a summary of current support services available to adult carers which enable the provision of appropriate breaks, both in and away from the home and a clear explanation of how carers can use respite units in order to access a break from caring.
- Work with partners to ensure loneliness and isolation among carers is addressed and there is appropriate support available for those hard to reach carers supporting complex needs.

What does success look like?

- Increase in Carers reporting they have quality of life.
- Increase in the number of Carer's Assessments undertaken.
- Increase in the number of carers who have received support enabling them to take a break of 24 hours or more.
- Decrease in the number of carers who say that their health has been negatively affected by their caring role.
- Decrease in the number of carers who say that they are not always able to look after themselves as well as they would like.

Delivery and monitoring progress

These priorities will be delivered through an action plan (see Appendix 1).

Blackpool Council's Carers Lead will oversee the strategy. Adult social care and health scrutiny committee will receive an annual progress report detailing progress made in delivering the action plan. The Carers Lead will be responsible for working with carers, partners and stakeholders to deliver the actions as set out within the action plan (see Appendix 1).

The deliverables within this strategy will be monitored through the following:

- Monitoring actions in the action plan.
- Monitoring Key Performance Indicators associated with the priorities.
- Monitoring of feedback from the Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE).

The strategy will be reviewed halfway through the course to assess the success of the implementation of the strategy.

Key Performance Indicators

A set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been defined to measure the impact of the strategy and action plan. Baseline figures are based on the 21/22 SACE results which were sent randomly to 801 carers with a 40% response rate and also our internal recording and reporting:

Priority 1 – Identifying Carers

We are currently establishing a system which accurately reflects actual current numbers of carers (it previously didn't exclude those no longer in a caring role). We are also updating data held in the data warehouse which will allow us to accurately update the number of carers assessments offered.

- Total number of identified carers.
- Total number of carers assessments offered.

Priority 2 – Working with Carers

- 70.1% of carers responding reported they felt they had been included or consulted in any discussions about the support or services that are provided to the person they care for.

Priority 3 – Communication: Information and Advice

- 71.9% of carers who responded reported that they find information or advice about support, services or benefits easy to find

Priority 4 – Partnership and Collaboration (Internal and External)

- 46.9% of carers responding said that they were either extremely or very satisfied with the support services they had received. A further 29.2% said they were quite satisfied.

Priority 5 – Health and Wellbeing of Carers

- Carers reported quality of life score. NHS Digital calculate this measure based on responses to 6 different questions. The 2021/22 outcome score is 7.2

- Total number of Carer’s Assessments conducted.
In the 2022/23 SALT (Short and Long Term) return, 169 carers were assessed or reviewed jointly with the person they care for and a further 615 were assessed or reviewed separately.
- Part 1 -Total number of carers supported to have a break.
As reported in the SALT (2022/23), 992 carers received some form of respite during the year.
Part 2 – Did it meet their need? Was it the right type, duration and frequency to maintain their caring role?
To be discussed with carers further, working alongside carer organisations.
- Total number of carers who say that their health has been negatively affected by their caring role.
Only 9.9% of the respondents said that their health had not been affected by their caring role in the latest SACE. 80.1% said they felt tired; 46.2% reported feeling depressed; 18.3% said they had experienced a loss of appetite; 69.6% had disturbed sleep; 62.2% reported general feelings of stress; 34.9% said it had caused them some kind of physical strain (e.g. Back); 46.8% said it made them short tempered/irritable; 16.3% had had to go and see their GP due to the way their caring role had affected their health; 20.5% had developed their own health conditions as a result; 20.2% said caring had made an existing health condition worse and 1.3% said it had affected their health in other ways.
- Total number of carers who say that they are not always able to look after themselves as well as they would like.
Responding to the question which asks ‘Thinking about how much time you have to look after yourself – in terms of getting enough sleep or eating well, which statement best describes your present situation’. 53.8% said they were able to look after themselves; 25.3% said ‘sometimes I can’t look after myself well enough’ and 20.8% said they felt they were neglecting themselves.

Appendix 1– Adult Carers Action Plan

Table 4- Priority 1: Identifying Carers

ID	Action	Lead	Deadline	Resources	Outcome
1	<p>Review, refresh and promote Carer Awareness Training to ensure managers and staff who may encounter carers both as employees and general public, are trained to suitably identify and recognise the different types of carers the course of their work.</p> <p>Devise a training plan of who, when and frequency and set participation targets.</p>	Carers Lead/ OWD/HR	31 st December 2023	iPool Online Training	<p>Greater awareness of carers amongst Blackpool Council employees.</p> <p>Improve the identification of carers by to increase the number of identified carers and supported, through the uptake of training.</p>
Page 93	Develop a publicity campaign involving local community services and organisations, for example posters and leaflets in GP surgeries, libraries and pharmacies, to help people to self-identify as a carer and explain the benefits of doing so, including the right to an assessment.	Blackpool Carers Centre	Ongoing until 31 st March 2027 with targeted approaches and campaign streams.		Increase in the number of self-identified carers.
3	Optimise opportunities to raise the profile of caring, to help people to self-identify, such as Carers Week and Carers Rights Day.	Blackpool Carers Centre	Ongoing annual activity until 2027	National campaign resources	Increase in the number of self-identified carers and links with professionals.
4	Optimise the carers data held to ensure it accurately reflects the overall landscape of carers within Blackpool.	Carers Lead and Business Intelligence Officer, Blackpool Council	31 st July 2024	Mosaic, SACE, Census	To ensure the carers data reflects an accurate, current picture of the scope of carers, their assessments and well-being.

Table 5- Priority 2: Working with Carers.

ID	Action	Lead	Deadline	Resources	Outcome
5	Actively involve carers in the care planning process and recognise carers as experts and essential contributors to the assessment of the person they care for by ensuring that, where consent is given, care plans include evidence of the carer’s contribution.	Gill Nixon-Smith, Adult Social Care. Liz Russell, Mental Health, Learning Disability, Autism.	Benchmarked every other year in line with survey data	Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE)	Increase in the number of carers who report they have been involved in any discussions about the support or services that are provided to the person they care for.
6	Wherever appropriate and practicable we involve carers in reviews, design and redesign of services that are led by commissioning and work on embedding this approach throughout our operational service areas in Health & Social Care.	Carers Lead, Blackpool Council	Ongoing until 31 st March 2027		<p>Increase in the number of carers who report they have been involved in any discussions about the support or services that are provided to the person they care for.</p> <p>To ensure user experience is taken into account when reviewing and designing services through meaningful and open engagement sessions.</p>
7	Ensure timely communication including any changes to services, is carried out in a suitable language, with Carers during and following assessment of the cared for person and that the agreement of the cared for to share care plan is recorded where agreed.	Gill Nixon-Smith, Adult Social Care. Liz Russell, Mental Health, Learning Disability, Autism.	Benchmarked every other year in line with survey data		<p>Increase in the number of carers who report they have been involved in any discussions about the support or services that are provided to the person they care for.</p> <p>Carers are advised of the outcome of the cared for person assessment and timeframe for any agreed action. Where changes are made to services, the implications are communicated and continuity of care is maintained with appropriate information sharing.</p>

Table 6- Priority 3: Communication: Information and Advice

ID	Action	Lead	Deadline	Resources	Outcome
8	Maintain up to date signposting and referral points for carers, covering all areas where carers need advice and information.	Blackpool Carers Centre	Ongoing in line with changing needs and focus		<p>Ensure frontline staff are aware of information and advice and are able to effectively signpost relevant services and support as needed.</p> <p>Increase the number of carers who report that they find information or advice about support, services or benefits easy to find, easy to understand and helpful.</p>
Page 95	Review the information and advice available for carers to ensure that this is informative, accessible, in a range of formats (online and offline) and consistent across all organisations that support carers.	Blackpool Carers Centre	Ongoing as required	Formation of Carers Reading Panel	<p>Increase the number of carers who report that they find information or advice about support, services or benefits easy to find, easy to understand and helpful.</p>
10	Inform carers of where they can get help and speak to someone in the event of a crisis and support them with advance contingency planning.	Blackpool Carers Centre	Ongoing to 31 st March 2027		<p>Increase the number of carers who report that they find information or advice about support, services or benefits easy to find, easy to understand and helpful.</p> <p>Carers are supported to develop contingency plans for times of crisis.</p>
11	Develop online and offline awareness on current financial support and benefits offered to carers and how to access them.	Blackpool Carers Centre	Ongoing to 31 st March 2027		<p>Increase the number of carers who report that they find information or advice about support, services or benefits easy to find, easy to understand and helpful.</p>

ID	Action	Lead	Deadline	Resources	Outcome
					Carers are aware of the financial support and benefits they may be entitled to and are able to access them if eligible.
12	Work with partners to review how information can be made available more widely.	Blackpool Carers Centre	31 st March 2025		<p>Increase the number of carers who report that they find information or advice about support, services or benefits easy to find, easy to understand and helpful.</p> <p>Information on support and services available to carers is widely available.</p>

Table 7- Priority 4: Partnership and Collaboration (Internal and External)

ID	Action	Lead	Deadline	Resources	Outcome
13	Develop awareness of young carers within Adult Social Care supported households, and ensure understanding of appropriate pathways to support.	Carers Lead, Blackpool Council	31 st December 2024		<p>Increase in the number of carers who are satisfied with the care and support they receive.</p> <p>Increase in the overall satisfaction of carers with social services.</p> <p>To provide joined up support for young carers in family settings.</p>
14	Organise a workshop with carers and partners to understand the story and the experience of carers in order enhance collaboration and avoid any duplication of work and lessen story-telling where possible.	Carers, Blackpool Carers Centre, and Carers Lead at Blackpool Council	31 st July 2024	Venue, Themes, Partners	<p>Increase in the number of carers who are satisfied with the care and support they receive.</p> <p>Increase in the overall satisfaction of carers with social services.</p>

Table 8- Priority 5: Health and Wellbeing of Carers

ID	Action	Lead	Deadline	Resources	Outcome
51 Page 97	<p>Improve communication with Carers about their Carers Assessment, this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information about: the Assessment prior to it taking place, the benefits of having one, how to obtain one, the choice of medium (face to face, video call, etc.) and how to access community support within a formal assessment. • Advising of the outcome of the Assessment as soon as possible (including providing a copy of the Assessment). • Re-design the Carers Assessment process so that it stands alone rather than as a by-product of an assessment for the cared for, ensuring that the assessment process fully considers the impact of caring on the wellbeing of carers, identifies carers' eligible needs and responds to them appropriately, and that carers assessments are reviewed such the caring roll be significantly impacted and carers needs change.. 	<p>Gill Nixon-Smith, Adult Social Care. Liz Russell, Mental Health, Learning Disability, Autism.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>		<p>Increase in the number of Carer's Assessments undertaken.</p> <p>Decrease in the number of carers who say that they are not always able to look after themselves as well as they would like.</p> <p>Increase in carers reported quality of life.</p> <p>Carer's are given the opportunity to discuss what matters most them, including their own health, wellbeing and social care needs, including work, education or training.</p>
	16	<p>Review the Council's HR Policies in relation to employees who are carers and produce a catch-all guidance document for employees</p>	<p>Carers Lead, Blackpool Council</p>	<p>31st March 2024</p>	

ID	Action	Lead	Deadline	Resources	Outcome
17	Work with partners to review the current training offered to carers and engage with carers to understand their training needs and requirements.	Blackpool Carers Centre	31 st March 2025		<p>Decrease in the number of carers who say that their health has been negatively affected by their caring role.</p> <p>Offer relevant training to support carers in their caring role, in order to empower and enable carers to enhance their own well-being and that of the people they care for.</p>
18	Produce a simple guide for choosing respite, to be readily available to adult carers enabling them to access the provision of appropriate breaks, both in and away from the home, giving a clear explanation of how carers can use respite units in order to access a break from caring and ensure staff also receive this and are fully aware.	Gill Nixon-Smith, Adult Social Care. Liz Russell, Mental Health, Learning Disability, Autism.	31 st March 2024		<p>Increase in the number of carers who have received support enabling them to take a break of 24 hours or more.</p> <p>Carers have access to appropriate support services which enable them to have adequate breaks from their caring role.</p>

ⁱ UK Census Data. Blackpool: Health and Provision of Unpaid Care (KS301EW). 27 March 2011

ⁱⁱ NHS England. Who is considered a carer?

ⁱⁱⁱ UK government. Care Act 2014.

^{iv} UK government. Children and Families Act 2014.

^v UK government. Children and Families Act 2014.

^{vi} Carers Week. Carers Week 2020 Research Report: The rise in the number of unpaid carers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. 2020

^{vii} Office for National Statistics. 2021. Coronavirus and the social impacts on unpaid carers in Great Britain: April 2021.

^{viii} Carers UK. Will I care? The likelihood of being a carer in adult life. November 2019.

^{ix} Carers UK. Will I care? The likelihood of being a carer in adult life. November 2019.

^x Office for National Statistics. 2011 Census analysis: Unpaid care in England and Wales, 2011 and comparison with 2001. February 2013.

^{xi} Carers UK. Unseen and undervalued: The value of unpaid care provided to date during the COVID-19 pandemic. November 2020

^{xii} Carers UK. Unseen and undervalued: The value of unpaid care provided to date during the COVID-19 pandemic. November 2020.

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- ^{xxi} ONS How life has changed in Blackpool: Census 2021, ONS (2023)
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- ^{xxiv} National life tables – life expectancy in the UK: 2018 to 2020, ONS (2021)
- ^{xxv} JSNA Blackpool. Social Care. March 2022.
- ^{xxvi} UK Census Data. Blackpool: Health and Provision of Unpaid Care (KS301EW). 27 March 2011.
- ^{xxvii} Office for National Statistics – 2011 Census and Census 2021
- ^{xxviii} Carers UK. Employers for Carers.
- ^{xxix} Carers UK. Employers for Carers.

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September 2022

Department: Adult Social Care

Team or Service Area Leading Assessment: Commissioning Team

Title of Policy/ Service or Function: Blackpool Adult Carers Strategy 2022-2027

Lead Officer: Kate Aldridge

STEP 1 - IDENTIFYING THE PURPOSE OR AIMS

1. What type of policy, service or function is this?

Changing/ updated ✓

2. What is the aim and purpose of the policy, service or function?

Blackpool Council will develop a five-year Adult Carers Strategy for Blackpool

The need for this strategy is driven by the following:

- To update the current strategy which expired in 2015;
- To ensure that the council achieves compliance with the relevant aspects of the Care Act 2014 and associated Guidance;
- To develop an action plan that will help identify carers at an early stage, improve carer's support and services, deliver a more coordinated approach, and to enable carers to lead fulfilled, independent lives

3. Please outline any proposals being considered.

The Blackpool Adult Carers strategy sets out how Blackpool Council will work together with key organisations to enable Carers across Blackpool to feel recognised, valued and supported to lead fulfilled, independent lives alongside their caring role.

To achieve our vision, there are four key priorities which we will aim to deliver:

- Identifying Carers
- Working with Carers
- Communication: Information and Advice
- Health and Wellbeing of Carers

4. What outcomes do we want to achieve?

The focus of the Carers Strategy is Priority 1 'Communities: creating stronger communities and increasing resilience'. Supporting carers in their caring role significantly benefits the community. Carers provide an incredible amount of

support to: those they care for, their friends and family, the wider health and social care system, and to society. Therefore, it is in the best interest of communities that carers are and feel supported in their caring role.

This strategy will outline a clear vision and set of key priorities around how the council, working together with key stakeholders, are going to help support Blackpool Carers as much as possible in their caring role so that carers can continue providing care whilst also leading fulfilled, independent lives.

5. Who is the policy, service or function intended to help/ benefit?

Adult Carers in Blackpool

6. Who are the main stakeholders/ customers/ communities of interest?

- Adult Carers in Blackpool
- Blackpool Carers Centre
- Adult Social Care
- Carers peer support groups
- The cared for

7. Does the policy, service or function have any existing aims in relation to Equality/ Diversity or community cohesion?

No

STEP 2 - CONSIDERING EXISTING INFORMATION AND WHAT THIS TELLS YOU

8. Please summarise the main data/ research and performance management information in the box below.

Data/ information

General
 An adult carer is an adult who provides or intends to provide care for another adult (an “adult needing care”) who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support, the care they give is unpaid.

Population Data
 Blackpool has a resident population of approximately 138,381. Blackpool is a dense urban area with high levels of deprivation, workless households, and poor health in the resident population.

The latest available data (Census 2011) estimates there are approximately 16,319 people who provide unpaid care in Blackpool. This is a 5.7% rise in the number of Carers compared to 2001 census data (15,443). The current number of people registered with Blackpool Carers Centre is 10,992.

A breakdown of hours of care provided by Carers in Blackpool each week can be found in table 1.

Hours of care provided	Number of people	% of resident population
1 to 19 hours unpaid care a week	8,635	6.1%
20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week	20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week	1.8%
50 or more hours unpaid care a week	5,092	3.6
Total	16,319	11.5%

Table 1: A breakdown of hours of care provided by Carers in Blackpool each week (Census 2011)

Race and Ethnicity

Residents are mostly of White British ethnicity (93.6%), which is significantly higher than across England and Wales (80.5%). Black and minority ethnic groups, including Irish and European residents, are estimated to make up 6.4% of the population (approximately 9,000 people), compared with the estimated population for England and Wales of 19.5%. Race and ethnicity data on unpaid adult carers in Blackpool is currently unavailable.

Health and Disability

The health of people in Blackpool is generally worse than the national average. The town records one of the lowest life expectancy rates nationally and there are inequalities by deprivation and gender. The average life expectancy for males is 74.1 years, and for females it is 79.5 years. The average life expectancy across the town is one of the lowest nationally. Health priorities for Blackpool include alcohol and drug misuse, mental health, smoking and obesity.

25.6% of people in Blackpool reported a long-term health problem or disability at the last Census, which is eight percentage points higher than the national average.

Health and disability data on unpaid adult carers in Blackpool is currently unavailable.

Gender and Transgender

The population of Blackpool is approximately 138,381, 50.3% of the population are estimated to be female and 49.7% are male. Gender and transgender data on unpaid adult carers in Blackpool is currently unavailable.

Age

A larger proportion of residents are aged 65+ (20.5%) compared to the national age structure (18.5%). The working age population (16-64) in Blackpool is smaller than the national figure, additionally the 0-15 population in Blackpool is also slightly smaller than the national age structure. By 2030, the number of people aged 65+

who provide unpaid care in Blackpool is projected to rise from 4,164 to 4,836.

Sexual Orientation

ONS estimates from Annual Population survey data that amongst adults in Blackpool, around 107,100 (94.9%) adults identify as heterosexual, 3,700 (3.2%) people identify as gay or lesbian, around 600 (0.6%) people identify as bisexual and 500 (0.4%) adults whose sexual orientation is classified as 'other'.

For around 1,000 adults in Blackpool sexual orientation is unknown due to answering 'don't know' or declining to answer the survey question. Other estimates have put Blackpool's LGBTQ+ population as higher than the combined estimates from the data above.

Data on the sexual orientation of unpaid adult carers in Blackpool is currently unavailable.

Research or comparative information

National Context

General

In 2020, there were approximately 13.6 million unpaid carers in the UK, equating to around 1 in 4 people. The latest available data (2011 Census) reported that of the population providing unpaid care in England and Wales, 3.7 million people provide 1-19 hours per week, 775,000 provide 20-49 hours and 1.4 million provide 50 hours or more unpaid care.

Gender and Transgender

In April 2021, more women (57%) provided unpaid care than men (43%) did. National data on the number of transgender carers is unavailable.

Age

The majority of Carers (46%) are aged between 46- 65. As people are living longer and the population ages, the demand for care is projected to grow. There is a 65% likelihood that adults will provide care at some point in their lives.

Race and Ethnicity

Table 1 demonstrates Census 2011's findings on unpaid carers identities

Identify	Percentage of unpaid carers
UK identities: English only identity	60.58%
UK identities: British only identity	19.14%
UK identities: English and British only identity	8.82%
UK identities: Welsh only identity	4.27%
Other identities	3.61%
UK identities: Scottish only identity	0.82%

UK identities: Other identity and at least one of British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh identities	0.69%
UK identities: Welsh and British only identity	0.61%
Other identities only: Irish only identity	0.59%
UK identities: British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh / Cornish identities only: Any other combination of British / English / Northern Irish / Scottish / Welsh / Cornish identities	0.32%
UK identities: Northern Irish only identity	0.19%
UK identities: Scottish and British only identity	0.16%
UK identities: Cornish only identity	0.14%
UK identities: Northern Irish and British only identity	0.03%
UK identities: Cornish and British only identity	0.02%

Table 2 Census 2011's findings on unpaid carers identities

The BAME Community Advisory Group (2020) undertook research into the impact of COVID-19 policies on BAME communities. They reported that some health and care professionals also act as unpaid carers in their personal lives. The report attributes this to community structures in which members are expected to provide informal care. The report notes that this double role is often unaccounted for in the work setting and as a result; unpaid care roles can increase the levels of stress already experienced by carers working in the health and care sector.

Disability

Census 2011 found 1,568,923 carers have a disability. 38% report that their disabilities 'limits them a lot' and 62% report their disabilities 'limits them a little'.

Sexual Orientation

Census data in 2011 did not report sexual orientation of unpaid carers. Research from Carers Wales, The Carers Trust and Carers Northern Ireland highlight some additional barriers faced by LGBTQ+ carers. These barriers mirror wider social discrimination. Where LGBTQ+ carers are spouses/ partners and face bereavement, LGBTQ carers may be more isolated from sources of support and this can be especially compounded when if LGBTQ+ carers are older, estranged from their own families or international.

Religion and belief

Table 2 demonstrates Census 2011's findings on unpaid carers religious beliefs

Religion	Percentage of unpaid carers
Christian	71.81%

No religion	20.17%
Muslim	4.08%
Hindu	1.42%
Sikh	0.81%
Other religions	0.77%
Jewish	0.51%
Buddhist	0.43%

Table 3: Census 2011's findings on unpaid carers religious beliefs

In addition to the above breakdown, 404,459 unpaid carers did not submit a response to this census question.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Census data in 2011 did not specifically report on pregnant or new mothers who are unpaid carers, however taking into account data on sex and age of unpaid carers, a small proportion unpaid carers each year do become pregnant and/or claim maternity leave and benefits. This group are much more likely to be receiving healthcare support for themselves and baby than other unpaid carers.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Census data in 2011 did not specifically report on marriage and civil partnership status of unpaid carers. However, carers UK identified in 2018 more than a quarter of unpaid carers care for their spouse or partner.

For the 25% of unpaid carers who care for their partner, there are tax sharing incentives open to people in either civil partnerships or marriages. This scheme results in disproportionate impacts between taxable income levels for unpaid carers who are not in marriages or civil partnerships when compared to unpaid carers in marriages or civil partnerships.

Key findings of consultation and feedback

Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE)

The SACE is a national survey that takes place every other year and is conducted by Councils with Adult Social Services Responsibilities (CASSRs). The survey seeks the opinions of carers aged 18 or over, caring for a person aged 18 or over, on a number of topics that are considered to be indicative of a balanced life alongside their unpaid caring role.

1029 carers were included within the initial eligible population. After removing those that were no longer considered eligible, we had a cohort of 801 carers who went on to receive a postal copy of the survey. The 2021/22 response rate was 40%.

Gender

7 in 10 carers included in the eligible population were female and they accounted for 72% of responses.

Age

The majority of carers were aged 55 or above; half were between 55 and 74. Approximately 30% of those that are cared for are aged between 18 and 64. A

further 30% of respondents said they care for someone who is aged 85 or above. The oldest person included in this year's survey was confirmed as 101 years old.

There has been a decrease in the proportion of carers reporting that they were extremely or very satisfied with the care and support they receive in this year's SACE. Carers aged 75 and above are the happiest with the care and support they receive with 83% responding to say they were 'quite', 'very' or 'extremely' satisfied. Carers aged 18-64 were the least satisfied with 10% showing some level of dissatisfaction.

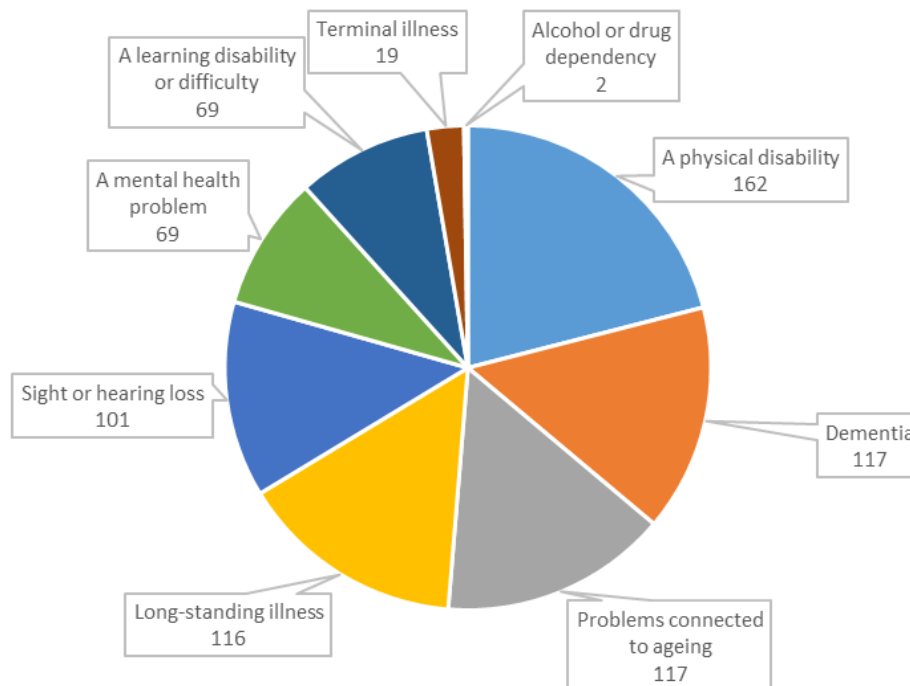
Race and Ethnicity

'Ethnic group' was either refused/undeclared/not known for 30% of carers in the eligible population.

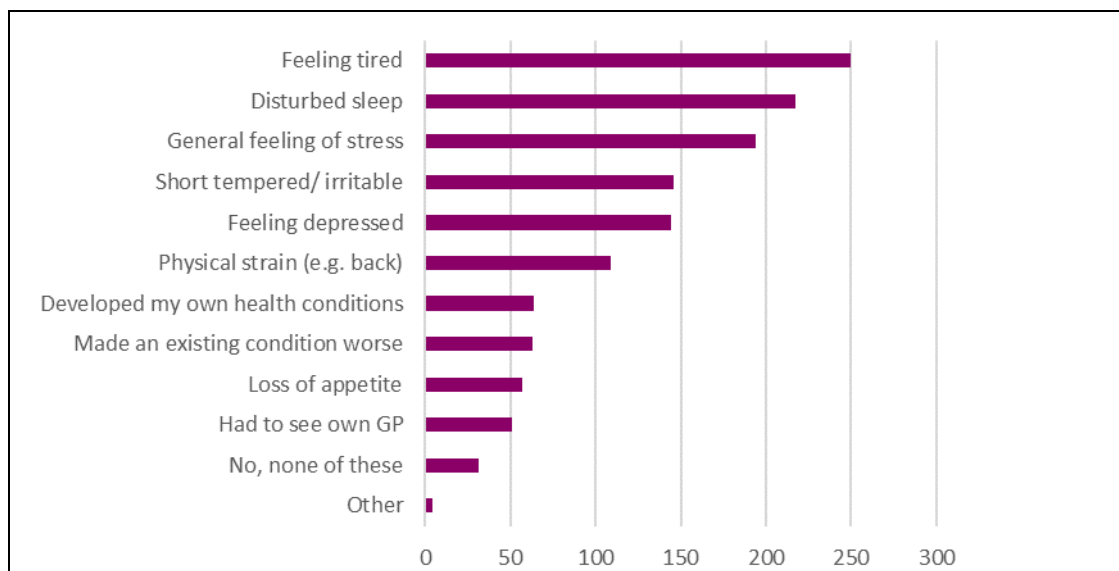
Health and Disability

50% cared for someone with a physical support need. 96% of carers were able to complete the questionnaire without the help of anyone else. Although 40% of carers said that they did not have any health issues of their own, 29% said that they had a long-standing illness; 19% had a physical impairment or disability; 13% suffered from problems relating to their mental health and 11% suffered from 'other' conditions.

Figures relate to responses from 309 individuals – a person can have multiple conditions reported in the chart which follows:



Carers were asked how their health had been affected by their caring role:



The majority of carers said that they felt tired, had disturbed sleep and/or general feelings of stress as a result of caring. Almost half responding to this question said they felt depressed and/or short tempered/irritable; a third of carers experienced physical strain; a fifth said it made an existing condition worse or that they had developed a new or additional health condition. 57 carers reported a loss of appetite which they attributed to their caring role; 51 had to see their own GP. Only 10% of respondents said they didn't experience any of the listed conditions or any 'other'. A quarter of those without any reported impact said that they had been caring for 20 years or more; 10% care for less than 20 hours a week; 36% spend 100 hours or more a week caring.

Engagement Sessions

Engagement sessions with Carer Peer Groups from Blackpool Carers Centre were held to understand what is working and not working for them, how needs can best be met and what potential gaps in current services there may be.

Feedback:

- Carers often struggle with their own mental health needs.
- Fear and worry are a barrier for older carers identifying as a carer, fear of losing their house, having to pay lots of money for care services, fear of their loved one being removed for their home.
- Older carers looking after their spouses were determined to keep their loved ones at home and look after them even to the detriment of their own health and wellbeing. "In sickness and in health, till death us do part."
- Carers often feel they are being judged by other regarding the health condition of the cared for.

9. What are the impacts or effects for Key Protected Characteristics?

General
No general negative impacts of the Adult Carers Strategy have been identified.
It is anticipated the Adult Carers Strategy will have a positive impact on Adult Carers

<p>in Blackpool by supporting them to continue providing care whilst also supporting them to lead fulfilled, independent lives.</p>
<p>Age</p> <p>No overall negative impacts of the Adult Carers Strategy have been identified associated with age.</p> <p>It is recognised that carers should be provided with age appropriate information that they can easily read and understand themselves or with support.</p>
<p>Disability</p> <p>No overall negative impacts of the Adult Carers Strategy have been identified on the grounds of disability.</p> <p>It is recognised that caring can place a real strain on individuals mental and physical health.</p>
<p>Gender Reassignment</p> <p>No overall negative impact of the Adult Carers Strategy have been identified associated with gender reassignment.</p> <p>It is recognised that transgender carers face additional barriers which mirror wider social discrimination, and as a result may be more isolated from sources of support.</p>
<p>Marriage and Civil partnership</p> <p>No overall negative impacts of the Adult Carers Strategy have been identified associated with marriage and civil partnership.</p> <p>It is recognised that many carers do not see themselves as carers and can be unrecognised as such by others, this is because they feel that providing care is a normal duty of being married or in a civil partnership. It is important to avoid making assumptions about who might be providing care based their relationship to the person being cared for.</p>
<p>Pregnancy and Maternity</p> <p>No overall negative impact of the Adult Carers Strategy have been identified associated with Pregnancy and Maternity.</p>
<p>Race</p> <p>No overall negative impact of the Adult Carers Strategy have been identified associated with race.</p> <p>It is recognised that it may be more difficult for carers in some groups to identify as a carer and to seek support due to cultural and communication barriers. This includes black and minority ethnic groups.</p>
<p>Religion and Belief</p> <p>No overall negative impact of the Adult Carers Strategy have been identified associated with religion or belief.</p>
<p>Sex</p> <p>No overall negative impact of the Adult Carers Strategy have been identified associated with sex.</p> <p>It is recognised that the burden of caring responsibilities disproportionately falls on women. It is important to avoid making assumptions about who might be providing care based their sex.</p>

Sexual Orientation

No overall negative impact of the Adult Carers Strategy have been identified associated with sexual orientation.

It is recognised that it may be more difficult for carers in some groups to identify as a carer and to seek support due to cultural and communication barriers. This includes people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

In addition, LGBTQ+ carers face additional barriers, which mirror wider social discrimination and as a result may be more isolated from sources of support.

10. What do you know about how the proposals could affect community cohesion?

It is anticipated that the Carers Strategy will strengthen community cohesion. Carers provide an incredible amount of support to those they care for, their friends and family, the wider health and social care system, and to society. Therefore, it is in the best interest of communities that carers are and feel recognised, valued and supported in their caring role.

11. What do you know about how the proposals could impact on levels of socio –economic inequality, in particular Poverty?

In an engagement session with Carer peer groups, some carers said that it would be useful to know what financial help they may be entitled to e.g. attendance allowance. One of the objectives of the strategy is to ensure carers have access to a range of good quality information and advice, such as information on the current financial support and benefits offered to carers and how to access them, which is clear, relevant and readily available.

It is not anticipated that the strategy will have a negative impact on levels of socio-economic inequality, in particular poverty, in Blackpool.

STEP 3 - ANALYSING THE IMPACT

12. Is there any evidence of higher or lower take-up by any group or community, and if so, how is this explained?

Many carers do not see themselves as carers and can be unrecognised as such by others, this is because they feel that providing care is a normal duty of being a family member or friend. Despite initiatives to identify carers and their needs, many carers remain unidentified and do not access the support they need.

Some people may not view themselves as a carer because:

- Becoming a carer can be a gradual process, and carers may not recognise the changing nature of their relationship with the person they support;
- Carers may prefer to continue identifying primarily as a husband, wife, partner, sibling, parent, child or friend, rather than as a carer;
- Carers often become engulfed by competing demands, including working and

caring, and as a result may overlook their own needs as a carer and may not seek support;

- The person being supported may not accept that they have care and support needs;
- The carer does not live with the person or the person has moved away from home, for example into supported living or residential care.

13. Do any rules or requirements prevent any groups or communities from using or accessing the service?

No

14. Does the way a service is delivered/ or the policy create any additional barriers for any groups of disabled people?

No

15. Are any of these limitations or differences “substantial” and likely to amount to unlawful discrimination?

N/A

16. If No, do they amount to a differential impact, which should be addressed?

N/A

STEP 4 - DEALING WITH ADVERSE OR UNLAWFUL IMPACT

17. What can be done to improve the policy, service, function or any proposals in order to reduce or remove any adverse impact or effects identified?

No adverse impact has been identified for the proposed strategy. However, in order to deliver the aims of the strategy there will need to be assistance from partners and stakeholders.

18. What would be needed to be able to do this? Are the resources likely to be available?

Unknown at the current time what additional resources requirements may be needed.

19. What other support or changes would be necessary to carry out these actions?

Not applicable

STEP 5 - CONSULTING THOSE AFFECTED FOR THEIR VIEWS

20. What feedback or responses have you received to the findings and possible courses of action?
Please give details below.

Not applicable

21. If you have not been able to carry out any consultation, please indicate below how you intend to test out your findings and recommended actions.

Not applicable

STEP 6 - ACTION PLANNING

No actions have been identified.

STEP 7 - ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING AND REVIEW

To be reviewed in line with the governance arrangements detailed in the strategy action plan

Date completed: 10/10/2022

Name: Kate Aldridge

Position: Head of Corporate Delivery, Performance and Commissioning

Signed: