



DRAFT

**Council Plan
2016-18**

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Financial Position	3
Organisational Overview.....	4
Summary Plan.....	7
Delivering the Plan.....	8
Monitoring Progress.....	12

Introduction

Leader of the Council's Comment

We are ambitious for West Lancashire. Our vision for the borough establishes a clear set of priorities and key projects for making a positive impact. Our priorities have breadth, considering economic, environmental and social factors. They are also realistic given that they recognise the essential expertise and input from both public and private sector partners for their successful delivery. Positive outcomes will be achieved most efficiently by working in partnership towards shared objectives in a leading or supporting role.

In providing a focus for the authority we are able to effectively target resources. This is becoming ever more critical given the unprecedented changes to local government finance. Phasing out of grants and increasing reliance on local funding sources has put financial pressures on council services as never before. To maintain and improve performance in some priority areas, a range of new ways of working and options for income must come from our innovative and commercially-minded approach to services. We need sufficient scope to enable us to structure operations and provide sustainable essential services that meet modern demands whilst limiting service reductions.

Alongside this, we have significant challenges ahead such as lobbying hard for the Environment Agency to continue to meet its obligations around Alt Crossens and managing the changes to Housing Revenue Account, but we also see great opportunities for the borough, since we are well-placed to take advantage of the exciting developments of the Northern Powerhouse and Liverpool Superport. By working in particular with other Lancashire councils, and also with neighbouring authorities in the Liverpool and Manchester City Regions, we will deliver economic growth for the borough and ensure that we continue to perform well against comparator areas.

West Lancashire has much to celebrate and we are optimistic and ambitious for the future. We will continue to listen to communities and stakeholders' views and maximise the opportunities for people to engage with us for example by extending our use of social media and digital technology. Our priorities are relevant to the whole of the borough and we aim to get results and make a difference for all – our businesses, our places and our people.



Councillor Ian Moran
Leader of **West Lancashire Borough Council**

Chief Executive's View

The Council underwent significant political and organisational change in 2015/16, with a new Cabinet in place from May 2015. The Council Plan 2015-18, establishing a new set of priorities for the Council, was agreed in October 2015. Also in October, Council agreed the voluntary redundancy of the Managing Director (People and Places), to achieve savings and to enable a new management structure to be put in place to deliver the new priorities.

A new senior management structure was agreed by Council in February 2016, replacing the Joint Managing Director approach with a Chief Executive model. The officer team has been restructured into four new directorates of:

- Leisure and Wellbeing Services
- Housing and Inclusion Services (incorporating Transformation Services)
- Development and Regeneration Services
- Street Scene Services.

These directorates are supported by standalone Legal & Democratic, and Finance & Human Resources Services.

We have made good progress during 2015/16 on our priority projects and will continue to build on this throughout 2016-18. The new senior management structure will provide the impetus to drive forward the Council's top priorities: Ambitious for our Economy, our Environment and for Health and Wellbeing. It will continue to underpin delivery of existing strategies including the Economic Development Strategy, Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy, Local Plan, Skelmersdale Vision and Housing Business Plan, whilst supporting the delivery of our new Digital by Preference initiative, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Street Scene Strategy.

Balancing the budget remains a chief consideration. The government have indicated that it will no longer provide revenue support grant by 2020, and that Councils will need to raise all their income locally. Our Policy Options approach will therefore be critical going forward and we will continue to invite the public to consider and comment on the implications. Members then have the opportunity to take the public's views into consideration when making what will be increasingly difficult decisions.

We will continue to look outside the authority for opportunities to work with others, on service delivery and strategically we will ensure that West Lancashire is fully represented in the emerging Lancashire Combined Authority developments, whilst continuing to play an active role as an Associate member in the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

As Chief Executive, my focus will be on providing strategic and corporate senior management leadership to staff within the Council, working with the Directors and staff, Councillors and partners to deliver the Council's vision and objectives.

A joined up 'One Council' culture will continue to be central to this, as will the involvement and development of staff – our key resource. I look forward to working with Members, staff and partners to deliver this plan.



Kim Webber
Chief Executive

Financial Position

The Council has a good record of effective financial management and currently has a healthy financial position. Our latest report from our external auditors identifies that:

“The Council continues to demonstrate good financial performance, despite the financial and demographic pressures facing Local Government. There are good financial planning and review processes in place, and a track record of delivering financial plans and savings.”

“The Executive and Senior Management demonstrate clear leadership and challenge to prioritise the Council’s resources. The Council continues to work well with partners across Local Government to prioritise resources effectively and deliver efficiencies”

This strong financial position can be demonstrated by the fact that:

- The latest budget projections show that we are on course to meet the financial targets for 2015/16 and that the year end accounts will show a favourable budget variance
- There is a detailed programme of efficiencies, income, savings and other measures in place for 2016/17 to deliver the £1.7m required to balance up the budget for the General Revenue Account and the £1.4m required for the Housing Revenue Account

There are a number of developments and initiatives that are currently taking place that demonstrate our innovative and commercially minded approach to services including:

- Creating a Lancashire Business Rates Pool with other local authorities in Lancashire to maximise the business rates income we are able to retain instead of paying it over to Central Government
- Investment of £1.9m in solar PV which will reduce Council House tenants’ electricity bills, address green issues, and generate a financial return for the Council
- Creating a new Strategic Assets Purchase Fund and Committee, which will enable the Council to purchase land and property with an individual value of up to £1m in a short timescale subject to there being a satisfactory business case
- Investment of £1.7m in the Greenshoots project to provide 11 high quality industrial units on Gorsey Place in Skelmersdale
- Creation of a new £2.3m Strategic Investment Reserve that can be used to finance Economic Regeneration Initiatives and the implementation of the Council’s Leisure Strategy

Looking to the future the financial prospects for the General Revenue Account continue to be challenging with additional reductions in government grant funding anticipated up to 2020. Similarly the financial prospects for the Housing Revenue Account will also be more difficult going forward, primarily as a result of a government requirement to reduce rents by 1% per year over a 4 year period, together with other elements of the Welfare Reform agenda.

Organisational Overview

West Lancashire is served by a Borough Council, County Council, 20 Parish Councils and one Parish Meeting. As a Borough Council, working in partnership with these organisations as well as the police, fire service, NHS, businesses, colleges, university and other stakeholders is vital for delivering lasting improvements for the benefit of the borough.

The Borough Council provides services for around 112,000 people or 48,500 households (including around 6,100 council homes) as well as businesses and organisations. Services are delivered by around 470 full time equivalent staff (not including employees managed through our secondment agreement with Lancashire County Council/BT Lancashire Services).

The organisation's success depends on our staff. We are committed to ensuring that staffing levels are appropriate for delivering services, and that the workforce is equipped to meet our commitments to the community and wider stakeholders, whilst fulfilling their own potential. The Human Resources Strategy and Workforce Plan agreed in July 2015 demonstrate the Council's commitment to aligning its workforce planning with corporate and financial planning cycles for greatest efficiency.

Council policy is determined by Councillors, with advice from officers. The Cabinet is the Executive Councillor body for the Council. The Cabinet and senior management structures and responsibilities are provided overleaf.

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET WITH PORTFOLIOS



Leader of the Council
Councillor Ian Moran

Chairman of the Cabinet; community leadership; partnership working including One West Lancs; major policy issues not specified within other portfolios; matters of urgency; liaison for management issues. Liaison for: LGA; DCN; other Lancashire & neighbouring authorities; Parish Councils; town twinning; Lancashire & Liverpool LEAs; Marketing Lancashire. Economic Regeneration: town centre developments; external funding & inward investment; borough marketing; business grants & training advice; corporate & commercial property portfolio; asset management; valuation advice; rating appeals. Legal & democratic services: corporate relations; Freedom of Information. Transformation: service design; customer relations; consultation & community engagement; press/media; Human Resources; equalities; corporate planning & performance; ICT and revenues & benefits services, including LCC/BTLS contract.



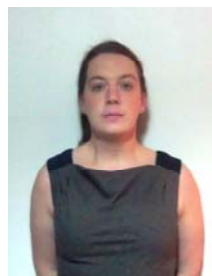
Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Leisure
Councillor Yvonne Gagen

Properties held and the services delivered for sports development, swimming pools, sports centres, arts development, the Chapel Gallery, playgrounds and community centres. Leisure Trust & Serco contracts. Countryside service; golf course, formal parks, open spaces, rights of way, environmental improvements. Outdoor recreation; facilities and services in partnership to develop local communities. Children's services; Voluntary sector grants.



Portfolio Holder for Planning
Councillor John Hodson

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



Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services
Councillor Jennifer Patterson

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.



Portfolio Holder for Health and Community Safety
Councillor Kevin Wright

Commercial Safety: health promotion, health & safety and food safety. Public Protection and Licensing: licensing for taxis, public entertainment/alcohol, charities etc; pest control and animal welfare. Environmental Protection: environmental monitoring & sampling; public health; pollution control; nuisance complaints; foul drainage & private sewers; flytipping; dog control; unsanitary premises; disposal of the dead; emergency planning/business continuity. Private Sector Housing: renovation & disabled facilities grants; home energy efficiency; Home Care Link; homelessness; unfit homes. Community safety. Social cohesion.



Portfolio Holder for Older People
Councillor Terry Aldridge

Older People's Champion encouraging and supporting active, independent and healthy lives. Raising the profile of and needs of older people; involving older people in the development of relevant council policies and service design; promoting positive images of older people as citizens; liaison with older peoples' networks and organisations.



Portfolio Holder for Street Scene
Councillor Kevin Wilkie

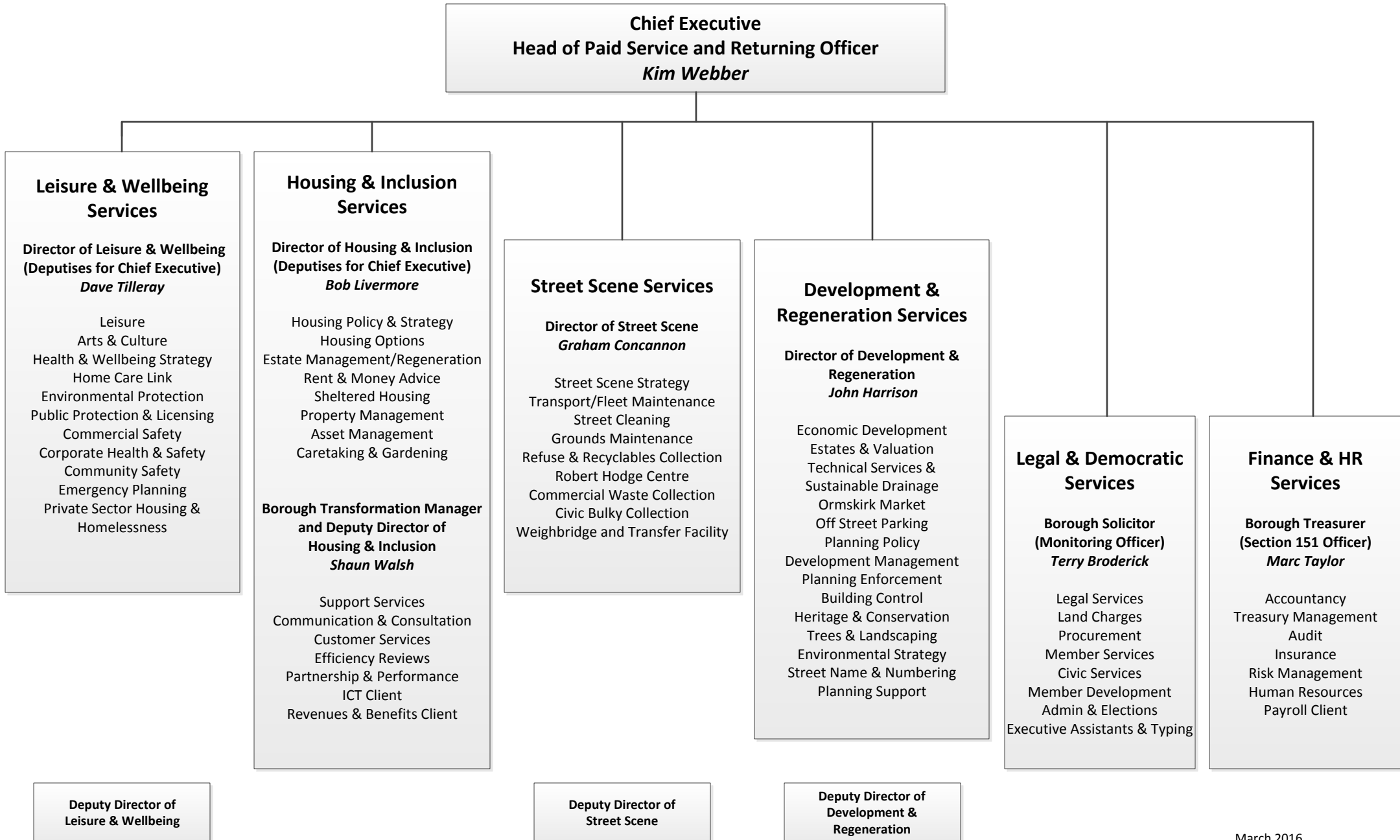
Transport: fleet/ garage/depot facilities; street cleansing; grounds maintenance; stores. Waste disposal & recycling duties as a waste collection authority; waste management, including through partnership; domestic & trade refuse; green waste & recyclables collection; farm round.



Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor Chris Wynn

Accounting services; capital and revenue estimates and budgeting; performance against budget; annual statement of accounts; treasury management; internal audit; risk management & insurance; data quality; value for money.

SENIOR OFFICER MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



Summary plan and projects 2016/17

Vision: To be a Council which is ambitious for West Lancashire

Values:

- Enterprising – being innovative and creative, delivering lasting improvements;
- Inclusive – working in partnership to benefit West Lancashire, and being open and involving in the way decisions are made
- Equality – promoting equality and reducing inequality
- One Council – adopting a co-ordinated approach
- Caring – valuing and developing employees

Priorities & Key Projects:

Ambitious for our Economy

Retain and grow jobs, increase skills levels and encourage business and wealth.

- Skelmersdale Vision
- Land Auction
- Economic Development Strategy & Delivery
- Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy & Delivery
- Partnership working for infrastructure delivery identified in West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan
- Combined Authority for Lancashire
- Engagement with Liverpool City Region
- Promoting the Borough as a place to be

Ambitious for our Environment

Enhance the built and physical environment, and its cleanliness.

- CCTV Scheme
- Estates Revival
- Community Safety Partnership Initiatives
- Housing Programme – Environmental Improvement
- Street Scene Priority Projects
- Street Scene Strategy Development

Ambitious for Health and Wellbeing

Improve the health and wellbeing of local communities

- Housing Capital Programme
- Sheltered Housing – Support for Older People
- Leisure Strategy & Delivery
- West Lancashire Health & Wellbeing Strategy Development
- Digital Inclusion Strategy & Delivery
- Tenants' Financial Inclusion Strategy & Delivery

West Lancashire – Ambitious for All - our businesses, our places, our people

Delivering the Plan

Working to agreed priorities provides a clear strategic direction for the organisation and allows resources to be targeted in the most effective and efficient way. Our plan allows us to co-ordinate financial and staffing requirements and helps us develop and monitor our activities. An annual refresh of the plan maintains its currency. Our key projects during 2016/17 will contribute towards achieving our priorities. Progress on the projects including the key measures and targets will be monitored and reported on during the year.

Priority: Ambitious for our Economy

Working with businesses and partners to provide land, premises, and finance for businesses, to match training opportunities to "skills needs", and improve transport. Measures and projects for 2016/17 include:

- Influencing overall employment rate and working age people on out of work benefits.

Skelmersdale Vision

Securing 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 scheme will bring forward an enhanced Skelmersdale town centre with improved night-time economy and attractive public realm.

- Progress scheme proposals following the outcome of judicial review.

Land Auction

The land disposal elements of a proposed national Community Land Auction model involving the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) and the Council brings development sites forward for sale. The scheme helps meet the objectives of the Local Plan and provide capital income for the Council.

- Market and sell sites at Whalleys (Skelmersdale) in conjunction with the HCA
- Use capital receipt from sale to invest in the Skelmersdale area
- Provide a supply of ready to build housing sites.

Economic Development Strategy & Delivery

A number of significant economic regeneration activities from the Council and partners will address employment opportunities, availability of housing, environmental improvements, raising skills and training levels, provide support for indigenous businesses and attract new investment. The strategy aim is to build a prosperous Borough with skilled and trained local residents to ensure that West Lancashire continues to be a great place to live, work, study and invest.

- Investigate the potential for a Skelmersdale Leadership Board
- Improve the knowledge and skills gap by developing initiatives in partnership with the Skills, Training and Employment Partnership
- Sign up at least 30 businesses to the new Let's talk Employment and Skills Charter.

Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy & Delivery

A progressive set of initiatives will ensure the long term economic and social viability of Ormskirk's town centre and improve its attractiveness as a visitor destination.

- Conduct market research to inform Ormskirk's brand
- Investigate and improve the appeal of the market
- Establish comprehensive car parking review.

Partnership Working for Infrastructure Delivery Identified in West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan

Influence and assist the progress of the infrastructure delivery identified in West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan through partnership working. This will support the delivery of improvements to transport infrastructure including around rail links and roads.

- Work with LCC to complete Skelmersdale Rail Station Location Options Appraisal
- Support LCC in relation to the work on Ormskirk Town Centre Movement Strategy.

Combined Authority for Lancashire and Engagement with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

The Council is continuing to maintain engagement with the established Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and involvement in the development of the Combined Authority for Lancashire. This will assist West Lancashire's profile and ambitions within the wider regional agenda.

- Decision on membership of Lancashire Combined Authority following consultation (subject to other councils' decisions)
- Play an active role as an Associate Member of Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
- Progress a joint strategic Housing and Employment Land Study with Liverpool City Region authorities.

Promoting the Borough as a Place to Be

Promote the positive picture of the borough's assets and capabilities so that West Lancashire is recognised as an improving place with aspirations. This will enhance West Lancashire's reputation as a place to live, a location to develop a business, a place to visit, a place to work and a place to study.

- Develop a brand / image for Skelmersdale
- Market rural visitor attractions and events as part of the West Lancashire offer
- Contribute to the development of a Lancashire brand.

Priority: Ambitious for our Environment

This means working with communities and partners to protect and improve our environment, keep our streets clean and tidy and combat crime and the fear of crime. Measures and projects for 2016/17 include:

- Helping residents to feel that West Lancashire is a safe and secure place to live
- Influencing the reduction in total crime incidents recorded
- Encouraging residents to feel safe in their local area during the day and after dark
- Maintaining performance for bin and fly tip collections and missed bins
- Working for residents satisfaction with household collections for domestic waste and recyclables and cleanliness of streets
- Influencing satisfaction with the local area as a place to live.

CCTV Scheme

The Council currently operates over 80 public open space cameras across the borough. Monitoring takes place 24/7 and plays a vital role in helping prevent disorder or crime, reduce the fear of crime, improve community confidence and maintain public safety.

- Bring 3 cameras into operation (Castlehey and Tanfields (Skelmersdale) and the Burscough Street area of Ormskirk)

Estates Revival

Revitalising and enhancing council estates and improving homes to provide a model for how other estates can be transformed and to maintain a modernised and sustainable housing stock.

- Complete build of 42 new properties (Firbeck)
- Regenerate Firbeck street scene
- Progress Beechtrees scheme (as appropriate following budget decision).

Community Safety Partnership Initiatives

In partnership, deliver initiatives that help ensure that West Lancashire remains a safe borough to live, work and visit.

- Continue to Chair the West Lancashire Community Safety Partnership
- Contribute to the annual BrightSparx and Freshers Week initiatives
- Collaborate on five Community Engagement events.

Housing Programme – Environmental Improvement

Engage with and involve tenants in various works to improve the built and natural environment.

- Advance tenant-led environmental improvement projects
- Progress schemes funded from the dedicated Environmental Improvement budget (as appropriate following budget decision).

Street Scene Priority Projects and Strategy

Improve the service to enable more responsive and sustainable operations that can enhance the appearance of the borough.

- Exploit real-time vehicle in-cab communication data to improve service
- Explore further mutual aid support packages for public realm work
- Develop a Street Scene Strategy for the Borough.

Priority: Health and Wellbeing

This means working with the West Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Partnership and other partners to provide opportunities including for leisure and culture which contribute to healthier communities. We will work to deliver housing that meets the needs of local people including affordable housing, and aim to be a top performing landlord. Measures and projects for 2016/17 include:

- Monitoring numbers of affordable housing and net homes provided
- Achieving rent collection levels of 97%
- Reducing non-decent council homes to 0.3%
- Achieving 97% of repairs within timescale
- Monitoring time taken to re-let homes (28 days general needs and 65 days supported needs)
- Encouraging the use of leisure & cultural facilities
- Promoting resident satisfaction with parks/open spaces and sport/leisure.

Housing Capital Programme

The Capital investment programme funds works on a variety of schemes to improve existing council homes and target investment in new housing stock.

- Continue to invest in improvements to our council housing stock as prioritised through resident involvement
- Seek direction from the Tenant Scrutiny and Landlord Services Committee to achieve the right balance between improvements to homes and services.

Sheltered Housing

Maintain the authority's sheltered housing service in light of significant grant and budget reductions and help reflect the needs and preferences of older people in Council business.

- Implement options report following review of Sheltered Services
- Encourage and support active, independent and healthy lives of older people.

Leisure Strategy Development and Delivery

Following a strategic review of the cultural and leisure service, the revised Leisure Strategy's key aims and actions provide direction for the service and will result in a quality and sustainable service offer. Cultural and other leisure activities are also supported through other schemes, for example the Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy.

- Implement the Leisure Strategy.

West Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Strategy Development

Implementing a strategy will allow us to align and target our resources to most effectively support the delivery of improvements in health and/or reduce health inequalities in the borough.

- Establish resources that enable the development and delivery of a West Lancashire Health & Wellbeing Strategy.
- Maintain the health promotion services in partnership with the public, private and voluntary sector to promote and improve health
- Encourage participation in Health Improvement Activities.

Digital Inclusion Strategy Delivery

The digital inclusion strategy is a key strand of our work to encourage use of digital technology and includes involvement with the wider *GO ON Lancashire* campaign. The strategy aims to increase online uptake and use within the borough including for Council services. Digital technology is considered in all our service developments and highlighted in other strategies, for example the Economic Development Strategy.

- Roll out Digital Inclusion action plan
- Define needs and attitudes of residents around their digital aspirations
- Embed Digital by Preference approach in service delivery
- Encourage use and access for digital council services.

Tenants' Financial Inclusion Strategy Delivery

The strategy provides a framework of services to assist the financially excluded access appropriate financial products and services. Financially excluded residents and tenants affected by welfare reforms are supported in retaining their home and quality of life and make the most of their money.

- Implement the strategy to enable assistance for residents and tenants affected by welfare reforms to adapt to the changes
- Encourage tenants to pay by direct debit.

Monitoring Progress

The plan projects are resourced and managed through budget and service action planning. They are monitored directly by the relevant service areas and through budget reports, service action plans, the corporate risk register, individual project reports to committees as required and working groups as appropriate. In addition, progress on the projects are reported to Members half-yearly and as an annual report. A set of performance indicators spanning various service areas are also reported quarterly to Members to help the authority understand how well it is performing.

Our priorities and resulting projects are informed by working closely with partners and through various consultation and stakeholder engagement activities. We recognise that people who provide and use our services come from diverse backgrounds and have different experiences and needs. We develop, commission and deliver services in a way that will help overcome discrimination and disadvantage.

As well as specific consultation for particular proposed projects, we have a continuous tenant involvement programme for housing developments and an annual citizen and stakeholder survey. The annual survey is used to gather views about Council spending, better understand the usage and opinions of Council services, gauge community safety perceptions, and receive views on the Council as a whole. Public opinion was directly sought to inform and finalise significant projects including: CCTV; Ormskirk Town Centre Strategy; Economic Development Strategy; Leisure Strategy and the Financial Inclusion Strategy. We also undertake a Meeting the Budget Challenge consultation to inform our approach to service reviews and balancing the budget.

West Lancashire Borough Council Plan 2016-18

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

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