APPENDIX A

Business Plan 2015-18

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Contents

Leader's Statement 2

Managing Directors' Report 5

Vision, Values and Priorities 7

Financial Position 8

Organisational Structures 8

Core Functions 11

Key Activities 13

Budget Strategy 18

Resource Budgeting and Staffing 18

Consultation and Equalities 19

Monitoring of Activities 19

Contact for Further Information 20

LEADER'S STATEMENT

The Business Plan 2015-18 continues our established approach to delivering our vision and priorities whilst also achieving permanent savings, efficiencies and income to maintain a balanced budget position.

Leader of the Council
Councillor David Westley

Our purpose as a Council is to provide the best possible services within the resources available. As a direct response to decreasing levels of government grant and reduced income in a number of areas we have had to reconsider how we are best able to do this. It is anticipated that this situation will continue for some years to come.

In addition to the 30% savings achieved during the 2011-15 Business Plan period, the Council has identified further savings of £xxx/%* necessary during 2015-18, with £1.3m** required for 2015-16 alone[1].

Creating a sustainable Council budget has been the driver behind all the recent service reviews and reshaping services remains fundamental to all our activities. Our aspiration is to maintain performance and the range of services that we provide where possible, but services must match the financial reality and have challenging but realistic service levels in place. Identifying local needs through listening and consulting with residents, businesses and stakeholders allows us to prioritise spending in consideration of these findings. Where appropriate, we may consider the further use of reserves to allow time to produce results, however simply using reserves without ensuring the sustainability of services is not a viable long-term strategy.

Following the major cost-saving exercises and organisational changes of recent years, during 2014/15 effort focussed on a detailed exercise to review base budgets and achieve savings as well as preliminary work on developing further MSR options. Since previous options for efficiency savings and non-priority service areas have now largely been taken, these future options are likely to require difficult decisions and will be consulted on and finalised later in 2015/16.

As a result of our managed approach to change, we anticipate being able to deliver our services on budget in 2015/16 whilst broadly maintaining the standard and range of services offered. We have the best record in Lancashire for zero or low Council Tax increases, with Council tax having now been frozen for the last 5 years. The freeze is likely to continue for 2015/16 which, allowing for inflation, equates to a saving of £38.45 for a Band D property.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) has allowed an ambitious investment programme of modernisation and regeneration of our housing assets to be undertaken and this is reflected in the Business Plan.

[1] Tbc following calculations from the finance settlement

Our priorities are therefore to balance our budget and, as guided by our residents and stakeholders, to care for our borough and work towards sustainable regeneration and growth.

Our vision is that we will be a Council to be proud of, delivering services that are:

- Lean – we will continue to look for ways of providing services at reduced cost.
- Local – where Council services are best provided through local delivery we will work with partners including the voluntary and community sectors.
- Fair – to the tax payer and to staff. A measured approach to change allows us to plan for the likely further contraction of the organisation. We will aim to minimise compulsory redundancies where possible as this is better for the tax payer, for staff and for the local economy. We will also be transparent – clear about what we spend public money on, and why.

Applying 'lean, local and fair' to our service offer has allowed us to continue to provide levels of service above those required by our statutory duties. It has also enabled us to deliver positive outcomes and developments within a wide range of service areas. For example, during 2014/15:

- **Leisure –** the Council has continued to invest in its parks and play areas funded by Section 106 Agreements from property developers' financial contributions, for example Shore Road (Hesketh Bank), Mossy Lea (Wrightington) and Westhead playing fields. This is in addition to specific capital funding used for Coronation Park (Ormskirk) and Richmond Park (Burscough) play areas.
- **Customer Services –** improved customer service was the motivation behind investment in our new website and additional staffing in the contact centre. We now have a rise in online payments of nearly a third compared to the same period last year and an increased focus on the quality and outcomes from customer contact via telephone.
- **Local Plan –** significant development in the borough has been progressed as a result of the Local Plan, including the adoption of development briefs for Grove Farm (Ormskirk) and Firswood (Skelmersdale) and the Yew Tree Farm (Burscough) Master Plan is nearing completion.
- **Social Housing –** the HRA £65 million investment programme to improve our housing stock continued to make good progress and the Firbeck estate regeneration has been boosted by obtaining approval from the government to borrow an additional £2.5m that will deliver 39 new properties.
- **Investment in town centres –** our main town centres continue to be improved and developed. The ongoing Skelmersdale town centre regeneration project saw two planning applications received for competing developments. One has been approved and the other is under consideration. In Ormskirk, using an Environmental Town & Village Centre Improvement Fund, new low-energy Christmas lights were put up and the town centre car parks (Hants Lane, The Styles, Market Way) were resurfaced in early 2015, and revised pay and display arrangements applied that recognise changing shopping habits.

- **Economic Development & Regeneration –** locally, our 'Greenshoots' programme to update and enhance industrial estates by providing modern accommodation is well underway. West Lancashire Investment Centre (Skelmersdale) has also seen an upturn in occupancy levels and is now fully let and a clear indication of the recovery. Further afield, the potential for new growth opportunities has been assisted through our joining of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority as an Associate Member. In addition, we are now engaged in initial cross-county discussions for a combined authority for Lancashire.

Many of these projects are part of the Business Plan and these and other activities will be further detailed in our 2014/15 Annual Report.

Recent past performance puts us in a strong position but further reductions in government funding over the forthcoming years will create significant financial challenges. The Council will keep working with residents, partners and businesses to ensure that we continue to provide affordable, sustainable services that meet the needs of West Lancashire.

MANAGING DIRECTORS' REPORT

The Business Plan 2015-18 outlines our positive approach to managing the Council and its services within the context of continued funding cuts and public sector spending restraint.

The local government finance settlement, announced in December 2014 confirmed that there will be no further funding reductions for Councils in 2015/16 on top of those already announced. However, those already announced mean that significant net cost reductions will have to be found in order to balance the Council's General Revenue Account going forward.

There is a more positive picture with the Housing Revenue Account, which specifically funds the housing landlord activities of our organisation and contributes to our overall corporate priorities

This Business Plan therefore sets out the key areas of work to deliver the Council's priorities within a balanced budget, including through improving efficiency, reducing costs and generating income. This ensures resources are focused on our priorities whilst limiting the impact of reduced budgets on services.

We have also been able to embark on a carefully considered and ambitious programme of investment in the housing stock which is driven by the vision "to be a top performing landlord within an economically vibrant West Lancashire."

The plan works towards a target for GRA budgetary savings of £x** or £%** for 2015-18. Our well-embedded and successful Major Service Review programme has proved an effective vehicle for delivering savings and efficiencies and identifying income opportunities and we will continue to use it. Clearly, as the financial squeeze continues, we will continue to review and re-assess our own approach as well as learning from best practice and innovation championed by other organisations. Having been proactive in looking for budget options with minimal impact on service levels for the past four years, these are now increasingly difficult to find. Traditional expectations of service provision will be challenged and some tough and potentially unpopular decisions will need to be made.

Our priority of sustainable regeneration and growth assists in ensuring that West Lancashire's economy continues to perform well in comparison to others, bringing jobs and income to the area. Work to deliver the regeneration of Skelmersdale Town Centre features highly, and we continue to promote West Lancashire within the wider region. We are corporate members of the Liverpool Local Enterprise Partnership, which has enabled key sites such as the G-Park sites in Skelmersdale to be promoted as part of the Liverpool Superport initiative, and also sit within the remit of the Lancashire LEP. We have joined the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority on an associate/non-voting basis and have also been proactive in discussions in relation to a Lancashire Combined Authority. This involvement is reflected within the Business Plan, where one of our priority actions is a focus on influencing the regional agenda in the

interests of the borough. This activity will support the delivery of our Economic Development Strategy.

A number of key projects are directed towards our priority of caring for our borough, including two which will significantly improve the look of one of West Lancashire's main town centres, Ormskirk, through the Moor Street scheme and in respect of the early proposals surrounding the bus station developments. The production of, and consultation on, Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy is also key. The ongoing work for the Skelmersdale Vision is one of the main drivers behind this priority within Skelmersdale.

As Managing Directors, we want to foster a culture that enables staff to work to and develop their strengths, and which ensures that staff are involved and informed about the context in which we are working. This includes the Council's priorities and being open about any changes that will impact on them. Our series of meetings with staff across all service areas, partners, local businesses and stakeholders within the borough, and neighbouring Chief Executives have all been invaluable in guaging opinion about the Council from inside and out. With this insight, and by promoting our '*One Council – Team West Lancs'* message and our values, we hope to better meet the needs of those who work with us.

We would like to thank staff for their fantastic efforts over the past year. National issues continue to impact on our work, but locally staff continue to get on with the job and deliver the services that make us a Council to be proud of.

Managing Directors

Kim Webber **Gill Rowe**

VISION, VALUES AND PRIORITIES

The Council's vision is:

To be a Council to be proud of – delivering services that are lean, local and fair.

The Council's values are:

We will deliver our vision by continuing to be an innovative organisation which:

- prioritises customers and the services that are most important to quality of life;
- works as 'one council' to provide a joined up approach;
- is open and accountable in the way that it makes decisions;
- develops and values employees;
- promotes equality and diversity; and
- works in partnership to benefit the borough.

Our values underpin the way in which we will deliver our priorities and achieve our vision.

Our Corporate Priorities are:

- balancing the budget and providing the best possible services within the resources available;
- focussing upon sustainable regeneration and growth within the borough;
- caring for our borough by delivering the small improvements that can make a big difference.

(We will minimise uncertainty for staff and stakeholders by continuing to implement a managed approach to change and explore innovation as a means to secure further value for money.)

Our services will continue to prioritise the following, subject to affordability:

- Protect and improve the environment and keep our streets clean and tidy;
- Combat crime and the fear of crime;
- Work to create opportunities for and retain good quality jobs in particular for local people;
- To be a top performing landlord;
- Improve housing and deliver housing that meets the needs of local people, including affordable housing; and
- Provide opportunities for leisure and culture that together with other Council services contribute to healthier communities.

FINANCIAL POSITION

General Revenue Account (GRA)

*[*Borough Treasurer to provide text following Council on 25 February*]*

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

*[*Borough Treasurer to provide text following Council on 25 February*]*

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

The Council's senior management team provides consistent management stability. We continue to consider the appropriateness of staffing structures within services, in particular during Organisational Reviews.

Organisational structures are illustrated on the following pages.

CABINET MEMBERS & PORTFOLIOS

Leader of the Council
Councillor David Westley

Chairman of the Cabinet; community leadership; partnership working; major policy issue not specified within other portfolios; matters of urgency; corporate/business planning; legal & democratic services; press & media strategy; One West Lancs; corporate procurement; Freedom of Information. Liaison for: LGA; DCN; other Lancashire & neighbouring authorities; Parish Councils; town twinning; Lancashire & Liverpool LEPs; Marketing Lancashire. Regeneration: external funding & inward investment; authority & borough marketing; business grants & training advice; corporate & commercial property portfolio; asset management; valuation advice; rating appeals co-ordination.

Deputy Leader & Street Scene
Councillor Paul Greenall

Transport: fleet/ garage/depot facilities; street cleansing; grounds maintenance; stores. Waste disposal & recycling: waste management, including through partnership; domestic & trade refuse; green waste & recyclables collection; farm round.

Planning & Development
Councillor Martin Forshaw

Planning policy; Local Development Framework; development control; building control & enforcement; Skelmersdale Vision; conservation of built & natural environment; arboricultural & landscape services; conservation areas, tree preservation, landscape improvements; council- owned unadopted footways, highways & grit bins; liaison with utility companies/Highway Authority for highway works & transportation issues; off-street public car parking & enforcement; Ormskirk market & bus station; land drainage & coastal engineering; 'green' & sustainability issues including Council activities.

Housing & Transformation
Councillor Jane Houlgrave

Public sector housing: repairs & maintenance; housing allocations; tenancy management; former tenant arrears; sheltered housing & tenant empowerment/participation. Housing strategy: housing advice service; Supporting People Initiative. Links with social services, health providers and regulatory bodies. Housing finance including self-financing business plan. Transformation: customer relations; consultation & community engagement; corporate & strategic HR; ICT and revenues & benefits services, including LCC/BTLS contract.

Health, Leisure & Community Safety
Councillor David Sudworth

Health & safety and food safety. Licensing taxis, public entertainment/alcohol, charities etc. Dog & pest control; animal welfare. Pollution control; nuisance complaints; environmental monitoring & sampling. Foul drainage & private sewers; flytipping; unsanitary premises; disposal of the dead; emergency planning & business continuity. Community Safety. Leisure Trust & Serco contracts. Playgrounds; arts development, Chapel Gallery. Outdoor recreation; health improvement; facilities and services in partnership to develop local communities. Countryside service; formal parks, open spaces, rights of way, environmental improvements. Private sector housing: renovation & disabled facilities grants; home energy efficiency; home care link; homelessness; unfit homes. Children's Services; Social Cohesion; Voluntary Sector Grants.

Resources
Councillor David Whittington

Accounting services; capital and revenue estimates and budgeting; annual statement of accounts; treasury management; internal audit; risk management & insurance; data quality; value for money; major service reviews; organisational re-engineering; performance management.

Town & Village Centres
Councillor David Griffiths

Development of market town and village centre strategies and promotion of these centres.

SENIOR OFFICER MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Managing Director (People & Places)

Gill Rowe

Managing Director (Transformation)

Kim Webber

Community Services

Dave Tilleray
Assistant Director Community Services

- Leisure, Arts & Culture Services
- Environmental Protection
- Public Protection & Licensing
- Commercial Safety
- Corporate Health & Safety
- Community Safety
- Emergency Planning
- Technical Services
- Ormskirk Market
- Off Street Parking
- Private Sector Housing & Homelessness
- Home Care Link

Street Scene

Graham Concannon
Assistant Director Street Scene

- Transport
- Street Cleaning
- Grounds Maintenance
- Refuse & Recyclables Collection
- Robert Hodge Centre

Planning Services

John Harrison
Assistant Director Planning

- Planning Support
- Planning Policy
- Development Management
- Planning Enforcement
- Building Control
- Heritage & Conservation
- Trees & Landscaping
- Environmental Strategy
- Street Name & Numbering

Housing & Regeneration

Bob Livermore
Assistant Director Housing & Regeneration

- Public Sector Housing
- Housing Options
- Property Management
- Housing Strategy
- Regeneration & Implementation
- Economic Development
- Tourism
- Estates & Valuation
- Asset Management
- External Funding
- Funded Programmes
- Investment Centre

Corporate Services

Terry Broderick
Borough Solicitor

- Legal Services
- Land Charges
- Procurement
- Member Services
- Civic Services
- Member Development
- Admin & Elections

Marc Taylor
Borough Treasurer

- Accountancy
- Treasury Management
- Audit
- Insurance
- Risk Management

Shaun Walsh
Transformation Manager

- Communication & Consultation
- Customer Services
- Corporate change projects
- Human Resources
- Partnership & Performance
- Payroll Client
- ICT Client
- Revenues & Benefits Client

CORE FUNCTIONS

West Lancashire is served by a County Council, Borough Council, 20 Parish Councils and one Parish Meeting.

Main services provided by Lancashire County Council (LCC)

LCC is responsible for providing many of the services in the borough. Around 73% of the council tax collected in West Lancashire is spent on services that the County Council delivers.

Children and Young People

Incorporates the County Council's statutory role as a Children's Services Authority with a duty to promote co-operation and wellbeing of children and young people; make arrangements to safeguard and promote welfare; and prepare and publish a strategic plan setting out how services for children and young people will be provided.

The functions also include the County Council's powers and duties in relation to schools, including: access and school transport; school improvement and tackling failure; special educational needs; school attendance; educating excluded pupils and pupil welfare.

Adult Services, Health and Wellbeing

Responsible for assessing the needs of vulnerable adults and their carers and securing the provision of social care services to meet these needs in line with the County Council's criteria. Also responsible for public health, adult learning, county libraries, arts development, county museums, record office, welfare rights, coroners' and registrars' services.

Environment

Responsible for the County Council's duties and policies as Highway Authority and Planning Authority; for waste disposal, sustainable development, tourism, countryside services and the Lancashire Highways Service including highway maintenance services to the County Council and providing a grounds maintenance service to County Council property. Also responsible for the Trading Standards Service and the County Analyst's Laboratory.

Lancashire County Commercial Group

Responsible for servicing County Council and other public service vehicles; cleaning County Council buildings; providing a catering service; providing a school crossing patrol service and providing a range of residential care services in County Council homes for the elderly, together with day care and home care services.

Main services provided by West Lancashire Borough Council

Around 12% of the council tax collected in West Lancashire is spent on services delivered by the Borough Council.

The Council also provides some services on behalf of LCC. These arrangements have been put in place in areas where devolving management and resources locally can provide a more efficient service, for example the Public Realm partnership with LCC whereby we deliver verge cutting and hedge trimming within our borough.

Planning Services
Responsible for all planning applications, building regulations and enforcement, as well as conservation, heritage, tree protection, planning policy and street name and numbering.

Housing & Regeneration
Responsible for providing social and affordable housing, and providing housing advice services. The service manages its housing stock, the Council property portfolio and a large commercial portfolio. In addition, the function also undertakes the principle work of the Council in relation to creating jobs and bringing investment into the borough.

Community Services
Responsible for environmental health (including dog and pest control, food safety, health promotion, health and safety, public health and pollution control); Community safety (including CCTV) and funding contributions for Police Community Support Officers; flood defences, shoreline management and methane monitoring; public protection and licensing; private sector housing and homelessness; Ormskirk market and off-street parking.

Also responsible for country parks, the ranger service, sports pitches, playgrounds, parks and Chapel Gallery. Our pools and sports centres are run by West Lancashire Community Leisure Trust.

Street Scene
Responsible for the collection of waste and recycling from homes and cleaning all streets except the major highways. Also responsible for grass cutting and grounds maintenance (of open spaces, parks and roadside verges).

Revenues & Benefits
West Lancashire Borough Council collects council tax and business rates that is spent by the Borough Council, LCC, the Police and Fire Authority and Parish Councils. BT Lancashire Services (BTLS) manages the collection on behalf of the Council. In addition, housing benefits and council tax benefits are also managed by BTLS on behalf of the Council.

Main services provided by Parish Councils

West Lancashire has 20 Parish Councils and one parish meeting. These cover the entire borough except for Ormskirk and Skelmersdale. Parish Councils are financed by raising a small council tax on all residential properties within a parish.

Parish Councils are a key tier of local government and provide a way of making sure services meet the needs of residents by influencing decisions that affect local people.

Parish Councils' powers include: the provision of facilities (such as allotments, leisure, bus shelters, litter bins, car parks, community centres, parks and open spaces); representation (e.g. planning applications); and wellbeing (to spend on any activity which adds to the wellbeing of its community).

West Lancashire Borough Council and (signatory) Parish Councils have an established Charter setting out how the Borough and Parish Councils will work together, whilst balancing the needs of the wider West Lancashire community and recognising our respective responsibilities as autonomous, democratically elected, statutory bodies.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Workstreams

Actions within the Business Plan are aligned directly to the Council's priorities. This provides a clear focus on key strategic aims and therefore a framework for the delivery of our vision. Projects from the previous Business Plan that have concluded or will not be monitored as part of the 2015-18 Plan will be detailed in the Annual Report. Outlines of the actions for the forthcoming year are given below.

Balancing the budget and providing the best possible services within the resources available

Actions 2015/16

- Major Service Reviews
- Organisational Re-engineering (Housing Implementation)
- Housing Asset Management Plan
- Welfare Reform
- Sheltered Housing Offer
- Corporate & Commercial Property Appraisal

Our successful ***Major Service Review Programme*** (MSR) examines every aspect of the Council's business to develop options for alternative forms of service delivery. It includes streamlining services and prioritising their affordability and desirability. MSR has been our key tool for delivering savings and efficiencies in recent years. Four years of applying the process has achieved cumulative savings of £xxxx**. It is however increasingly difficult to identify options that offer the level of savings needed without impacting upon service delivery. Having achieved savings through a

base budget review for all services during 2014/15, consultation on a range of MSR options will be carried out during 2015/16.

Reviewing services has also helped inform our ***Organisational Re-engineering (OR)*** programme. Action has been targeted at the parts of our organisation where outcomes can deliver savings through efficiencies, whilst also considering improving service delivery and customer accessibility. During the year, work around Property Services Day-to-day Repairs Maintenance and Voids Maintenance will be concluded and recommendations made.

The ***Housing Asset Management Plan*** is a five-year investment scheme to modernise and enhance the Council's housing stock and ensure its long-term sustainability. In addition to prioritised improvement works such as for kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, windows and doors, the first revival scheme (see *Firbeck Revival*) is well underway and a second revival scheme Beechtrees (Digmoor, Skelmersdale) will be progressed during the third year of the plan.

The main focus of ***Welfare Reform*** work within the Council remains the introduction of Universal Credit (UC). Together with partners, a UC Task Group is working to minimise the impact of UC on affected households within West Lancashire. The first claimant group was introduced in the borough in September 2014 and the timeline for further groups is to be confirmed by the government in due course as part of its national roll out programme. The impact of welfare reforms specifically on Council tenants (and therefore Council income) has been mitigated directly by the Council in a number of ways, for example through dedicated assistance for those who have not previously paid rent or for those who may benefit from re-housing following the introduction of the social sector size criteria. Personal Budgeting Support is also available. During 2015/16, the Council will continue to be an active part of the UC Task Group. We will also implement a Financial Inclusion Strategy that provides a framework of services to assist the financially excluded make the most of their money and access appropriate financial products and services.

A significant reduction in grant from Lancashire County Council of almost £200K from April 2015 meant that a review of WLBCs ***Sheltered Housing Service Offer*** had to be undertaken. Residents will be consulted further on a range of proposals for service reconfiguration. A number of options are being explored to assist the process of balancing the budget initially from April 2015 and then again from April 2017, since LCC are considering ceasing the grant to Sheltered Housing entirely from 2017/18.

A ***Corporate & Commercial Property Appraisal*** will review the daily operational expenses of the Council's corporate properties to establish utility and maintenance expenditure. This exercise will identify where savings may be made to reduce running costs for example through the introduction of energy saving measures and possible alterations or improvements to the fabric of the building. The functionality of the buildings will also be considered along with the potential of alternative working practices, such as home working, mobile working and 'hot desking', which could relieve pressure on these resources and free areas for other uses.

In addition to the projects outlined above, the partnership with LCC/BT Lancashire Services which includes ICT Services means that significant upgrades to the Council's ICT infrastructure continue to be implemented as well as service efficiencies and improvements. Both the customer and the organisation will benefit from our work towards channel migration which facilitates being able to 'do it online'. Expanding our digital service offer where appropriate for transactions/processes extends service availability, reduces costs through reducing direct contacts and meets customer expectations for modern service delivery.

Focussing upon sustainable regeneration and growth within the borough

Actions 2015/16

- Skelmersdale Vision
- Firbeck Revival
- Land Marketing & Sale
- Economic Development Strategy & Delivery
- Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy & Delivery
- Infrastructure Delivery – Rail
- Influencing the Regional Agenda

Skelmersdale Vision seeks to secure regeneration in the form of new commercial, leisure and residential development alongside existing property and environmental enhancements across a large area of land within and surrounding Skelmersdale town centre. The project is being implemented in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency, LCC and St Modwen.

The project has so far facilitated the delivery of the West Lancashire College campus; the LCC Youth Zone and stimulated commercial interest in Skelmersdale resulting in the submission of competing planning applications for leisure development incorporating the provision of a cinema and associated food outlets. During the year ahead we will be seeking to secure the sale of one or more residential sites located adjacent to the town centre; to facilitate the delivery within the town centre of a cinema (with associated food outlets/restaurants/bars); to enhance the retail offer; and to improve the public realm leading to the western entrance of the Concourse.

Firbeck Revival is an £8m initiative to revitalise and enhance the Firbeck estate (Skelmersdale) through a phased scheme. The scheme broadly covers home improvements to Council properties (kitchens, bathrooms, windows, doors, roofs and external wall insulation), and external improvements to privately owned properties (new roofs and external wall insulation, and new windows/doors if not already done); demolition of flats (excluding Firbeck Court) as well as property construction and redevelopment of the street scene. The original £5.5m scheme was expanded in 2014 through additional borrowing of £2.5m which allows further new properties to be developed in 2015/16.

A two-year pilot project involving the Homes & Communities Agency and the Council tested the land disposal elements of a proposed national Community Land Auction model. The pilot saw development sites being brought forward to meet the objectives of the Local Plan. It is anticipated that ***Land Marketing and Sale*** of at least part of the land will take place in 2015, with remaining sites being sold over several years.

Implementing the ***Economic Development Strategy*** will deliver further economic growth and prosperity to the borough through key activities delivered by the Council and our partners. The key issue of skills gaps will be addressed by working with partners to improve the skills and development opportunities of local people thereby helping to sustain employment and support the growth of our businesses. The strategy's fourteen 'key asks' will enable the Council and partners to respond to funding opportunities to support the development and implementation of regeneration projects. The action plan will deliver short, medium and long-term actions to drive forward further economic growth in the borough.

The ***Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy*** provides a clear, strategic direction and initiatives to ensure the long term economic and social viability of the town. The strategy will result in a strong vision and identity for the town, developed and delivered through stakeholders and partners. Short, medium and long-term goals are defined for key actions around brand, marketing and town centre management, building & place, vacancy levels, the market, car parks, transport & access and the night-time/evening economy.

Infrastructure Delivery focuses on assisting improvements in rail transport. Although not a statutory function, the Council engages with partners on a range of transport-related projects to improve the infrastructure of the local area through contributing to the content of plans and projects as appropriate, advising partners, facilitating local consultations and raising awareness in the local community.

The Skelmersdale rail link is included in LCC's West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan and WLBC's Local Plan, and so is a key infrastructure project to unlock economic growth in Skelmersdale. During 2015/16, subject to the feasibility and value for money of the outline proposal, the GRIP 2[2] Study and Outline Strategic Business Case will be finalised, enabling progress to the GRIP 3 stage and Full Strategic Business Case.

Through developing links with regional bodies, we aim to promote the key strategic projects for West Lancashire so that they receive appropriate recognition and ***influence the regional agenda***. The Council became a Corporate Member of the Liverpool Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in April 2014, which has assisted marketing sites in West Lancashire and positioning the borough to benefit from the Liverpool Superport and wider regional agenda. We also engage on sub-regional economic matters with LCC and through them with the Lancashire LEP. Our Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Associate Member status provides opportunities to

[2] Governance for Railway Investment Projects – process carried out by Network Rail

liaise on sub-regional matters and to be involved in appropriate working groups. We will also consider engaging with the Greater Manchester LEP as appropriate, possibly through our links with Wigan Borough Council.

A significant contribution to this priority is delivered by the Planning Service. The Service is responsible for the Local Plan which influences the future growth and development of the borough by ensuring that new homes, jobs and services are located in the most sustainable places and also provides the framework for delivering the necessary infrastructure, facilities and other development to make this possible.

Caring for our Borough
by delivering the small improvements that can make a big difference

Actions 2015/16

- Moor Street (Ormskirk)
- Ormskirk Bus Station Development
- Leisure Strategy & Development
- CCTV Scheme Completion

In partnership with LCC, a major £700,000 project is set to improve Ormskirk's ***Moor Street*** to make the area a more attractive place to visit, shop and do business, thereby helping improve the vitality of the town centre. The new layout will see the street re-paved and re-designed to accommodate market stalls in a new arrangement as well as identifying a small square for events. As part of the scheme new seats, street lights, litter bins and tree planting are being installed, drainage improved and traffic restrictions strengthened.

Working in partnership with LCC in relation to ***Ormskirk bus station***, the best use of LCC funding will be made to provide an improved bus station facility. It is hoped that the refurbishment will enhance the appearance of the town centre as well as benefitting the passenger experience.

A strategic review of leisure provision was carried out considering the needs of the borough, local planning developments, facility planning/replacement, the economics/affordability of service provision and the changing population profile. The resulting ***Leisure Strategy*** will cover the period to 2025 and will inform the future of leisure and cultural services by providing direction in the short, medium and long-term.

The Council has operated public open space CCTV cameras for over a decade and there are currently 84 public open space cameras across the borough. Monitoring takes place 24/7 and plays a vital role in helping prevent crime and disorder and increasing public safety. Council funding was approved for a further seven cameras in 2014 for completion of the ***CCTV Scheme***, with two each in Tarleton, Scarisbrick

and DownHolland and one in Burscough. These are due to become operational by late autumn 2015.

In addition to the projects above, our borough's cared for appearance is principally down to the operations of our Street Scene service. Around 800 incidents of flytipping, 800 litter bins and 250 dog waste bins, collection of waste and recycling from over 48,000 properties, cleansing of 3 million metres of roadway and 3.5 million square metres of hard landscaping, grass cutting, weed spraying and tree maintenance are dealt with each year. We are also making a difference with many new or enhancements of existing play areas funded by s106 monies.

BUDGET STRATEGY

*[*Borough Treasurer to provide text following Council on 25 February*]*

A graphical representation of the budget strategy is shown below.

*[*Borough Treasurer to provide figures for graph*]*

RESOURCE BUDGETING AND STAFFING

The Council's 2014/15 income was made up as follows:

*[**pie chart of income 2014/15 - Borough Treasurer to provide figures.]*

In 2014/15, the budget was spent as follows:

*[**pie chart of expenditure 2014/15 - Borough Treasurer to provide figures.]*

STAFFING

The Council values its employees and provides a supplement to lower paid staff so that they are paid the equivalent of the Living Wage. We are committed to ensuring that staffing levels (currently around 460 FTEs, not including staff managed through our secondment agreement with LCC/BTLS) are appropriate for delivering services to agreed standards. In the current financial climate it is anticipated that the workforce will continue to reduce in size during the Business Plan period and beyond.

To manage staffing levels effectively and sensitively, the Council will continue to monitor the use of recruitment appropriately. This will ensure there is an adequate balance between maintaining an effective workforce supply and preserving potential redeployment opportunities for staff that may be displaced, through the judicious use of temporary recruitment to co-ordinate with the requirements of the MSR process. The Council will continue to seek to minimise compulsory redundancies as far as possible and arrive at change through voluntary measures wherever feasible.

Graduate Recruitment is encouraged wherever possible within service areas. Additional work is being carried out to facilitate work experience placements for University and College students and from Job Centre Plus. To complement the work undertaken by the Regeneration Service in the West Lancashire Challenge project, work is also taking place on the implementation of an apprenticeship scheme.

CONSULTATION AND EQUALITIES

The Council has a duty to consult and involve representatives of local persons and others where appropriate in the exercise of its functions. A new Consultation and Engagement Protocol has recently been developed for staff.

We recognise that people who provide and use our services come from diverse backgrounds and have different experiences and needs. We value this diversity and the ways in which it contributes to the richness of life and character of our community.

We develop, commission and deliver services in a way that will help to overcome discrimination and disadvantage. We want every resident and visitor to West Lancashire to be treated fairly and with dignity regardless of age, gender, disability, race, belief and sexual orientation and with respect to their marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or gender reassignment status. We will use our position and influence to promote equality in all aspects of community life. Further information around our work on equality, including monitoring our progress in addressing discrimination and disadvantage in our borough, can be found on our website.

MONITORING OF ACTIVITIES

Business Plan Monitoring

Performance and progress against the 2015-18 Business Plan will be reported annually to the Council and the public in the form of an Annual Report. In addition, Members receive regular reports regarding progress against the actions. A Head of Service is identified as the 'lead officer' for each of the actions. Lead officers regularly monitor progress and performance against their projects, and report any issues to the Senior Management Team by exception. The plan will be reviewed annually.

Risk Management

Risks around health and safety are proactively managed on a 'plan, do, check' approach and progress against a strategic plan for improvements is regularly provided to Members. The actions of the Business Plan will be entered onto service risk registers as appropriate. Those actions with high risk and high impact for the Council will be included in the Key Risk Register, which is reported to Cabinet and available for call-in through the Overview and Scrutiny process.

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you require any further information, or copies of this document in an alternative format, please contact:

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