



Jacqui Sinnott-Lacey  
Chief Operating Officer

52 Derby Street  
Ormskirk  
West Lancashire  
L39 2DF

18 March 2024

**TO: COUNCILLORS Y GAGEN, G DOWLING, C COUGHLAN, V CUMMINS,  
A FENNEL, N FUREY, R MOLLOY, N PRYCE-ROBERTS AND  
A YATES**

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in the **CABINET/COMMITTEE ROOM, 52 DERBY STREET, ORMSKIRK L39 2DF** on **TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2024** at **7.00 PM** at which your attendance is requested.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JS', written over a circular scribble.

Jacqui Sinnott-Lacey  
Chief Operating Officer

**AGENDA**  
**(Open to the Public)**

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** 7 - 8

If a member requires advice on Declarations of Interest, he/she is advised to contact the Legal & Democratic Services Manager in advance of the meeting. (For the assistance of members a checklist for use in considering their position on any particular item is included at the end of this agenda sheet.)

3. **PUBLIC SPEAKING** 9 - 14

Residents of West Lancashire, on giving notice, may address the meeting to make representations on any item on the agenda except where the public and press are to be excluded during consideration of the item. The deadline for submissions is 10.00am Friday ?? 2020.

#### **4. SPECIAL URGENCY (RULE 16 ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES)/URGENT BUSINESS**

If, by virtue of the date by which a decision must be taken, it has not been possible to follow Rule 15 (i.e. a matter which is likely to be the subject of a key decision has not been included on the Forward Plan) then the decision may still be taken if:

- a) The Chief Operating Officer, on behalf of the Leader, obtains the agreement of the Chairman of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the making of the decision cannot be reasonably deferred,
- b) The Chief Operating Officer, on behalf of the Leader, makes available on the Council's website and at the offices of the Council, a notice setting out the reasons that the decision is urgent and cannot reasonably be deferred.

#### **5. MINUTES 15 - 22**

To receive as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Tuesday 6 February 2024.

#### **6. MATTERS REQUIRING DECISIONS**

- |    |  |              |
|----|--|--------------|
| 6a | <b>COUNCIL PERFORMANCE DELIVERY – Q3 2023/24</b><br>(Relevant Porfolio Holder: Councillor R Molloy)  | 23 - 36      |
| 6b | <b>Corporate Performance Reporting 2024/25</b><br>(Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Molloy)   | 37 - 46      |
| 6c | <b>2023-24 GRA Revenue Q3 Monitoring Report</b><br>(Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Molloy)  | 47 - 50      |
| 6d | <b>GRA Capital Programme Q3 Monitoring Report</b><br>(Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Molloy)  | 51 - 70      |
| 6e | <b>2023-24 HRA Revenue and Capital Q3 review</b><br>(Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor N Pryce-Roberts)  | 71 - 76      |
| 6f | <b>Housing Policies - Recharge Policy, Empty Homes Policy &amp; Domestic Abuse Policy</b><br>(Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor N Pryce-Roberts) | 77 - 114     |
| 6g | <b>Financial Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029</b><br>(Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor N Pryce-Roberts)   | 115 -<br>136 |

6h	<b>Draft Homelessness &amp; Rough Sleepers Strategy 2024-29</b> (Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor N Pryce-Roberts)	137 - 166
6i	<b>Revised Anti Social Behaviour Policy</b> (Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor N Pryce-Roberts)	167 - 182
6j	<b>Use Of Community Infrastructure Levy Monies On Burscough Sports Centre</b> (Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor G Dowling)	183 - 186

**We can provide this document, upon request, on audiotape, in large print, in Braille and in other languages.**

**FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE: Please see attached sheet.**

**MOBILE PHONES: These should be switched off or to 'silent' at all meetings.**

For further information, please contact:

Jacky Denning on 01695 585384

Or email [jacky.denning@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:jacky.denning@westlancs.gov.uk)

**FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE FOR:  
COUNCIL MEETINGS WHERE OFFICERS ARE PRESENT  
(52 DERBY STREET, ORMSKIRK)**

**PERSON IN CHARGE:** Most Senior Officer Present  
**ZONE WARDEN:** Member Services Officer / Lawyer  
**DOOR WARDEN(S)** Usher / Caretaker

**IF YOU DISCOVER A FIRE**

1. Operate the nearest **FIRE CALL POINT** by breaking the glass.
2. Attack the fire with the extinguishers provided only if you have been trained and it is safe to do so. **Do not** take risks.

**ON HEARING THE FIRE ALARM**

1. Leave the building via the **NEAREST SAFE EXIT**. **Do not stop** to collect personal belongings.
2. Proceed to the **ASSEMBLY POINT** on the car park and report your presence to the **PERSON IN CHARGE**.
3. **Do NOT** return to the premises until authorised to do so by the **PERSON IN CHARGE**.

**NOTES:**

Officers are required to direct all visitors regarding these procedures i.e. exit routes and place of assembly.

The only persons not required to report to the Assembly Point are the Door Wardens.

**CHECKLIST FOR PERSON IN CHARGE**

1. Advise other interested parties present that you are the person in charge in the event of an evacuation.
2. Make yourself familiar with the location of the fire escape routes and inform any interested parties of the escape routes.
3. Make yourself familiar with the location of the assembly point and inform any interested parties of that location.
4. Make yourself familiar with the location of the fire alarm and detection control panel.
5. Ensure that the zone warden and door wardens are aware of their roles and responsibilities.
6. Arrange for a register of attendance to be completed (if considered appropriate / practicable).

**IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE, OR THE FIRE ALARM BEING SOUNDED**

1. Ensure that the room in which the meeting is being held is cleared of all persons.
2. Evacuate via the nearest safe Fire Exit and proceed to the **ASSEMBLY POINT** in the car park.
3. Delegate a person at the **ASSEMBLY POINT** who will proceed to **HOME CARE LINK** in order to ensure that a back-up call is made to the **FIRE BRIGADE**.
4. Delegate another person to ensure that **DOOR WARDENS** have been posted outside the relevant Fire Exit Doors.

5. Ensure that the **ZONE WARDEN** has reported to you on the results of his checks, i.e. that the rooms in use have been cleared of all persons.
6. If an Attendance Register has been taken, take a **ROLL CALL**.
7. Report the results of these checks to the Fire and Rescue Service on arrival and inform them of the location of the **FIRE ALARM CONTROL PANEL**.
8. Authorise return to the building only when it is cleared to do so by the **FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE OFFICER IN CHARGE**. Inform the **DOOR WARDENS** to allow re-entry to the building.

**NOTE:**

The Fire Alarm system will automatically call the Fire Brigade. The purpose of the 999 back-up call is to meet a requirement of the Fire Precautions Act to supplement the automatic call.

**CHECKLIST FOR ZONE WARDEN**

1. Carry out a physical check of the rooms being used for the meeting, including adjacent toilets, kitchen.
2. Ensure that **ALL PERSONS**, both officers and members of the public are made aware of the **FIRE ALERT**.
3. Ensure that **ALL PERSONS** evacuate **IMMEDIATELY**, in accordance with the **FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**.
4. Proceed to the **ASSEMBLY POINT** and report to the **PERSON IN CHARGE** that the rooms within your control have been cleared.
5. Assist the **PERSON IN CHARGE** to discharge their duties.

It is desirable that the **ZONE WARDEN** should be an **OFFICER** who is normally based in this building and is familiar with the layout of the rooms to be checked.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR DOOR WARDENS**

1. Stand outside the **FIRE EXIT DOOR(S)**
2. Keep the **FIRE EXIT DOOR SHUT**.
3. Ensure that **NO PERSON**, whether staff or public enters the building until **YOU** are told by the **PERSON IN CHARGE** that it is safe to do so.
4. If anyone attempts to enter the premises, report this to the **PERSON IN CHARGE**.
5. Do not leave the door **UNATTENDED**.



# Agenda Item 2

## MEMBERS INTERESTS 2012

A Member with a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter considered at a meeting must disclose the interest to the meeting at which they are present, except where it has been entered on the Register.

A Member with a non pecuniary or pecuniary interest in any business of the Council must disclose the existence and nature of that interest at commencement of consideration or when the interest becomes apparent.

Where sensitive information relating to an interest is not registered in the register, you must indicate that you have an interest, but need not disclose the sensitive information.

Please tick relevant boxes

Notes

	General		Notes
1.	I have a disclosable pecuniary interest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You cannot speak or vote and must withdraw unless you have also ticked 5 below</i>
2.	I have a non-pecuniary interest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You may speak and vote</i>
3.	I have a pecuniary interest <b>because</b> it affects my financial position or the financial position of a connected person or, a body described in 10.1(1)(i) and (ii) <b>and</b> the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice my judgement of the public interest or it relates to the determining of any approval consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to me or a connected person or, a body described in 10.1(1)(i) and (ii) <b>and</b> the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice my judgement of the public interest	<input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You cannot speak or vote and must withdraw unless you have also ticked 5 or 6 below</i>          <i>You cannot speak or vote and must withdraw unless you have also ticked 5 or 6 below</i>
4.	I have a disclosable pecuniary interest (Dispensation 20/09/16) or a pecuniary interest but it relates to the functions of my Council in respect of:  (i) Housing where I am a tenant of the Council, and those functions do not relate particularly to my tenancy or lease.  (ii) school meals, or school transport and travelling expenses where I am a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, and it does not relate particularly to the school which the child attends.  (iii) Statutory sick pay where I am in receipt or entitled to receipt of such pay.  (iv) An allowance, payment or indemnity given to Members  (v) Any ceremonial honour given to Members  (vi) Setting Council tax or a precept under the LGFA 1992	<input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>          <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You may speak and vote</i>          <i>You may speak and vote</i>          <i>You may speak and vote</i>          <i>You may speak and vote</i>          <i>You may speak and vote</i>          <i>You may speak and vote</i>
5.	A Standards Committee dispensation applies (relevant lines in the budget – Dispensation 15/09/20 – 14/09/24)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>See the terms of the dispensation</i>
6.	I have a pecuniary interest in the business but I can attend to make representations, answer questions or give evidence as the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You may speak but must leave the room once you have finished and cannot vote</i>

**'disclosable pecuniary interest'** (DPI) means an interest of a description specified below which is your interest, your spouse's or civil partner's or the interest of somebody who you are living with as a husband or wife, or as if you were civil partners and you are aware that that other person has the interest.

### Interest

Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation

Sponsorship

### Prescribed description

Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M.

	This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

*"body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest" means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest; "director" includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society;*

*"land" excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income; "M" means a member of a relevant authority;*

*"member" includes a co-opted member; "relevant authority" means the authority of which M is a member;*

*"relevant period" means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which M gives notice to the Monitoring Officer of a DPI;*

*"relevant person" means M or M's spouse or civil partner, a person with whom M is living as husband or wife or a person with whom M is living as if they were civil partners;*

*"securities" means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.*

**'non pecuniary interest'** means interests falling within the following descriptions:

- 10.1(1)(i) Any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your authority;
- (ii) Any body (a) exercising functions of a public nature; (b) directed to charitable purposes; or (c) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union), of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;
- (iii) Any easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for you (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income.
- 10.2(2) A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a connected person to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward, as the case may be, affected by the decision.

**'a connected person'** means

- (a) a member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association, or
- (b) any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors;
- (c) any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
- (d) any body of a type described in sub-paragraph 10.1(1)(i) or (ii).

**'body exercising functions of a public nature'** means

Regional and local development agencies, other government agencies, other Councils, public health bodies, council-owned companies exercising public functions, arms length management organisations carrying out housing functions on behalf of your authority, school governing bodies.

A Member with a personal interest who has made an executive decision in relation to that matter must ensure any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of that interest.

**NB** Section 21(13) of the LGA 2000 overrides any Code provisions to oblige an executive member to attend an overview and scrutiny meeting to answer questions.



## **PUBLIC SPEAKING – PROTOCOL**

**(For meetings of Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny Committees, Audit & Governance Committee and Standards Committee)**

### **1.0 Public Speaking**

- 1.1 Residents of West Lancashire may, on giving notice, address any of the above meetings to make representations on any item on the agenda for those meetings, except where the public and press are to be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item.
- 1.2 A Parish Council Representative may, on giving notice, address any of the above meetings to make representations on any item on the agenda for those meetings, except where the public and press are to be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item.
- 1.3 The form attached as an Appendix to this Protocol should be used for submitting requests.

### **2.0 Deadline for submission**

- 2.1 The prescribed form should be received by Member Services by 10.00 am on the Friday of the week preceding the meeting. This can be submitted by e-mail to [member.services@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:member.services@westlancs.gov.uk) or by sending to:

Member Services  
West Lancashire Borough Council  
52 Derby Street  
Ormskirk  
West Lancashire  
L39 2DF

- 2.2 Completed forms will be collated by Member Services and circulated via e-mail to relevant Members and officers and published on the Council website via Modgov. Only the name of the speaker (and representative) and details of the issue to be raised will be published.
- 2.3 Groups of persons with similar views should elect a spokesperson to speak on their behalf to avoid undue repetition of similar points. Spokespersons should identify in writing on whose behalf they are speaking.

### **3.0 Scope**

- 3.1 Any matters raised must be relevant to an item on the agenda for the meeting.
- 3.2 The Legal & Democratic Services Manager may reject a submission if it:
  - (i) is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
  - (ii) is substantially the same as representations which have already been submitted at a previous meeting; or
  - (iii) discloses or requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

#### **4.0 Number of items**

- 4.1 A maximum of one form per resident will be accepted for each Agenda Item.
- 4.2 There will be a maximum of 10 speakers per meeting. Where there are more than 10 forms submitted by residents, the Legal & Democratic Services Manager will prioritise the list of those allowed to speak. This will be considered having regard to all relevant matters including:
- a. The order in which forms were received.
  - b. If one resident has asked to speak on a number of items, priority will be given to other residents who also wish to speak
  - c. Whether a request has been submitted in relation to the same issue.

No amendments will be made to the list of speakers once it has been compiled (regardless of withdrawal of a request to speak).

- 4.3 All submissions received will be published on the Council's website and circulated to Members of the relevant body and officers for consideration.

#### **5.0 At the Meeting**

- 5.1 Speakers will be shown to their seats. At the commencement of consideration of each agenda item the Leader/Chairman will invite the speakers to make their representations. Speakers will have up to 3 minutes to address the meeting. The address must reflect the issue included on the prescribed form submitted in advance.
- 5.2 Members may discuss what the speaker/s have said, along with any other information/representations submitted under this protocol, when all speakers on that item have finished and will then make a decision. Speakers should not circulate any supporting documentation at the meeting and should not enter into a debate with Councillors.
- 5.4 If residents feel nervous or uncomfortable speaking in public, then they can ask someone else to do it for them, including a Parish or Borough Councillor representative. They can also bring an interpreter if they need one. They should be aware there may be others speaking as well.

(Note: If a Resident wishes to have their Borough Councillor speak on their behalf, the Borough Councillor is not a member of the body considering the item.)

5.5 Speakers may leave the meeting at any time, taking care not to disturb the meeting.

(Please see attached form.)





## REQUEST FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING AT MEETINGS

**MEETING & DATE** .....

**NAME** .....

**ADDRESS** .....

Post Code .....

**PHONE** .....

**Email** .....

Please indicate if you will be in attendance at the meeting

**YES/NO\***

\*delete as applicable

Please indicate if someone will be speaking on your behalf at the meeting

**YES/NO\***

\*delete as applicable

If someone is speaking on your behalf please provide their contact details:

**NAME** .....

**PHONE** .....

**Email** .....

Note: This page will not be published.

(P.T.O.)

PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS OF THE MATTER YOU WISH TO RAISE

Agenda Item      Number .....

Title .....

Details .....

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Name ..... Dated .....

*Completed forms to be submitted by 10.00am on the Friday of the week preceding the meeting to:-*

*Member Services, West Lancashire Borough Council, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2DF or  
Email: [member.services@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:member.services@westlancs.gov.uk)*

*If you require any assistance regarding your attendance at a meeting (including access) or if you have any queries regarding your submission please contact Member Services on 01695 585065*

Note: This page will be circulated to Members of the Committee and published.

# Agenda Item 5

**CABINET**

**HELD: Tuesday, 6 February 2024**

Start: 7.00 pm

Finish: 7.12 pm

**PRESENT:**

Councillors:

Portfolio

Councillor Yvonne Gagen	Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Legal & Democratic
Councillor Gareth Dowling	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning & Community Safety
Councillor Carl Coughlan	Portfolio Holder for Leisure; and Youth Champion
Councillor Vickie Cummins	Portfolio Holder for Health & Wellbeing
Councillor Anne Mary Fennell	Portfolio Holder for Communities; and Dementia Champion
Councillor Neil Furey	Portfolio Holder for Street Scene
Councillor Rob Molloy	Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor Nicola Pryce-Roberts	Portfolio Holder for Housing
Councillor Adam Yates	Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder for Green Growth

Officers:

Jacqui Sinnott-Lacey, Chief Operating Officer  
Chris Twomey, Corporate Director of Housing, Transformation & Resources  
James Pierce, Head of Finance, Procurement and Commercial Services Section 151 Officer  
Lisa Windle, Head of Corporate and Customer Services  
Paul Charlson, Head of Planning & Regulatory Services  
Kay Lovelady, Head of Legal & Democratic Services  
Jacky Denning, Democratic Services Manager  
Peter Quick, Principal Finance Business Partner (Virtual)  
Nicola Bradley, Tenancy Service Manager(Virtual)  
Jonathan Mitchell, Housing Strategy & Development Programme Manager(Virtual)  
Rebecca Spicer, Repairs & Servicing Manager(Virtual)

137 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

138 **SPECIAL URGENCY (RULE 16 ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES)/URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of special urgency.

**139 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

There were no items under this heading.

**140 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

1. Councillor Coughlan declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda items relating to his Council garage tenancy (nothing in these reports relates particularly to his interests arising from that tenancy).
2. Councillors Carl Coughlan, Vicki Cummins and Yvonne Gagen declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items relating to Lancashire County Council (LCC) as employees of Lancashire County Council and did not enter into detailed discussions, which affected LCC.

**141 MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 November 2023 be received as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

**142 MATTERS REQUIRING DECISIONS**

Consideration was given to report relating to the following matters requiring decisions and contained on pages 1 to 240 of the Book of Reports.

**143 HRA BUDGET REPORT 24-25**

Councillor N Pryce-Roberts introduced the report of the Head of Housing, Procurement & Commercial Services, which sought feedback to enable the Council to set its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget and capital investment programme for the next financial year 2024/25.

The Minutes of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) and the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee had been circulated prior to the meeting.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the report before it and the recommendations contained therein.

RESOLVED:

- A. That the financial position be noted and consideration given to the budget matters set out in this report.
- B. That the use of the Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources delegated authority in relation to rent and service charge changes be noted.
- C. That consideration be given to the comments received from the committees



and working group above when finalising the HRA budget proposals to be approved by Council on 28 February 2024.

- D. That the Housing Portfolio Holder be given delegated authority to submit firm proposals to Council on 28 February 2024 to enable the budget to be set.

144 **GRA BUDGET REPORT AND MTFS UPDATE 24-25**

Councillor R Molloy introduced the report of the Head of Finance, Procurement & Commercial Services, which sought to set a balanced Revenue Budget for the forthcoming financial year 2024/25, presented the updated Medium-Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) for the following financial years 2025/26 to 2026/27, noting the latest forecast budget gap of £1.348m, comprising:

- £1.620m in 2025/26
- (£0.272)m in 2026/27

and detailed the reserves position as at 31 March 2023 and the forecast position to 2026/27.

The Minute of the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee had been circulated prior to the meeting.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the report before it and the recommendations contained therein.

**RESOLVED:**

- A. That the General Revenue Account (GRA) budget for 2024/25 be approved based on the proposals to be presented at the Council meeting.
- B. That the latest GRA Medium-Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) budget gap for 2025/26 to 2026/27 be noted.
- C. That the latest GRA reserves position as at 31 March 2023 and forecast to 2026/27 be noted and the GRA reserves policy be approved.
- D. That delegated authority be given to the Chief Operating Officer and the Corporate Director to take all necessary action to implement the changes resulting from the budget proposals.

145 **GRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME & STRATEGY 24-25 - 26-27**

Councillor Molloy introduced the report of the Head of Finance, Procurement & Commercial Services, which set the framework for capital financing and treasury management operations for the next financial year.

The Minute of the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee had been circulated prior to the meeting.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the report before it and the recommendations contained therein.

RESOLVED: That the Capital Strategy and Programme for 2024/25 be noted.

146 **QUARTER 2 COUNCIL PERFORMANCE DELIVERY**

Councillor Molloy introduced the report of the Corporate Director Transformation, Housing & Resources, which presented performance monitoring data for the quarter ended 30 September 2023.

The Minute of the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee was circulated prior to the meeting.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the report before it and the recommendations contained therein.

RESOLVED: A. That the Council's performance for its key performance indicators for the quarter ended 30 September 2023 be noted.

B. That the call-in procedure is not appropriate for this item as the report was submitted to the meeting of the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 25 January 2024.

147 **DRAFT TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 24-25**

Councillor R Molloy introduced the report of the Head of Finance, Procurement & Commercial Services, which set the framework for capital financing and treasury management operations for the next financial year.

The minute of the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee had been circulated prior to the meeting.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the report before it and the recommendations contained therein.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve:

- A. That the projected position in respect of the Prudential Indicators for 2023-24 set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.
- B. That the Treasury and Prudential Indicators for the next three years, set out in Appendix 1, be agreed.
- C. That the capital expenditure projections in Appendix 1 be agreed.
- D. That the Capital Financing Requirement projections, set out in Appendix 1, be agreed.

- E. That the Minimum Revenue Position policy, as set out in section 4.5 of the report, be agreed.

148 **DAMP AND MOULD POLICY AND GOODWILL AND DISCRETIONARY PAYMENT POLICY**

Councillor N Pryce-Roberts introduced the report of the Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources, which sought approval of two new policies:

- Damp and Mould Policy
- Goodwill and Discretionary Payment Policy

The Minute of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) had been circulated prior to the meeting.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the report before it and the recommendations contained therein.

RESOLVED: That the policies detailed in Appendix A Damp and Mould Policy and Appendix B Goodwill and Discretionary Payment Policy, be approved.

149 **DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY 2024-2029**

Councillor N Pryce-Roberts introduced the report of the Corporate Director Transformation, Housing & Resources, which sought approval for the publication of the Housing Strategy 2024-2029 and associated Action Plan.

The Minutes of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) and the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee had been circulated prior to the meeting.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the report before it and the recommendations contained therein.

RESOLVED:

- A. That the agreed comments of the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee, set out in Appendix F to the report, be noted.
- B. That the Housing Strategy 2024-2029 and associated Action Plan, attached at Appendix A and B to the report, be approved for consultation purposes.
- C. That the Head of Housing, in consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder, be given delegated authority to make drafting changes, arising from any consultation responses received and publish any such revised and final version of the Housing Strategy and Housing Strategy Action Plan in May 2024.
- D. That the Head of Housing, in consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder,

be given delegated authority to make any changes to the Housing Strategy and Action Plan throughout the operating term of the Housing Strategy to ensure it reflects the Councils operating structures and resource capacity, any legislative and/ or regulatory amendments and/or emerging housing need issues and/or any other related matter that needs to be considered in order to ensure the Housing Strategy and Action Plan remains relevant throughout its operating term.

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**DEMOLITION OF FLAT BLOCKS IN BLYTHEWOOD & BANKSBARN TO FACILITATE PHASE 2 OF DIGMOOR REVIVAL SCHEME**

Councillor Pryce-Roberts introduced the report of the Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources, which sought approval to proceed with the development of Digmoor area of Skelmersdale in accordance with the Digmoor Revival Scheme, to demolish the existing blocks of flats in Blythewood and Banksbarn, shown in the current site plan attached at Appendix 1, and thereafter take all steps necessary to develop the site, in order to facilitate the development of 45 new Council homes for affordable/social rent.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the report before it and the recommendations contained therein.

**RESOLVED:**

- A. That the proposed development, details of which are contained within the report, (including the demolition of the flat blocks in Blythewood and Banksbarn) be approved, subject to Council approval where appropriate.
- B. That the Head of Housing, following discussion with the relevant Portfolio Holder, be given delegated authority to take all steps necessary (subject to Council approval where necessary) to implement the development outlined within the report, this will include, but not limited to, instructing Tawd Valley Developments Ltd, obtaining planning permission, entering into grant funding arrangements with Homes England, contracts with design and build businesses, demolition of existing properties, relocation of tenants and repurchase of leaseholds.
- C. That the Head of Housing, following discussion with the relevant Portfolio Holder, be given delegated authority to, as a last resort, use the power of compulsory purchase.
- D. That the Head of Housing be given delegated authority to make on going adjustments to the delivery of the scheme following discussions with the relevant Portfolio Holder.
- E. In respect of matters reserved to Council the report be noted and any agreed comments be referred to Council for consideration.

**CABINET**

**HELD: Tuesday, 6 February 2024**

.....  
**Leader**





## AGENDA ITEM:

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE: 14 MARCH 2024**

**CABINET: 26 MARCH 2024**

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**Report of: Corporate Director of Housing, Transformation and Resources**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Molloy**

**Contact for further information: Lisa Windle  
(E-mail: [Lisa.Windle@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:Lisa.Windle@westlancs.gov.uk))**

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**SUBJECT: COUNCIL PERFORMANCE DELIVERY – Q3 2023/24**

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Wards affected: Borough wide.

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To present performance monitoring data for the quarter ended 31 December 2023.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

2.1 That the Council's performance for its key performance indicators for the quarter ended 31 December 2023 be noted and agree comments as appropriate.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

3.1 That the Council's performance for its key performance indicators for the quarter ended 31 December 2023 be noted following consideration of any agreed comments from Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

3.2 That the call-in procedure is not appropriate for this item as the report was submitted to the meeting of the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 14 March 2024.

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## 4.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Members are referred to Appendix A of this report which provides a summary of the quarterly key performance indicators.
- 4.2 A replacement monitoring framework for the new Council Priorities 2023-2028 that were adopted by Council in October 2023 will be taken through Executive Scrutiny and Cabinet in March 2024. Interim reporting arrangements for quarter performance reporting for the remainder of 2023/24 were also approved which will focus on the existing KPI suite approved through Scrutiny and Cabinet in March 2023 and presented by service area.
- 4.3 During this time, services continue to manage and monitor performance and much of the Council's key activity will continue to be reported through to Members via individual reports to committees.
- 4.4 Appendix A refers to 44 items within the approved quarterly suite, 10 of which are 'data only' (no target). Of the 34 PIs with targets reported quarterly:

	Current Quarter	Previous Quarter	Current vs previous Quarter
Indicators meeting or exceeding target ('Green')	23	24	↓
Indicators narrowly missing target ('Amber')	4	2	↓
Indicators 5% or more off target ('Red')	5	6	↑
PI Data not yet available	1	1	-
PI Data that will not be provided	1	1	-

Data will not be provided for *WL132-c19 FTE working days lost due to sickness absence* due to issues with transfer to new HR system. LCC is aware of the impact of this and are in the process of addressing the issue.

Data not yet available for PIs *NI 192 % kerbside household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting*

- 4.5 Performance plans are prepared by service managers for those performance indicators where performance is below the target by 5% or more for this quarter where they can improve performance. These plans (Appendix B) provide further narrative and context behind the outturn.

## 5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report/update and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. The information set out in this report aims to help the Council achieve its vision and should contribute to the sustainability of services and the borough as a whole.



## **6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no direct financial or resource implications arising from this report.

## **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

7.1 This item is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers.

Monitoring and managing performance information data helps the authority to ensure it is achieving its corporate priorities and key objectives and reduces the risk of not doing so.

We are continuing to embed risk management in the Council understanding that this will help us in the achievement of our priorities. We want to identify those risks that will stop us achieving our vision, priorities and key activities as defined by the delivery plan in development so that they can be mitigated, and therefore support progress and good performance. We consider where we are now, where we want to get to, and what may stop us getting there. These events, that may or may not happen, are our key risks which then need assessment, management, and reporting. These strategic, high-level council risks are currently reported to Members through the Key Risk Register report.

## **8.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report. The Council Priorities support the improvement of health and wellbeing within West Lancashire.

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### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

### **Appendices**












Appendix A: Quarterly Corporate Performance Delivery Report  
Appendix B: Performance Plans








# APPENDIX A: CORPORATE PERFORMANCE DELIVERY

## Quarter 3 2023/24 (October-December)

### INDICATOR STATUS



- OK (within 0.01%) or exceeded ...  Data only (no target) ... 
- Warning (within 5%) .....  Awaiting data ..... 
- Alert (by 5% or more) ..... 

Corporate & Customer Services										
Performance Indicator	2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Current Quarter Target	Outturn vs same Q previous year	Comment	Quarter Status
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
R1 % of Council Tax collected	93.79%	79.02%	93.79%	27.76%	53.67%	79.66%	85.90%	↑	Although below target performance is better than at this point last year. Performance Plan provided in Appendix B1	
R3 % of Business Rates Collected (NNDR)	95.78%	77.96%	95.78%	31.23%	56.06%	78.93%	81.85%	↑	Although below target performance is better than at same point last year.	
B5 Speed of Processing Housing Benefit (days)	4	5	4	5	6	6	12	↓		
WL85a Website: no. visits	772,061	164,440	181,806	200,565	169,101	164,621		↑	Similar outturn to previous quarter and the same quarter last year. Most visited pages were Refuse and Recycling, Pay a Bill and Council Tax	
WL85c Website: No. of payments processed online	67,094	15,338	14,629	27,067 <sup>2</sup>	17,600 <sup>2</sup>	15,732		↑		
WL90 % of Contact Centre calls answered	93.4%	94.7%	93.5%	92.8%	94.7%	92.7%	88.0%	↓	Relates to over 20K calls made into the contact centre in the quarter.	
WL108 Average answered waiting time for callers to the contact centre (seconds)	94	88	77	82	65	83	145	↑		
WL130 No. Service Now Customer Accounts	54,194	52,913	54,194	56,005	57,305	58,428		↑		






Performance Indicator	2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Current Quarter Target	Outturn vs same Q previous year	Comment	Quarter Status
WL131 No. Social Media Followers (WLBC FB, Twitter)	15,647	15,523	15,647	15,779	15,974	16,121			Popular posts include Christmas lights switch ons, Christmas parking offer, Environmental Services recycling video and bin calendar. Engagement has significantly increased on some posts that include video and photos.	
WL132-c19 FTE working days lost due to sickness absence per average FTE	N/A	0.73	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.67		Continuing issues following the upgrade of the HR & Payroll system by LCC Payroll has resulted in data being unavailable and cannot be manually calculated having a direct impact on the ability to report on this measure. The system issue is being worked on by LCC Payroll technical team to resolve and we continue to engage regularly however priority is being given to maintaining pay functions. Information will be provided when available.  The WLBC HR Team are attempting to collate the data from our own data and records. If confident this can be delivered accurately this will be reported in Q4. A new Payroll provider is currently being procured. It is unlikely that information will be available retrospectively.	N/A
WL165 % Staff Turnover Rate	N/A <sup>1</sup>	2.93%	N/A <sup>1</sup>	2.47%	1.92%	2.61%			Continuing issues following the changeover of HR systems is being worked on with LCC Payroll colleagues. Data is now being manually calculated.	

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the system issues Q4 data and therefore annual outturn is not available for 2022/23 ; <sup>2</sup> revised data collection from Q1 onwards, Q1 and Q2 restated to provide consistent reporting in year and exclude telephone payments


Leisure Service										
Performance Indicator	2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Current Quarter Target	Outturn vs same Q previous year	Comment	Quarter Status
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
WL157a No. visits to leisure facilities	564,061	137,495	149,466	144,218	139,018	136,624	110,000			

Environmental Services										
Performance Indicator	2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Current Quarter Target	Outturn vs same Q previous year	Comment	Quarter Status
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
ES01 No. grass cuts undertaken on the highway between April-October	8	8	8	3	7	8	8	▬		
ES02 No. grass cuts undertaken in Sheltered Accommodation between April-October	10	10	10	2	6	7	10	↓	Due to the performance in Q1 being severely impacted by weather the service had previously reported to Members that it would be unlikely that the annual target (10) would be met. No additional grass cuts will be made outside of the cutting period. Head of Service decision: Plan not required as could not significantly improve performance.	
ES04 % locations inspected falling into categories A/B - Litter (cumulative)	96.8%	98.2%	96.8%	96.9%	98.3%	100.0%	97.0%	↑		
ES06 % locations inspected falling into categories A/B - Dog Poouling (cumulative)	96.8%	100.0%	96.8%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	97.0%	▬		
ES07 % locations inspected falling into categories C/D - Overflowing Litter Bins (cumulative)	00.4%	00.0%	00.4%	00.0%	00.0%	00.0%	05.0%	▬		
ES08 % locations inspected falling into categories A/B - grounds maintenance (includes grass and shrubbery) (cumulative)	100.0%	N/A <sup>3</sup>	100.0%	66.6%	95.0%	100.0%	95.0%	/		
ES11 % locations inspected falling into categories C/D - Detritus (cumulative)	09.7%	09.9%	09.7%	12.1%	17.3%	08.6%	05.0%	↑	Performance Plan provided in Appendix B2	
ES19a % successful planned bin collections (grey)	99.9%	99.8%	100.0%	99.9%	99.9%	99.8%	97.0%	▬		
ES19b % successful planned bin collections (blue)	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	97.0%	▬		
ES19c % successful planned bin collections (brown)	99.7%	98.7%	99.9%	99.6%	99.5%	99.8%	97.0%	↑		

Performance Indicator	2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Current Quarter Target	Outturn vs same Q previous year	Comment	Quarter Status
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
ES19d % successful planned bin collections (green)	99.9%	99.8%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	99.9%	97.0%	↑		
NI192 Percentage of kerbside household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	44.53% <sup>4</sup>	43.17% <sup>4</sup>	41.45% <sup>4</sup>	40.80% <sup>5</sup>			47.80%		Quarter information is externally verified by Waste Data Flow. Service to confirm when data reaches verification level within WDF to allow publication as provisional or confirmed.	








<sup>3</sup> Data not available as there were below expected visits for the quarter (Q3 ES08). Data cannot be provided retrospectively for the period ; <sup>4</sup> 2022/23 quarter figures have been restated through the service based on data from Waste Data Flow ; <sup>5</sup> Provisional data until externally verified.


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Finance, Procurement & Commercial Services										
Performance Indicator	2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Current Quarter Target	Outturn vs same Q previous year	Comment	Quarter Status
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
BV8 % invoices paid on time (within quarter)	95.29%	97.38%	94.57%	97.03%	93.55%	94.67%	98.75%	↓	Although below target, outturn has improved from the previous quarter. Monthly performance reports and guidance continue to be circulated to managers to promote good practice. The Civica review and implementation of the new system later this year will remove many of the manual elements of the current process. Following embedding of the new processes it is therefore reasonably expected to improve the performance.	


Housing Services										
Performance Indicator	2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Current Quarter Target	Outturn vs same Q previous year	Comment	Quarter Status
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
HS28 % of properties with a valid Electrical Installation Condition Report (homes and buildings)	94.5%	94.1%	94.5%	94.0%	93.4%	93.0%	100.0%	↓	Processes to help overcome access issues are in place. Performance Plan provided in Appendix B3	
TSM-BS01 % Gas safety checks <sup>6</sup>	Not developed at this time			99.8%	99.5%	99.8%	100.0%	/		
TSM-BS02 % Fire safety checks <sup>6</sup>	As above			99.7%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	/		
TSM-BS03 % Asbestos safety checks <sup>6</sup>	As above			34.2%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	/		
TSM-BS04 % Water safety checks <sup>6</sup>	As above			100%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	/		
TS1a Rent collected from current and former tenants as a % of rent owed (excluding arrears b/f)	100.47	100.86	100.47	102.21	99.09	101.99	100	↑		
TS11 % of rent loss through dwellings being vacant	0.97%	1.04%	0.97%	0.77%	0.91%	1.11%	1.4%	↓		
TS52 No. people accessing money advice (tenants and residents) <sup>7</sup>	2179	556	607	425	392	521		↓		
TS53 No. people provided with food poverty advice (tenants and residents) <sup>7</sup>	584	175	214	103	171	215		↑		
TS54 No. people provided with money advice to help prevent homelessness (tenants & residents) <sup>7</sup>	60	13	26	18	10	10		↓		
TS55 No. people provided with fuel poverty advice (tenants and residents) <sup>7</sup>	321	74	74	65	82	77		↑		
E01 % rent loss through empty commercial properties available to rent	6.4%	5.5%	6.4%	5.9%	5.8%	6.1%	10%	↓		
WL161 Affordable Housing units via Tawd Valley Developments	37	20	0	0	13	27	27	↑	The Fairlie development is ahead of schedule. 13 units were delivered in Q2 and 14 units developed in Q3. Remaining 23 affordable rent units are expected to be handed over ahead of schedule in Q4 23/24.	


<sup>6</sup> Revised PIs were introduced for 2023/24 to reflect new regulatory requirements ; <sup>7</sup>A new report has been created to avoid corruption issues and to give a truer reflection of support by basing count on closure of supportive action completion not when Money Advice case is closed. This has resulted in restating some data.

Economic Development & Regeneration Services <i>(including Community &amp; Wellbeing and Outdoor Recreation)</i>										
Performance Indicator	2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Current Quarter Target	Outturn vs same Q previous year	Comment	Quarter Status
	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value				
ER09 Number of businesses added value to via business support, property searches, skills and employment	229	110	93	35	26	68		↓		
WL150 No. of new participants engaged in health & wellbeing programmes/interventions	1,389	342	205	368	764	1,057	350	↑		
WL151a Number of new clients attending vocational training	67	64	67	38	76	108	80	↑	MPT finished at the end of Q3 however delivery of the UKSPF employment element will begin in January and continue to deliver the outcomes through a new WLBC project team.	
WL151b No. of new participants engaged to enhance employability, confidence, skills and qualifications	116	94	116	30	53	64	66	↓	Due to MPT finishing, not as many participants were signed up to programmes. The new programme is now running and uptake likely to increase over the coming months.	
WL153a Total no. of partners working with Wellbeing and Leisure Service	97	86	97	120	133	159	40	↑		
WL159 No. attending parks and countryside events & activities	31,457	3,114	1,639	9,862	4,460	670	5,000	↓	Figures are below target due to wet and stormy weather resulting in cancellation of several events, for example, Santa Dash. Additionally, failure of response in time of some delivery partners mean that not all figures have been captured. Rangers are currently developing a digital system using a phone app to collect future figures. Following similar weather impacts in Q2 the annual target will therefore not be met. Head of Service decision: Plan not required as could not significantly improve performance.	

PERFORMANCE PLAN				
<b>Indicator</b>	R1 - % Council Tax collected (current year)			
<b>Quarter Target</b>	85.9%	<b>Quarter outturn</b>	79.66%	
<b>Reason(s) for not meeting target</b>				
Impact of Pandemic National Cost of Living Crisis Higher Energy Prices Rising Interest Rates				
<b>Additional commentary / background</b>				
<p>Whilst the Q1/2 trajectory looked promising, as we moved through Q3 the Revenues &amp; Benefits service received increased contact from customers advising they were struggling to clear debts accumulated following the pandemic and cost of living/energy crisis and a result of rising interest rates which are impacting increases in mortgage payments.</p> <p>As with Q1/2 performance, it is important to note that whilst the PI is under target, we have seen an improvement on collection in comparison to same period of the previous year. As at the end of December 2023, the service has collected £66m of the £82m liability raised for 2023/24. This was following collection rate in Q2 of £44m of the £82m.</p> <p>The service continues to signpost customers who may need extra support to the Household Support Scheme which is currently being administered within the Revenues &amp; Benefits service, Financial Inclusion Team and also to information contained on the 'Cost of Living Hub' on our website. The service will continue to encourage early engagement from residents who are facing payment difficulties in order that the appropriate support and consideration can be given.</p> <p>Through Q4 the service will continue with the scheduled recovery plan whereby Reminders/Summons will be issued to non-payers. During any customer interaction we will review, discuss accounts and assess affordability to pay whilst offering advice and guidance as appropriate to each customer.</p> <p>Given the gap in performance throughout this year it is unlikely that the Annual SLA target will be met. The service actively reviews their processes to ensure a proactive approach to recovery is taken.</p> <p>Moving forward the service will be undertaking a review of how our computer systems handle and report data at individual level to assist in prioritising recovery action moving forward.</p>				
<b>Action plan</b>				
<b>Tasks to be undertaken</b>			<b>Completion due date</b>	
Review Performance Indicators to reflect changing conditions			Year End	
Signpost & support customers to relevant support schemes			Ongoing	
<b>Improvement expected: Q4</b>				



PERFORMANCE PLAN				
Indicator	ES11 % locations inspected falling into categories C/D - Detritus			
Quarter Target	5%	Quarter outturn	8.6%	
<p><b>Reason(s) for not meeting target.</b>            There are currently 3 HGV sweepers operating on a 12 week cleansing schedule. Historically the cleansing schedules have been hard to meet because of the vast road network within West Lancashire. HGV training was completed in 2023 to ensure adequate cover for annual leave and sickness.</p>				
<p><b>Additional commentary / background</b>            Since the completion of HGV training, we have seen a decrease in downtime due to sickness or annual leave. This has improved performance in all areas. Looking at the actual inspections, out of 118 inspections there were 9 C gradings and 1 D grading. The value has significantly decreased from 17.03% to 8.6% from Q2 to Q3.</p> <p>The service now has full cover for all 3 HGV sweepers with the addition of 2 extra trained staff, and this will be prioritised at all times.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring of the service will be completed by Clean and Green Area Managers and routes will be reviewed to ensure that efficiency is maintained. All routes will be reviewed within Q4 23/24 to make further improvements.</p>				
<b>Action plan</b>				
<b>Tasks to be undertaken</b>		<b>Completion due date</b>		
Monthly monitoring of cleansing schedules		On going until 2 quarters returned under current target		
Monthly updates on non-scheduled works completed		On going until 2 quarters returned under current target		
Further training to be offered to existing staff		On going		
Route Optimisation		End of Q4 23/24.		
<p><b>Improvement expected:</b>            Q4 2023/24</p>				
Plan prepared by Clean and Green Operations Manager				

PERFORMANCE PLAN				
<b>Indicator</b>	HS28: % of Properties with a Valid Electrical Installation Condition Report			
<b>Quarter Target</b>	100%	<b>Quarter outturn</b>	93.0%	
<p><b>Reason(s) for not meeting target.</b> Outstanding electrical safety certificates are principally as a result of access issues.</p>				
<p><b>Additional commentary / background</b> Whilst this performance indicator does not relate to a statutory requirement it is considered best practice to demonstrate electrical installations are kept in a good condition. It relates to public buildings, communal areas and homes.</p> <p>6,188 reports were due as at the end of December 2023 and 5,738 had been completed. Failure to meet the target was principally due to issues gaining access into council housing.</p> <p>The performance will improve as we gain access to the properties. A legal process based on the gas access procedure is in place with external legal support. With this additional support we anticipate the performance will steadily improve towards the end of the fourth quarter. The compliance officers are also supporting the process by door knocking and lettering the tenants to make appointments supplementary to the contractor no access procedures. The Building Safety Assurance team is using the Essendex text messaging service in addition to door knocking, letters and emails as a means of contacting residents. Monthly meetings with the electrical contractor is being undertaken to address any outstanding access issues.</p> <p>Ongoing processes in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue access rigorously, as per gas procedure, including legal action.</li> <li>• Continue with ongoing attempts to gain access in parallel with legal process including home visits.</li> <li>• Validation of stock reports</li> <li>• Weekly monitoring of progress</li> <li>• Weekly reporting at the Compliance meetings with Housing and Legal representatives</li> </ul> <p>As well as the processes in place above, the action plan below details some specific additional tasks.</p>				
<b>Action plan</b>				
<b>Tasks to be undertaken</b>			<b>Completion due date</b>	
Build and implement C365 compliance management system to allow the Council to proactively manage, audit, monitor and improve the level of Statutory and Regulatory compliance.			April 2024 – currently on target	
Start the re-surveys early to ensure adequate time to resolve access issues prior to expiry. This will then become part of regular process.			Survey restart date to be scheduled for 6 months prior to expiry	
Training identified - 2 staff members for the Building Safety Assurance team have been booked on an HQN run webinar relating to access issues to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand what a landlord and tenant's obligations are for access to a property.</li> <li>• Be able to identify reasons why access may not be</li> </ul>			Training completion date: 15 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	

provided.

- How to deal with a case where there are mental health and vulnerability issues present.
- Understand how to support a resident in providing access.

**Improvement expected:**

The monitoring of the outstanding electrical testing properties will be a continual process that will be managed and monitored every week and reported monthly. This is similar to the gas process currently undertaken and should keep the outstanding electrical properties to a manageable level. Alan Leicester is attending the weekly compliance meeting with representative from Building Assurance, Neighbourhoods and Legal to discuss the ongoing access issues.

Plan prepared by: Building Safety Assurance Manager





**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE: 14 MARCH 2024**

**CABINET: 26 MARCH 2024**

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**Report of: Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing and Resources**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Molloy**

**Contact for further information: Lisa Windle  
(E-mail: [Lisa.Windle@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:Lisa.Windle@westlancs.gov.uk))**

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**SUBJECT: CORPORATE REPORTING : COUNCIL PRIORITIES DELIVERY PLAN**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval for the Council Priorities Delivery Plan for 2024/25.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

2.1 That the Committee consider the draft delivery plan for the Council Priorities (Appendix 1) and agree comments as appropriate.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

3.1 That, subject to consideration of the agreed comments of the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the delivery plan at Appendix 1 is approved for reporting as the Council Priorities Delivery Plan.

3.2 That the Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing and Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, be authorised to finalise and amend the plan (Appendix 1) having regard to agreed comments from Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee made on 14 March 2024, and to make necessary amendments in year in response to any issues that may arise, for example budget decisions, government policy or indicator collection mechanisms.

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### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

4.1 The Council Priorities 2023-28 detailing the Vision and Priorities were adopted at Council in October 2023. The Priorities provide clarity of purpose for the Council

allowing efficient communication of its strategic direction with the public, stakeholders and staff. This in turn allows effective planning and prioritisation of work throughout the organisation and supports transparency and accountability.

- 4.2 It was agreed at October full Council that a replacement monitoring framework for the new Priorities would be brought to Executive Scrutiny and Cabinet in March 2024.
- 4.3 Prior to public consultation on the draft priorities over the summer, an early draft delivery plan was provided to Members based on the understanding of key strategies and plans at the time. This was to give an indication of how the Council would achieve the draft priorities.
- 4.4 Work began to finalise the content for monitoring the delivery of the Council Priorities 2023-2028 following adoption of the new Council Priorities in October 2023.

## **5.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 5.1 The draft delivery plan at Appendix 1 has been developed from the initial draft. It does not detail everything the Council will do aligned with these priorities. From all our work, the plan content evidences where the Council will add most value and deliver the best outcomes aligned to the priorities. Consideration of impacts from actions have been made during action development.
- 5.2 The proposed key priority actions have been developed as part of the corporate planning process including consideration of existing strategies and plans which is aligned to the budget setting timetable. Proposed KPIs have been established after consideration of the priority areas. Targets and timescales have then been set through services and senior management development to be challenging but realistic based on current expectations.
- 5.3 The draft delivery plan therefore captures a large amount of anticipated work across a wide range of service areas. It contains a number of longer-term deliverables whilst having a natural focus on work during 2024/25.
- 5.4 The key actions and measures will be delivered and monitored within services as part of service action plans and performance indicator suites. Performance will additionally be monitored by the corporate management team. This ensures that the priorities of the council are considered on an ongoing basis as part of service and corporate management.
- 5.5 Monitoring the Council Priorities Delivery Plan through reports to committee is intended to provide a strategic focus for Members rather than monitoring operational delivery. Service data remains actively monitored and managed by Managers and Heads of Service to ensure effective day to day service delivery.

## **6.0 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORTING**

- 6.1 Once approved the delivery plan will be used to evidence progress on the Council Priorities. Progress on actions will be summarised along with the supporting Key Performance Indicator data (and reference to Key Risks) and reported to Committee on a quarterly basis.
- 6.2 It should be noted that not every key action or KPI may have a tangible output or outturn for every quarter reporting period depending on the nature of the work involved or definitions and collection mechanisms.
- 6.3 The Council Priorities Delivery Plan will be refreshed annually through committee. This will ensure that that content is regularly reviewed for relevance in setting the strategic direction for the Council.

## **7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report, and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder. The information set out in this report aims to help the Council achieve its vision and priorities and should contribute to the sustainability of services and the borough as a whole.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no direct financial or resource implications arising from this report. Agreed Council Priorities assist in shaping budget decisions and enable clear priorities to be set for services. Through corporate planning processes the Council is then able to continue to pursue its objectives, within the resources available and can monitor and manage use of those resources.

## **9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 The risk associated with this report has been included in the Business Transformation and Change risk register referenced as *BTACR06: Produce accessible, reliable corporate performance information through process*. Approval of this report is a consideration for the risk scoring.

Having well-defined priorities means that attention and resources can be effectively focussed on managing, monitoring and achieving the Council's corporate priorities and key objectives and reduces the risk of not doing so. Monitoring and managing the key actions and KPIs is therefore an essential part of delivering the priorities.

We are continuing to embed risk management in the Council understanding that this will help us in the achievement of our priorities. We want to identify those risks that will stop us achieving our vision, priorities and key activities as defined by the delivery plan so that they can be mitigated, and therefore support progress and good performance. We consider where we are now, where we want to get to, and what may stop us getting there. These events, that may or may not happen, are our key risks which then need assessment, management, and reporting.

These strategic, high-level council risks are currently reported to Members in more detail through the Key Risk Register report.

## **10.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The proposed Delivery Plan will support health and wellbeing within West Lancashire in a variety of ways. The priority *Foster inclusive and healthy communities* outlines what we want and what we intend to do to achieve this. In addition, a positive impact on Health & Wellbeing will also be supported through the wider work of the other priorities and actions of the delivery plan.

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### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The decision does not have a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and/or stakeholders. Therefore no equality impact assessment is required.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Council Vision & Priorities 2023-2028 - Draft Delivery Plan 2024/25



# APPENDIX 1: COUNCIL VISION & PRIORITIES 2023-2028 - DRAFT DELIVERY PLAN 2024/25

West Lancashire together; the place of choice to live, work, visit and invest

## Create a clean and environmentally sustainable borough

- Build resilience to climate change and reduce our carbon footprint
- Reduce waste production and increase reuse and recycling
- Enhance and improve a safe, built environment
- Preserve the natural environment, biodiversity and landscape

Actions/deliverables	Lead area
Create a Community Energy Interest Group	ES
Review our approach to culvert and drainage management	ES
Achieve Energy Performance Certificate 'C' rating in all our council homes by 2030	HSG
Introduce food waste collections in line with legislation	ES
Review our approach to ensuring the environment around our commercial estate is clean and tidy	HSG
Implement the requirements of counter terrorism legislation (Martyn's Law)	PRS
Maintain community participation in greenspace management	EDR
Create a Beacon Country Park Masterplan in consultation with citizens	LS
Develop a Tree Management Strategy	ES

Measures	Annual Target 2024/25	To report	Lead area
Council CO2e emissions ("carbon footprint")	Reduce on previous year	Annually (if data available)	ES
% household waste recycling rate	47.8%	Quarterly	ES
% feel West Lancs is a safe and secure place to live	70%	Annually	PRS
Maintain number of Green Flag Awards	2	Annually	EDR

Associated Key Risks	Lead area
Those risks that will stop us achieving our vision, priorities and key activities. These are currently reported to Members through the Key Risk Register Report.	
Failure to respond to the climate emergency	ES

## Generate prosperity in our borough

- Attract investment, support businesses and direct wealth into the local economy and support co-operatives
- Provide opportunities for regeneration, housing and economic business growth
- Identify the housing needs of the borough and work with partners to address them
- Attract high quality job opportunities and support people into employment and training

<b>Actions/deliverables</b>	<b>Lead area</b>
Deliver our Community Wealth Building Strategy	EDR
Support Skelmersdale Ambassadors Place Board and Network	EDR
Approve and implement our Economic Development Strategy	EDR
Review opportunities to enhance our Markets offer	EDR
Progress the Local Plan 2027-2042 for adoption at full council	PRS
Develop an asset management plan to support investment in our commercial properties	HSG
Develop a Masterplan for Skelmersdale Town Centre	EDR
Deliver Digmaor Regeneration Plan (phase 1)	HSG
Deliver UK Shared Prosperity Funding Programme	EDR
Implement our Housing Strategy	HSG
Launch NEST (Networking employability, support and training) programme for local businesses	EDR
Increase opportunities for apprenticeship schemes through partnership with education organisations	EDR

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Annual Target 2024/25</b>	<b>To report</b>	<b>Lead area</b>
% of NNDR collected each year	97.2%	Quarterly	CCS
% planning applications determined in timescale – major	100%	Quarterly	PRS
% planning applications determined in timescale – minor	85%	Quarterly	PRS
% planning applications determined in timescale – other	85%	Quarterly	PRS
Number of workplaces supported to adapt and reduce ill health absence	30	Quarterly	EDR
Number of economically inactive residents supported into training, education or employment	140	Quarterly	EDR
Number of businesses accessing business support services, referrals to external partners, property searches and skills and employment services	48	Quarterly	EDR

### **Associated Key Risks**

Those risks that will stop us achieving our vision, priorities and key activities. These are currently reported to Members through the Key Risk Register Report.

None

## Foster inclusive and healthy communities

- Reduce health and wellbeing inequalities
- Design services around residents and communities
- Support our Armed Forces and vulnerable residents
- Provide safe, quality and affordable homes as a social landlord

Actions/deliverables	Lead area
Establish a network of Workplace Health Champions in West Lancashire businesses	EDR
Establish programmes for healthy lifestyle interventions to support tackling overweight and obesity	EDR
Progress leisure investment plans	FPCP
Establish WELL and enhance community services offered at Leisure sites	LS
Implement our Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy	HSG
Establish a face-to-face service to help alleviate digital inequality	EDR
Implement our Financial Inclusion Strategy	HSG
Achieve 'Silver' award level through our armed forces covenant employer recognition scheme (phase 2)	CCS
Implement our Damp Strategy	HSG
Deliver Housing Standards in accordance with Housing Regulations	HSG
Deliver our Housing Investment Programme based on outcome of the Stock Condition Survey	HSG

Measures	Annual Target 2024/25	To report	Lead area
Number of active, targeted population health & wellbeing active intervention projects	18	Quarterly	EDR
Number of new participants engaged in health & wellbeing programmes/interventions	1400	Quarterly	EDR
% Gas Safety Checks	100%	Quarterly	HSG
% Valid Fire Risk Assessments	100%	Quarterly	HSG
% Asbestos Surveys	100%	Quarterly	HSG
% Legionella Risk Assessments	100%	Quarterly	HSG
% Lift Safety Inspections (homes and corporate properties)	100%	Six-monthly	HSG
% properties with a valid Electrical Installation Condition Report	100%	Quarterly	HSG
% non-decent council homes	0%	Annually	HSG
Overall satisfaction with landlord	Target to be set after Q1	Annually	HSG

Associated Key Risks	Lead area
Those risks that will stop us achieving our vision, priorities and key activities. These are currently reported to Members through the Key Risk Register Report.	
Not agreeing on and delivering a sustainable and affordable leisure provision	LS
Cost of Living Crisis	CMT
Failure to comply with regulatory corporate compliance	HSG
Failure to comply with Housing Regulatory Compliance Requirements	HSG

## Manage a resilient, financially strong Council

- Maintain a balanced budget and transparent decision-making
- Continue to improve our services and deliver value for money
- Attract, retain and develop an engaged, skilled and motivated workforce including through an Employee Recognition Scheme

<b>Actions/deliverables</b>	<b>Lead area</b>
Achieve Medium Term Financial Strategy agreed savings	FPCP
Complete options appraisal for the potential development of a solar farm	HSG
Implement and embed new governance structure for managing council decisions	LDS
Develop the Customer Experience Strategy	CCS
Implement our Procurement Strategy	FPCP
Implement our Accommodation Strategy	FPCP
Refresh our website and ServiceNow (look, feel, functionality) to enhance the customer digital journey	CCS
Review and roll out mandatory training programme through the e-learning system	CCS
Review the Our People Strategy	CCS

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Annual Target 2024/25</b>	<b>To report</b>	<b>Lead area</b>
% staff turnover rate	18%	Annually	CCS
% staff that participate in six-monthly Our People Pulse Survey / Our People Survey	75%	Six-monthly	CCS
% staff that understand how their role contributes to achieving the vision and priorities	85%	Six-monthly	CCS
% staff that think the council is a good organisation to work for	85%	Six-monthly	CCS
% staff that feel proud to work for the council	85%	Six-monthly	CCS

<b>Associated Key Risks</b>	<b>Lead area</b>
Those risks that will stop us achieving our vision, priorities and key activities. These are currently reported to Members through the Key Risk Register Report.	
Unable to implement actions to reduce the budget gap in order to maintain financial sustainability over the medium term.	FPCP
Failure to ensure an effective procurement process to facilitate ethical, complaint and legally sound contracts and SLAs that provide VfM	FPCP
Difficulty with recruitment and retention of staff	CCS
Failure or prolonged loss of ICT	CCS
Significant failure to comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018)	CCG
Failure to ensure appropriate business continuity and emergency plans, procedures and processes are in place, resulting in an ineffective response to an event.	PRS

Notes:

Service abbreviations

CCS – Corporate & Customer Services

EDR – Economic Development & Regen Services (including Community & Wellbeing, Greenspace)

ES – Environmental Services

FPCP – Financial, Procurement and Commercial Services

HSG – Housing Services

LDS – Legal & Democratic Services

LS – Leisure Services

PRS – Planning & Regulatory Services

The delivery plan does not detail everything the Council will do aligned with these priorities. It outlines our key areas of work where the Council will add most value and deliver the best outcomes aligned to the priorities. It contains a number of longer-term deliverables that may start and complete beyond 2024/25, whilst having a natural focus on work during 2024/25. Progress with timescales and targets will be reported at committee during the year and refreshed annually through committee.





## AGENDA ITEM:

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY:**  
14 March 2024

**CABINET: 26 March 2024**

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<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Head of Finance, Procurement and Commercial Services</b>
<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>Councillor Rob Molloy</b>
<b>Contact for further information:</b>	<b>Jonas Smith (ext 5093)</b> <b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:jonas.smith@westlancs.gov.uk">jonas.smith@westlancs.gov.uk</a></b>
	<b>Peter Quick (ext 5203)</b> <b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:peter.quick@westlancs.gov.uk">peter.quick@westlancs.gov.uk</a></b>

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**SUBJECT: 2023/24 GRA REVENUE Q3 MONITORING**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide a summary of the General Revenue Account (GRA) position for the 2023/24 financial year at quarter 3.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **2.1 TO OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

2.2 That the 2023/24 GRA position be noted and any agreed comments passed to Cabinet prior to the meeting on 26 March 2024.

#### **2.3 TO CABINET**

2.4 That the 2023/24 GRA position be noted and endorsed.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 In February 2023, Council agreed the 2023/24 GRA Net Budget of £16.327m.

3.2 December 2023 cpi remains relatively high at 4.0% though the general trend now seems to be downward. This means there is likely to be ongoing contract inflation pressures to fund or manage in-year and beyond as inflation flows through contracts. In addition, the 2023/24 pay settlement was £1,925 per full time

employee, this is in excess of the 3% budgeted and will therefore be a pressure in the current year of approximately £600k.

- 3.3 The Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) is showing that significant pressure remains following the Government Financial Settlement. Work is currently being undertaken to identify additional measures to reduce this pressure over the period to 2026/27. The MTFF is based on the phasing out of the use of reserves beyond 2024/25 in order to provide a sustainable financial position going forward.

#### 4.0 GENERAL REVENUE ACCOUNT: QUARTER 3 POSITION

- 4.1 The table below provides quarter 3 forecast outturn estimates against the latest revised budget. The Q3 net forecast is a favourable position of £201K. If the forecast proves to be correct, this means that £201k less reserves will be required at year-end than was budgeted, (around £1,579k of general reserves required in 2023/24 rather than the budgeted amount of £1,780k). Further details are provided below. This Q3 forecast outturn compares favourably to the forecast at Q2, which was a £524k shortfall, the change is primarily due to the reduction in NNDR appeals provision (see below).

	FY Bud £000's	Q2 FY Var £000's	Q3 FY Var £000's	Commentary
Corporate & Customer Services	5,409	-600	-1,150	£750k favourable on ICT costs and salaries. 2024/25 savings likely to remove ICT favourable position. £400k one-off favourable anticipated on NNDR appeals provision at year end.
Environmental Services	6,696	600	650	Mainly staff & agency costs, plus fleet repair costs. 2024/25 fee increases should improve the position, subject to Council approval.
Finance Procurement & Commercial Services	1,592	125	130	Additional use of agency staff due to vacant posts & year end £60k savings target – additional income/efficiencies across WLBC
Housing Services (incl. Estates)	-886	-20	-15	
Legal & Democratic Services	1,128	110	75	Staff & agency costs, plus costs of new governance structure
Planning & Regulatory Services	1,818	200	150	Mainly Planning & Building Control income, plus staff & agency costs. 1 January 2024 increase in



				planning fees without change to income budgets in 2024/25 should reduce/remove underlying budget pressure.
Wellbeing & Place Services	1,689	350	425	Leisure Contract. Staff costs, pay settlement. Parking income down.
Other Corporate Budgets	501	0	-75	Central budget contingency
<b>Total Net Service Budgets</b>	<b>17,932</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>190</b>	
Interest Receivable (net)	-225	-241	-391	Higher interest rates, as well as £90k budgeted interest payments not required to be made by WLBC in 2023/24.
Minimum Revenue Position	400	0	0	
Contribution to/from reserves	-1,780	0	0	
<b>Total Net Budget</b>	<b>16,327</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>-201</b>	<b>1.2% of budget. Estimated pay settlement shortfall £0.6m offset by once-off estimated year end upside and interest.</b>
<b>GRA Net Funding</b>	<b>-16,327</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

- 4.2 Overall budget pressure primarily relates to the pay settlement of £1,925 per full time employee. Budgets were set assuming a 3% increase, the settlement was closer to 6% on average.
- 4.3 At service level there are various additional service-specific pressures as identified in the table above, these are largely offset by service-specific budget savings, once-off favourable matters at year end, plus treasury interest income being better than budget due to high interest rates and the reduced need to borrow.
- 4.4 It was reported in 2022/23 that agency staff were being used to help fill vacant posts, so maintaining service delivery. The use of agency staff is being monitored in 2023/24 with the intention of reducing reliance on this type of staff.
- 4.5 Savings proposals of around £1.3m have been identified to address the budget gap within the Medium-Term Financial Forecast. These have been built into budgets for 2024/25, for Council approval in February 2024, and will comprise a combination of one-off and recurring measures to reduce expenditure and increase income.

## 5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Careful monitoring of the budget position helps ensure that the GRA remains able to deliver services and is financially sustainable in the medium term.

## **6.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 The formal reporting of performance on the General Revenue Account is part of the overall budgetary management and control framework that is designed to minimise the financial risks facing the Council. This process is resource intensive for both Members and Officers but ensures that a robust and achievable budget is set.

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

## Agenda Item



Executive, Overview & Scrutiny  
Committee: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024

CABINET: 26th March 2024

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**Report of: Head of Finance, Procurement and Commercial Services**

**Relevant Corporate Director: Housing, Transformation and Resources**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor R. Molloy**

**Contact for further information: Cathy Murphy (Ext. 5057)**  
**(E-mail: [Cathy.Murphy@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:Cathy.Murphy@westlancs.gov.uk))**

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**SUBJECT: CAPITAL MONITORING FOR QUARTER 3**

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Wards affected: Borough Wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To agree a Revised General Revenue Account (GRA) Capital Programme for 2023/24 and provide an update on progress on capital schemes.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the revised Capital Programme, including budget adjustments and re-profiling contained within Appendix A be approved.

2.2 That progress against the Revised Capital Programme at quarter 3 be noted.

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### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Capital Programme is set on a three-year rolling basis and the Programmes for 2023/2024, 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 were approved by Council in February 2023.

3.2 In accordance with best practice, the Capital Programme is subject to revision during the year to ensure that it is based on the latest available information and to make monitoring of the Programme more meaningful. It enables Managers to review their schemes with the most up to date information and to review the resources available. It also provides a base upon which to build future Capital Programmes.

3.3 Members are kept informed of the financial position of the Capital Programme through monitoring reports. The Housing Public Sector programme is the subject of a separate report elsewhere on the agenda and will be also presented to this Cabinet meeting. This report concentrates on the GRA programme.

#### **4.0 REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

4.1 The original Capital Programme that was set for the 2023/2024 financial year together with underspends brought forward from the previous financial year totalled £13.971m of which £3.448m is funded by Capital Receipts as shown in Appendix A - Funding of Capital Programme.

4.2 Heads of Service have reviewed their respective schemes and are now proposing that further changes since Quarter 2 are made as a result of more up to date information that has become available. This review process has incorporated a number of considerations including:

- Re-profiling of schemes to match the anticipated timing of spending.
- Increasing expenditure budgets to reflect new and / or additional external funding

4.3 The proposed updated changes from Quarter 2 to the 2023/24 Programme are analysed in Appendix C. This shows a net decrease of £1.059m largely due to these items being agreed to be utilised for the transformation programme.

- I C T Infrastructure £150K
- ICT Development Programme £604K
- CRM System £67K
- Website development £200K
- Invest to Save Digital Services £59K
- Digital innovation and the continued development of ServiceNow £80K
- Microsoft 365 phase 3 £166K
- Corporate wifi upgrade £85K

There is also a reduction in the amount of Re-profiling since Quarter 2 for the leisure facilities of £510k.

## 5.0 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

- 5.1 Generally, capital schemes are profiled with relatively low spending compared to budget in the early part of the financial year with increased spending as the year progresses. This reflects the fact that many new schemes have considerable lead in times. Other schemes are dependent on external partner funding and can only begin once their funding details have been finalised. Other related issues include contract retentions or contingencies that will only be spent some time after completion of the contract.
- 5.2 For the current year, £3.747M (27%) of total expenditure has been incurred by quarter 3 (before capital Re-profiling). A substantial amount of this is due to spend on the Leisure Centres (£1.731M), Disabled Facilities Grants (£1.050M) and the Cycle Trail at Cheshire Lines (£436k).

Although The Electric Charging points has an overspend of 19k and the Cycle Trail at Cheshire Lines has an overspend of £8k a grant for both projects will be applied for and are expected to be received.

A comparison with previous years' programmes comparing schemes funded by Capital Receipts is shown in **Table 1**. The expenditure against budget before and after re-profiling is analysed in Appendix B – 2023/24 Revised Capital Programme Spend to Date against Budget

Year	Expenditure £m	Budget £m	% spend against Budget
2023/2024	0.499	2.578	19%
2022/2023	0.534	4.723	11%
2021/2022	0.630	3.665	17%
2020/2021	2.085	7.087	29%
2019/2020	0.998	5.175	19%
2018/2019	1.908	7.128	27%
2017/2018	0.455	2.634	17%

## 6.0 CAPITAL RESOURCES

- 6.1 There are sufficient resources identified to fund the 2023/24 Revised Capital Programme as shown in Appendix A.
- 6.2 The main area of the capital resources budget that is subject to variation is in relation to capital receipts. These are the useable proceeds from the sale of Council assets (mainly houses under Right to Buy legislation) that are available to fund capital expenditure. These receipts can vary significantly depending on the number and value of assets sold.

- 6.3 The budget for useable capital receipts (including the affordable housing element) to be generated from Council House sales in the year is set at £0.960m from 50 sales. At the end of Quarter 3, 30 sales had been completed with a sales value of £1.34m and the targets for the year have been exceeded. Around 50 Right to Buy sales are expected to be completed in year so the number of sales are anticipated to be as budgeted.
- 6.4 In February 2023 Council approved that all right to buy receipts retained by the Council will be for HRA use from 2024/25. This proposal has no impact on the commitments already included within the capital programme, so the non - Treasury Share of receipts for 2022/23 and 2023/24 will still be available to meet those projects previously planned to be financed as set out in 4.1. In addition, Government have advised that the Treasury Share can be retained by the HRA in 2022/23 and 2023/24. From 2024/25 the Treasury Share will again be paid to Government.

## **7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Capital Programme includes schemes that the Council plans to implement to enhance service delivery and assets. The Capital Programme also achieves the objectives of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities by ensuring capital investment plans are affordable, prudent, and sustainable. This report provides an updated position on project plans and shows progress against them.

## **8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 Capital assets shape the way services are delivered for the long term and, as a result, create financial commitments. The formal reporting of performance against the Capital Programme is part of the overall budgetary management and control framework that is designed to minimise the financial risks facing the Council. Schemes within the Programme that are reliant on external contributions and/or decisions are not started until funding is secured. Other resources that are subject to fluctuations are monitored closely to ensure availability. The Capital receipts position is scrutinised on a regular basis and managed over the medium term to mitigate the risk of unfunded capital expenditure.

## **9.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Some of the Capital Schemes will enhance the Health and Wellbeing of residents and the management of the delivery is ensured via the reporting mechanism.

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The majority of the budget issues set out in this report have been the subject of previous reports to committees and consequently an Equality Impact Assessment has already been prepared for them where relevant.

### **Appendices**

- A Funding of Capital Programme
- B 2023-2024 Revised Capital Programme Spend to Date Against Budget at Quarter 3.
- C Capital Re-profiling and Significant variances at Quarter 3







Corporate and Customer Services	Digital innovation and the continued development of ServiceNow	£80	£80	£80					£0	£80			£80	£80	£0	
Corporate and Customer Services	Shop Front Improvement Fund	£50	£50	£50					£0	£50			£50	£50	£0	this is be looked into further as the task and finish groups for this have been disbanded and this project is on hold.
Corporate and Customer Services	Digital Transformation	£6	£6	£6					£0	£0			£0	£0	£0	This project is no longer going ahead and was released back to pot in December 2023
Environmental Services	Culvert Debris Screens	£2	£2	£2				£2	£2	£0			£0	£0	£0	
Environmental Services	Purchase of Vehicles	£2	£2	£2					£0	£0			£0	£0	£0	release no longer required
Environmental Services	Purchase of Wheelie Bins	£0	£0	£0					£0	£0			£0	£0	£0	
Environmental Services	Expand In Cab System	£1	£1	£1					£0	£0			£0	£0	£0	release no longer required
Environmental Services	Waste Collection Projects	£2	£2	£0					£0	£0			£0	£0	£0	
Environmental Services	Litter Bin Policy Review (Cabinet November 2019)	£73	£7	£62	£23	£5	£1	£33	£62	(£0)	£0	£30	(£0)	£30	£0	The £5k that is in recurrence of schemes is not required in 2023/24 so has been removed
Environmental Services	Street Cleansing Tools	£0	£0	£0					£0	£0			£0	£0	£0	
Environmental Services	Liverpool Road Cemetry	£1	£1	£1				£1	£1	£0			£0	£0	£0	
Environmental Services	Waste Management Service	£35	£35	£35					£0	£35		£35	£35	£35	£0	White Paper has been released now awaiting LCC
Environmental Services	Glutton Vaccum Cleaner	£20	(£2)	£0					£0	£0			£0	£0	£0	
Environmental Services	Becconsall Closed Church Yard	£30	£30	£30					£0	£30		£30	£30	£30	£0	This is with legal and hopefully won't be needed
Environmental Services	Tree Management	£50	£50	£100				£10	£10	£90		£90	£90	£90	£0	with procurement as at present
Environmental Services	Culvert Management	£50	£50	£100				£30	£30	£70		£70	£70	£70	£0	awaiting quotes for a consultant, 1st quote is £30k
Environmental Services	Replace faulty domestic bins	£10	£9	£19		£15		£4	£19	(£0)	£10		£10	£10	£0	
Environmental Services	Littering T&F 23/24	£0	£0	£23	£1	£3		£8	£13	£10			£0	£0	£0	10k will be given back to the pot as agreed with the budget manager
Environmental Services	Street Recycling Bins 23/24	£0	£0	£10		£6		£4	£10	£0			£0	£0	£0	
Environmental Services	Free Trees	£20	£17	£23			£4	£1	£5	£18		£18	£18	£18	£0	Currently looking at places that these could be stored and residents could collect from , looking to re-profile 18k to 2024/25
Environmental Services	Conservation Area Enhancement	£14	£12	£12					£0	£12		£12	£12	£12	£0	

Environmental Services	Abbey Lake Quarry	£20	£20	£0					£0	£0				£0				£0	This project has been confirmed as complete with the budget manager and the £20k is no longer needed and has been released back for other projects
Environmental Services	Mill Dam Lane	£3	£2	£2			£2	£2	(£0)					£0				£0	
Environmental Services	Alder Lane	£5	£5	£5		£5		£5	£0					£0				£0	
Environmental Services	Electric Vehicle Charging point	£0	£0	£0		£19		£19	(£19)					£0				£0	This has been funded by an external grant
Environmental Services	WebaspX System			£80				£0	£80			£80		£80				£0	
Finance Procurement and Commercial Services	Parish Capital Schemes	£42	£22	£31	£1	£0	£7	£8	£16	£15	£30		£13	£43	£30			£30	2k no longer required was agreed after December council. 25k to be re-profiled
Finance Procurement and Commercial Services	Restructuring Costs	£152	£152	£152					£0	£152			£152	£152				£0	These schemes are to be identified as part of 2023/24 budget setting and the exploration of the use of flexible capital receipts in line with guidance
Finance Procurement and Commercial Services	Capitalise revenue transformation costs.	£300	£300	£300					£0	£300			£300	£300				£0	These schemes are to be identified as part of 2023/24 budget setting and the exploration of the use of flexible capital receipts in line with guidance
Finance Procurement and Commercial Services	Building Compliance on Commercial Property	£40	£40	£60				£45	£45	£15	£20		£15	£35				£0	surveys in 24/25 after work complete
Finance Procurement and Commercial Services	Gorsey Place Rebuild	£0	£0	£0					£0	£0				£0				£0	This is funded by GRA Contribution
Finance Procurement and Commercial Services	Fixed Asset Register 23/24	£0	£0	£30				£30	£30	£0				£0				£0	
Finance Procurement and Commercial Services	Capital works 23/24	£0	£0	£230				£230	£230	£0			£10	£10		£180		£180	Tenders to go out by Christmas to start early 2024, possibly run into 24/25.
Finance Procurement and Commercial Services	Civica Financials	£163	£163	£163		£120		£43	£163	£0				£0				£0	
			£0						£0	£0									
Housing Services	Robert Hodge Centre - external site improvements relating to Health and Safety Traffic Flow	£16	£16	£16		£10	£7		£17	(£1)				£0				£0	Work is in progress of receiving drawings and costings for this

Housing Services	Affordable Housing	£247	£247	£247						£0	£247		£247					£0	£72K has been earmarked as a contribution to the Egerton project however none of this is expected to be spent in 2023/24. Plans are in place and project are being looked into how the rest of this budget can be utilised
Housing Services	Corporate Property Investment Programme	£239	£110	£274	£2	£42	£38	£97	£180	£94	£164	£94	£258	£164				£164	
Housing Services	Housing Renewal Grants	£0	(£24)	£50	£6	£4	£0	£20	£30	£20		£20	£20					£0	
Housing Services	Disabled Facilities Grants	£1,444	(£511)	£1,444	£198	£592	£260	£394	£1,444	£0	£1,444		£1,444	£1,444	£1,444			£1,444	This is funded in full by a grant from Central Government
Housing Services	Burscough Sports Centre - roofing upgrades	£20	£20	£20				£20	£20	£0			£0					£0	
Housing Services	Safer Streets	£39	£1	£1				£1	£1	(£0)			£0					£0	
			£0						£0	£0									
Planning and Reg	Preservation of Buildings at Risk	£1	£1	£1				£1	£1	£0			£0					£0	
Planning and Reg	M3PP System Replacement	£90	£90	£90			£32	£58	£90	£0			£0					£0	awaiting prices, looking at IDOX but could still be M3PP
Planning and Reg	CCTV	£212	£33	£33		£3		£29	£32	£0			£0					£0	This was delayed to being procured as one project and is currently now out to tender.
Planning and Reg	CCTV monitoring 23/24	£0	£0	£79		£4	£0	£75	£79	(£0)			£0					£0	work is currently scheduled over the next few weeks, delay was due to awaiting the contractors for part of it
Planning and Reg	IDOX ERDM System	£43	£33	£53	£7	£7	£4	£36	£53	£0			£0					£0	
Planning and Reg	Planning/building	£0	£0	£20					£0	£20		£20	£20					£0	
			£0						£0	£0									
Wellbeing and Place Services	Skelmersdale Town Centre	£5,220	£3,258	£3,258				£1,220	£1,220	£2,038		£2,038	£2,038					£0	This is an ongoing project
Wellbeing and Place Services	WL Play Strategy Improvements (Receipts)	£354	£230	£260	£60	£3			£64	£197		£197	£197					£0	delays due to resource capacity, procurement and delivery delays
Wellbeing and Place Services	WL Play Strategy Improvements (S106)	£102	£62	£62					£0	£62		£62	£62					£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Burscough Sports Centre (receipts)	£321	£321	£321					£0	£321		£321	£321					£0	This project has been placed on hold pending finalisation of the new Leisure Hubs procurement project.

Wellbeing and Place Services	Burscough Sports Centre (grant)	£75	£75	£75					£0	£75			£75	£75			£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Allotment Improvements	£4	£4	£4					£0	£4			£4	£4			£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	WL Play Strategy Improvements (cil)	£234	£9	£9					£0	£9			£9	£9			£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	WL Play Strategy Improvements (grant)	£47	£47	£47					£0	£47			£47	£47			£0	grant supposed to be from LEF but it is now not sure whether this will come in
Wellbeing and Place Services	Tawd Valley (S106)	£48	£19	£19					£0	£19			£19	£19			£0	developments on site are an ongoing process. For some of the schemes (mountain bike track, community room) we have received additional match funding beyond original estimated budgets
Wellbeing and Place Services	Chapel Gallery phase 3	£1	£1	£1			£1		£1	£1							£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Chapel Gallery - Repair works	£48	£10	£100	£0		£100		£100	£100			£33	£33		£6	£6	this was agreed as a record of decision and to be funded by borrowing
Wellbeing and Place Services	Tawd Valley (CIL)	£10	£10	£10			£8		£8	£2			£2	£2			£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Hesketh Avenue	£40	£40	£40					£0	£40			£40	£40			£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Nye Bevan Pool Building Works	£9	£9	£9					£0	£9			£9	£9			£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Park Pool Building works	£10	£10	£10					£0	£10			£10	£10			£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Banks Leisure Centre	£0	£0	£0					£0	£0				£0			£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Hunters Hill	£0	£0	£0					£0	£0				£0			£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Bowling Greens	£11	£11	£11					£0	£11				£0			£0	this will be released back to the pot as this is no longer required
Wellbeing and Place Services	Whittle Drive	£60	£60	£60					£0	£60			£60	£60			£0	This will likely be spent in 2024/25
Wellbeing and Place Services	Abbey Lakes	£11	£11	£11	£3				£3	£8			£8	£8			£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Cycle Trail at Cheshire Lines	£442	£428	£428	£271	£165			£436	£8				£0			£0	cost increases and specification changes by partners mean delay as additional resources are sought
Wellbeing and Place Services	Resurfacing of Blaguegate Lane	£160	£160	£160					£0	£160			£160	£160			£0	The council still holds the 160k capital contribution from the CCG, however due to the CCG's disbanding discussions are still ongoing on the funding
Wellbeing and Place Services	Leisure Facilities Project	£4,000	£2,782	£2,782	£122	£974	£635		£1,731	£1,051			£1,051	£1,051			£0	

Wellbeing and Place Services	Community environmental improvements	£6	£6	£6	£3			£3	£6	£0				£0				£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Christmas trees & decorations for Skelmersdale	£25	£25	£25			£11	£14	£25	(£0)				£0				£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Moor Street Phase 2 (receipts)	£177	£67	£67					£0	£67			£67	£67				£0	The expenditure incurred on this scheme is being reviewed by officers and a report will be presented to members on completion of this work explaining the findings
Wellbeing and Place Services	Moor Street Phase 2 (grant)	£565	(£0)	(£0)					£0	(£0)				£0				£0	The expenditure incurred on this scheme is being reviewed by officers and a report will be presented to members on completion of this work explaining the findings
Wellbeing and Place Services	Moor Street/St Helens Road	£276	£0	£0					£0	£0			£0	£0				£0	The expenditure incurred on this scheme is being reviewed by officers and a report will be presented to members on completion of this work explaining the findings
Wellbeing and Place Services	Moor Street (Phase 1) St Helen's Rd Ruff Lane	£104	£104	£104					£0	£104			£104	£104				£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Ormskirk Cycle and Pedestrian improvements	£95	£95	£95					£0	£95			£95	£95				£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Skelmersdale Vision	£11	£11	£11					£0	£11			£11	£11				£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Wheatsheaf Walks	£1	(£4)	£0					£0	£0				£0				£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Economic Regeneration	£5	£5	£5					£0	£5			£5	£5				£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Skelmersdale Gateway Improvements	£50	£50	£50					£0	£50			£50	£50				£0	This is for vehicle approaches for artwork and is currently being looked into
Wellbeing and Place Services	Cycle Path (S106)	£10	£10	£10					£0	£10			£10	£10				£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Ormskirk Town Centre (CIL)	£0	£0	£0					£0	£0				£0				£0	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Changing Places Facility	£60	£60	£60					£0	£60			£60	£60				£0	This is currently in the tendering process and it is hoped that Preliminary works will start in Q4
Wellbeing and Place Services	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	£63	£63	£254					£0	£254			£254	£1,535				£1,789	UKSPF incepted into the Capital Programme following grant award in December 2022

Wellbeing and Place Services	Ginnells	£107	£107	£107				£30	£30	£77			£77	£77			£0	Ginnells currently proposed to be funded by Uk shared prosperity fund	
Wellbeing and Place Services	Elmers Clough Improvements	£50	£5	£5		£3	£2		£6	(£0)			(£0)	(£0)			£0		
<b>RA Capital Programme Expenditure</b>		<b>£17,978</b>	<b>£10,493</b>	<b>£14,051</b>	<b>£696</b>	<b>£1,978</b>	<b>£1,072</b>	<b>£2,706</b>	<b>£6,452</b>	<b>£7,598</b>	<b>£1,918</b>	<b>£30</b>	<b>£7,596</b>	<b>£1,578</b>	<b>£11,122</b>	<b>£1,888</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£186</b>	<b>£2,074</b>
	<b>FUNDING:</b>								£0	£0									
	Capital Receipts	£4,548	£3,468	£2,578	£102	£229	£167	£514	£1,012	£1,566	(£5)	£0	£2,316	£0	£2,311	£0	£0	£0	£0
	GRA Contributions	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
	Prudential Borrowing	£5,438	£3,438	£5,740	£1	£14	£0	£1,767	£1,782	£3,958	£479	£30	£3,208	£43	£3,760	£444	£0	£186	£630
	CIL	£4,294	£2,806	£2,806	£122	£978	£645	£0	£1,744	£1,062	£0	£0	£1,062	£0	£1,062	£0	£0	£0	£0
	s106	£757	£412	£412	£3	£0	£0	£0	£3	£409	£0	£0	£398	£0	£398	£0	£0	£0	£0
	Other Grant Funding	£2,942	£369	£2,515	£469	£757	£260	£425	£1,911	£604	£1,444	£0	£613	£1,535	£3,592	£1,444	£0	£0	£1,444
	HCA (Homes England)	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
									£0	£0									
	<b>Total GRA Capital Programme Funding</b>	<b>£17,978</b>	<b>£10,493</b>	<b>£14,051</b>	<b>£696</b>	<b>£1,978</b>	<b>£1,072</b>	<b>£2,706</b>	<b>£6,452</b>	<b>£7,598</b>	<b>£1,918</b>	<b>£30</b>	<b>£7,596</b>	<b>£1,578</b>	<b>£11,122</b>	<b>£1,888</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£186</b>	<b>£2,074</b>





APPENDIX 1: GRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24 - 2025/26

Funding LU	Cost Code	concatenate	Service	Capital Scheme	2022/23					2023/24					2024/25				2025/26			Notes														
					Recurring and Continuation of Schemes	Approved Budget Feb 2020 / 2021 /2022	Re-profiling from 2021/22 July 2022	In-Year Approvals Dec 2022	Total Budget	Potential Slippage	Total Budget	Q1 Actual Spend	Q2 Actual Spend	Q3 Actual Spend	Q4 Forecast	total spend	Remaining Budget	Recurring and Continuation of Schemes	Approved Budget Feb 2022	Slippage from 2023/24	New Capital Bids Feb 2023		Total Budget	Recurring and Continuation of Schemes	Slippage from 2024/25	New Capital Bids Feb 2023	Total Budget									
Receipts	7603	7603ReceiptsCulv	Environmental Services	Culvert Debris Screens		£0	£2		£2	£2			£2	£2	£0				£0				£0													
Receipts	7781	7781ReceiptsPur	Environmental Services	Purchase of Vehicles		£0	£2		£2	£2				£0	£0				£0				£0												release no longer required	
Receipts	7126	7126ReceiptsPur	Environmental Services	Purchase of Wheelie Bins		£0	£0		£0	£0				£0	£0				£0				£0													
Receipts	7125	7125ReceiptsExp	Environmental Services	Expand In Cab System		£0	£1		£1	£1				£0	£0				£0				£0												release no longer required	
Receipts	7770	7770ReceiptsWas	Environmental Services	Waste Collection Projects		£2	£0		£2	£2				£0	£0				£0				£0													
Receipts	7134	7134ReceiptsLitr	Environmental Services	Litter Bin Policy Review (Cabinet November 2019)	£5	£68	£0		£73	£73				£62	£23	£5	£1	£33	£62	£0	£0	£30	£0	£30											The ESk that is in recurrence of schemes is not required in 2023/24 so has been removed	
Receipts	7129	7129ReceiptsStre	Environmental Services	Street Cleansing Tools		£0	£0		£0	£0				£0	£0				£0				£0													
Receipts	7137	7137ReceiptsLive	Environmental Services	Liverpool Road Cemetery		£0	£1		£1	£1				£1	£1				£1				£1													
Receipts	7136	7136ReceiptsWas	Environmental Services	Waste Management Service		£35	£0		£35	£35				£35	£0				£35				£35													White Paper has been released now awaiting LCC
Receipts	7148	7148ReceiptsGlut	Environmental Services	Glutton Vacuum Cleaner		£20	£0		£20	£20				£0	£0				£0				£0													
Receipts	7149	7149ReceiptsBecc	Environmental Services	Becconsall Closed Church Yard		£30	£0		£30	£30				£30	£0				£30				£30													This is with legal and hopefully won't be needed
Receipts	7150	7150ReceiptsTree	Environmental Services	Tree Management		£50	£0		£50	£50				£100	£10				£90				£90												with procurement as at present	
Receipts	7603	7603ReceiptsCulv	Environmental Services	Culvert Management		£50	£0		£50	£50				£100	£30				£70				£70													awaiting quotes for a consultant, 1st quote is £30k
Receipts	7151	7151ReceiptsRep	Environmental Services	Replace faulty domestic bins	£10		£0		£10	£19				£19	£15		£4		£19	£0	£10		£10													
Borrowing	7057	7057BorrowingLit	Environmental Services	Littering T&F 23/24					£0	£0				£23	£1	£3		£8	£13																	10k will be given back to the pot as agreed with the budget manager
Borrowing	7058	7058BorrowingSt	Environmental Services	Street Recycling Bins 23/24					£0	£0				£10		£6		£4	£10																	
Receipts	7400	7400ReceiptsFree	Environmental Services	Free Trees		£20	£0		£20	£23				£23			£4	£1	£5				£18													Currently looking at places that these could be stored and residents could collect from , looking to re-profile 18k to 2024/25
Receipts	7402	7402ReceiptsCon	Environmental Services	Conservation Area Enhancement		£0	£14		£14	£12				£12					£12				£12													
Receipts	7428	7428ReceiptsAbb	Environmental Services	Abbey Lake Quarry		£0	£20		£20	£0				£0	£0				£0				£0													This project has been confirmed as complete with the budget manager and the £20k is no longer needed and has been released back for other projects
Receipts	7442	7442ReceiptsMill	Environmental Services	Mill Dam Lane		£0	£3		£3	£2				£2			£2		£2				£0													
Receipts	7444	7444ReceiptsAlder	Environmental Services	Alder Lane		£0	£5		£5	£5				£5			£5		£0				£0													
Receipts	7534	7534ReceiptsElec	Environmental Services	Electric Vehicle Charging point		£0	£0		£0	£0				£0	£19				£19				£0													This has been funded by an external grant
Borrowing		BorrowingWebasp	Environmental Services	Webasp System						£80				£0					£80				£80													
<b>Total GRA Capital Programme Expenditure</b>					<b>£479</b>	<b>£5,548</b>	<b>£9,261</b>	<b>£2,690</b>	<b>£17,978</b>	<b>£10,493</b>	<b>£14,051</b>	<b>£696</b>	<b>£1,978</b>	<b>£1,072</b>	<b>£2,706</b>	<b>£6,452</b>	<b>£7,598</b>	<b>£1,918</b>	<b>£30</b>	<b>£7,596</b>	<b>£1,578</b>	<b>£11,122</b>	<b>£1,888</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£186</b>	<b>£2,074</b>										
<b>FUNDING:</b>																																				
Receipts		Capital Receipts			£479	£1,378	£2,691	£0	£4,548	£3,468	£3,448	£102	£229	£167	£614	£1,112	£2,336	£0	£0	£3,186	£0	£3,181	£0	£0	£0	£0										
Borrowing		GRA Contributions			£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0										
Borrowing		Prudential Borrowing			£0	£170	£5,220	£48	£5,438	£3,438	£4,870	£1	£14	£0	£1,667	£1,682	£3,188	£479	£30	£2,338	£43	£2,890	£444	£0	£186	£630										
CIL		CIL			£0	£4,000	£244	£50	£4,294	£2,806	£2,806	£122	£978	£645	£1,744	£1,744	£1,062	£0	£0	£1,062	£0	£1,062	£0	£0	£0	£0										
S106		S106			£0	£0	£458	£299	£757	£412	£412	£3	£0	£0	£0	£3	£409	£0	£0	£398	£0	£398	£0	£0	£0	£0										
Grant		Other Grant Funding			£0	£0	£649	£2,293	£2,942	£369	£2,515	£469	£757	£260	£425	£1,911	£604	£1,444	£0	£613	£1,535	£3,592	£1,444	£0	£0	£1,444										
		HCA (Homes England)			£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0										

	Total GRA Capital Programme Funding	£479	£5,548	£9,261	£2,690	£17,978	£10,493	£14,051	£696	£1,978	£1,072	£2,706	£6,452	£7,598	£1,918	£30	£7,596	£1,578	£11,122	£1,888	£0	£186	£2,074	
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**APPENDIX B - 2023/2024 CAPITAL PROGRAMME**  
**SPEND TO DATE AGAINST BUDGET BEFORE RE-PROFILING**

Service	Budget Approval	Spend to date		Budget remaining
	£000	£000	%	£000
Corporate and Customer Services	1,777	58	3%	1,719
Environmental Services	506	83	16%	424
Finance Procurement and Commercial Services	966	128	13%	838
Housing Services	2,051	1,160	57%	892
Planning and Regulatory Services	276	57	21%	219
Wellbeing and Place Services	8,474	2,261	27%	6,213
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,051</b>	<b>3,747</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>10,304</b>

**SPEND TO DATE AGAINST BUDGET AFTER RE-PROFILING**

Service	Budget Approval	Spend to date		Budget remaining
	£000	£000	%	£000
Corporate and Customer Services	221	58	26%	162
Environmental Services	172	83	48%	89
Finance Procurement and Commercial Services	484	128	26%	356
Housing Services	1,690	1,160	69%	531
Planning and Regulatory Services	256	57	22%	199
Wellbeing and Place Services	3,631	2,261	62%	1,370
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,452</b>	<b>3,747</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>2,706</b>



APPENDIX C- CAPITAL RE-PROFILING FOR INDIVIDUAL SCHEMES - 2023/2024

	£'000	£'000	Notes
		<b>6,308</b>	
<b><u>Corporate and Customer Services</u></b>			
I C T Infrastructure	150		To be used in Transformation project in 2024/25
ICT Development Programme	604		To be used in Transformation project in 2024/25
Website	20		To be used in Transformation project in 2024/25
CRM System	67		To be used in Transformation project in 2024/25
Right Kit Right Role Right Refresh - support agile working	33		To be used in Transformation project in 2024/25
Website development	200		To be used in Transformation project in 2024/25
Communication devices	40		To be used in Transformation project in 2024/25
Invest to Save Digital Services	59		To be used in Transformation project in 2024/25
Digital innovation and the continued development of ServiceNow	80		To be used in Transformation project in 2024/25
Microsoft 365 phase 3	166		to be reviewed in 2024/25 as agreed with budget holder
Corporate wifi upgrade	85		to be reviewed in 2024/25 as agreed with budget holder
<b>Corporate and Customer Services Total</b>		<b>1,505</b>	
<b><u>Environmental Services</u></b>			
Webaspx	80		This project is awaiting a contract being awarded and will not compete before 2023/24
<b>Environmental Services Total</b>		<b>80</b>	
<b><u>Finance Procurement and Commercial Services</u></b>			
Parish Capital Schemes	13		some Parish's have asked for an extension due to weather conditions which has been agreed
<b>Finance Procurement and Commercial Services Total</b>		<b>13</b>	
<b>Total to be Reprofiled Q2 report</b>		<b>1,598</b>	
<b><u>Significant Variances not to be included in Re-profiling since Q2</u></b>			
<b><u>Finance Procurement and Commercial Services</u></b>			
<b><u>Parish Capital</u></b>			
One of the projects is no longer going ahead so the money is to be returned to the Capital Pot		-2	
<b><u>Wellbeing and Place</u></b>			
<b><u>Leisure Facilities Project</u></b>			
Expenditure not anticipated until 2024/25 made in Q3 2023/24		-510	
<b><u>Skelmersdale Town Centre</u></b>			
Expenditure not anticipated until 2024/25 made in Q3 2023/24		-1,220	
<b><u>Tawd Valley</u></b>			
Expenditure not anticipated until 2024/25 made in Q3 2023/24		-8	
<b><u>Elmers Clough</u></b>			
Expenditure not anticipated until 2024/25 made in Q3 2023/24		-2	
<b><u>Total Significant Variances not to be included in Re-profiling</u></b>		<b>-1,742</b>	
<b>Total of Re-profiling</b>		<b>-144</b>	
<b><u>Revised Capital Programme Total</u></b>		<b>6,452</b>	





## AGENDA ITEM:

Landlord Services Committee:

Executive Overview & Scrutiny: 14 March  
2024

Cabinet: 26 March 2024

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**Report of: Head of Finance, Procurement and Commercial Services**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor N. Pryce-Roberts**

**Contact for further information: Peter Quick (Extn. 5203)**  
**([peter.quick@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:peter.quick@westlancs.gov.uk))**

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**SUBJECT: HRA REVENUE AND CAPITAL QUARTER THREE (Q3) REVIEW**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide a summary of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Housing capital programme positions for the 2023/24 financial year.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **2.1 TO LANDLORD SERVICES COMMITTEE**

2.2 That the 2023/24 HRA and Housing capital programme positions be noted and any comments forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

#### **2.3 TO OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

2.4 That the 2023/24 HRA and Housing capital programme positions be noted and any comments forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

#### **2.5 TO CABINET**

2.6 That the 2023/24 HRA and Housing capital programme positions be noted and endorsed.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 In February 2023, Council agreed the HRA revenue and capital budgets for the 2023/24 financial year.

3.2 The Government's current rent policy confirms annual increases of up to cpi + 1% until 2025/26. The cpi + 1% increase is applied to the cpi rate from the September before, so for 2024/25 rent setting it will be based on September 2023 cpi, 6.7%.



#### 4.0 HRA – 2023/24 Q3 Projected Outturn

4.1 A summary of the projected HRA revenue outturn against revised budget is set out in the table below. The HRA is expected to outturn around £325k (1.1%) below budget.

Budget Area	2023/24 Revised Budget £000	Q1 Var. £000	Q2 Var. £000	Outturn Var. £000	Comment
Employee Expenses	4,577	150	200	150	Pay settlement partially offset by vacancies (after vacancy factor).
Void and response repairs plus electrical testing	5,370	0	0	250	Forecast over budget due to retrospective costs for 2022/23 and increased billing run rate since October due to previous under-billing by the contractor.
Other premises costs	4,227	0	0	0	Heating outturn will be zero through y/e debtor.
Transport costs	191	0	0	-25	
Budget contingency	390	0	-150	-200	Various plans that will require most of contingency.
Supplies and Services	1,604	0	0	0	
Support Services and internal income (net)	2,819	0	-110	-150	Estates recharge for HRA valuations. Legal recharge for vacant post. Caretaking internal income for works completed elsewhere within WLBC.
Loan interest & Contribution towards Repayment	3,492	0	0	0	£3,432k is 'fixed' interest and debt repayment. Additional £60k depends on level of additional borrowing for capital programme and TVDL works.
Contributions to capital	7,205	0	0	0	
Dwelling rents	-25,900	-100	-150	-250	Based on latest run rate
Other external income	-3,975	-50	-50	-100	Mainly furnishing service - likely to be well ahead of budget.
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-260</b>	<b>-325</b>	<b>1.1% of total expenditure budget</b>

- 4.1 Energy cost pressures on the **district heating scheme** (DHS) were reported throughout 2022/23. Final outturn recognised a shortfall within the account overall of around £370k, which will need to be recovered from DHS customers over time. An overall shortfall in 2023/24 is also expected. As in 2022/23, any shortfall will be treated as a debtor at year-end so the overall DHS accounting outturn position in year will be zero.
- 4.2 Budget pressure identified to date primarily relates to the pay settlement of £1,925 per full time employee, plus continued budget pressure from our repairs contract. Salary budgets were set assuming a 3% increase, the final settlement was closer to 6% on average.
- 4.3 Salary and repair budget pressures are expected to be more than offset by rental and furnishing service income, plus budget contingency not used. In addition, latest estimates suggest that around £150k of recharges to the HRA from the GRA are unlikely to occur due to (i) a vacant post for Housing-specific work in the Legal team means there are limited costs to recharge; (ii) year-end Housing valuation work procured through Estates will be less than budgeted so the recharge will be less too; and (iii) HRA caretaking work completed for other (GRA) services within WLBC will be more than budgeted, so additional internal income to the HRA.

## 5.0 Capital Investment Programme

- 5.1 The table below shows expenditure at Q3 of £5.3m on the capital programme, this represents 37% of the revised budget. In addition, a further £2.33m, (66%), has been invested in building new HRA homes through TVDL. Expenditure at Q3 2023/24 was £4.8m (41%).
- 5.2 Housing capital budgets tends to profile with more expenditure later in the financial year and outturn typically around 70% of mid-year revised budget. This is the view for 2023/24 too.

Scheme	2023/24 Revised £000's	2023/24 Actual £000's	% of revised budget
Kitchens	1,573	494	31%
External Areas	1,347	763	57%
Heating	1,136	702	62%
Roofing	949	928	98%
Walls	786	519	66%
Windows & Doors	636	239	38%
Electricals	608	13	2%
Bathrooms	489	91	19%
Communal Services	218	25	11%
<b>Housing Capital Investment Plan</b>	<b>7,742</b>	<b>3,774</b>	<b>49%</b>
Decarbonisation – wave 2.1	3,000	11	0%
Environmental Programme	681	41	6%

Salary costs & Professional Fees	600	532	89%
Disabled Adaptations	566	256	45%
Sheltered Housing Upgrades	374	12	3%
Change in Standard for Smoke Detection	330	458	139%
Contingency	330	137	42%
Digmoor Regeneration	250	0	0%
Disrepair mitigation	250	0	0%
Fire Safety Works	136	9	7%
Lifts	78	52	67%
Abritas upgrade	15	9	60%
Digital Schemes Sheltered	12	12	100%
<b>Other Housing Schemes</b>	<b>6,622</b>	<b>1,529</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>14,364</b>	<b>5,303</b>	<b>37%</b>
TVDL Expenditure	3,542	2,328	66%
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>17,906</b>	<b>7,631</b>	<b>43%</b>

Funded by	2023/24 Revised £000's	2023/24 Actual £000's	% of revised budget
Revenue contributions/MRR	7,205	5,282	73%
Capital Receipts	10	10	100%
Borrowing	9,479	2,198	23%
Decarbonisation grant funding	712	110	15%
Grant c/fwd to future periods		-99	
Homes England Grants	500	130	26%
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>17,906</b>	<b>7,631</b>	<b>43%</b>

- 5.3 Contracts for electrical capital works are at the procurement stage, so part of this budget is being kept aside in 2024/25 to offset the expected overspend on smoke detection work. There are a number of other contracts still at the procurement phase relating to sheltered upgrades and fire safety works.
- 5.4 Work on decarbonisation retrofitting is expected to start in January 2024. It is important to prioritise this work as the grant conditions require a proportion to be completed by 31/3/24.
- 5.5 On 31 March 2023 Government advised that for the years 2022/23 and 2023/24, the share of right to buy (RTB) capital receipts that normally get paid straight to Government, known as the 'Treasury share', will be available for local authorities to use instead. The value of the 2022/23 'Treasury share' receipts was £811,471.80. Review of the Government website suggests that the £811k is to be used in a similar way to 141 receipts, that is as a 40% contribution to building new homes that needs to be 60% match funded by WLBC, without the use of Homes England grant funding. This means that a new build scheme needs to be identified over the next few years that will be funded from right to buy receipts and WLBC borrowing, rather than Homes England grant contribution.

## **6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Careful monitoring of the budget position helps ensure that the HRA remains able to deliver services and is financially sustainable in the medium term. This supports the aim that local people should receive good quality homes for a fair and appropriate rent.

## **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The formal reporting of performance on the Housing Revenue Account is part of the overall budgetary management and control framework that is designed to minimise the financial risks facing the Council. This process is resource intensive for both Members and Officers but ensures that a robust and achievable budget is set.

## **8.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The health and wellbeing implications arising from this report will be dependent on the budget proposals put forward at the Council meeting. Details of any significant implications will be provided at the Council meeting if required.

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.



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Report of: Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor N Pyrce-Roberts

Contact for further information: Rebecca Spicer, Carl Wallace, and Nicola Bradley  
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**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF THE COUNCIL'S EMPTY HOMES FOR COUNCIL OWNED HOUSING POLICY, TENANT RECHARGE POLICY AND DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY FOR HOUSING SERVICES.**

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## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To request approval of two new and one updated policy:

- Empty Homes for Housing Policy (New)
- Tenant Recharge Policy (Updated)
- Domestic Abuse Policy – Housing Services (New)

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the policies detailed in section 1.1 be approved.

2.2 That future revisions of these policies be agreed in conjunction with Council Officers and the Portfolio holder / Lead Member for Housing.

## 3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Work is being undertaken to ensure that the actions and processes that the Housing Service take are documented for complete transparency. By producing formal, written policies and procedures it will improve the service provided to tenants by detailing processes and expectations.

3.2 Legislation and regulation, as detailed in each individual policy, dictates the need for each policy to be formalised and documented.

3.3 The Empty Homes for Housing Policy and the Domestic Abuse Policy for Housing are new Policies whilst the Tenant Recharge Policy is an update of an existing Policy.

#### **4.0 Empty Homes for council Owned Housing Policy**

4.1 Each year approximately 450 of our homes are repaired and let to new tenants. The Empty Homes for Housing Policy (Appendix A) sets out the Council's approach to dealing with empty homes to ensure that the Council provides an efficient and customer focused service which complies with regulatory and legislative requirements.

4.2 The policy ensures value for money in repairing empty homes and achieving the relet standard whilst maximising customer satisfaction in relation to the standard of a tenant's new home.

4.3 The Council aims to ensure that homes which become empty are re-let as quickly and efficiently as possible, with due regard to the needs of outgoing and incoming tenants, and the need to maintain homes to the agreed relet standard.

4.4 The Policy supports the delivery of our strategic objectives to provide high quality and safe homes, and to meet our legal and regulatory requirements.

#### **5.0 TENANT RECHARGE POLICY**

5.1 The Tenant Recharge Policy (Appendix B) outlines West Lancashire Borough Council's approach to the raising and collection of charges from its tenants and former tenants for repairs and making good, damage to our homes.

5.2 It is a key priority to ensure that the homes our tenants live in meet decent homes standards and that the obligations of both parties are followed. We are mindful that the rental income provides the funds to maintain homes and provide services; and supports the Council's business plan. As a result of this we will aim to ensure that the cost of putting things right falls to those who have not followed the terms of the tenancy agreement through the charging and recovery process.

#### **6.0 DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY – HOUSING SERVICES**

6.1 The Domestic Abuse Policy (Appendix C) outlines West Lancashire Borough Councils approach to supporting housing tenants and customers who are experiencing or threatened with Domestic Abuse.

6.2 The Policy aims to:

- Put the safety of the victim and their family first.
- Create an environment where victims/survivors of domestic abuse feel that they can approach us and will be listened to.
- Provide information and support to enable victims to make informed decisions about their lives.
- To respond to any cases of abuse that may arise by working in partnership with relevant agencies.

- Work in partnership to offer support to perpetrators of domestic abuse who recognise and seek to change their behaviour.

6.3 To support the implementation of this Policy, procedural guides for staff will be developed in consultation with specialists in the field.

6.4 Each policy provides absolute clarity on our policy position, commitments, and processes.

## 7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.

## 8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 A more efficient and effective repairs service will generative savings.

8.2 An effective recharge policy will support the Council's business plan.

## 9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

9.1

Risk Number	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Rating
1	Lack of an Empty Homes for Housing Policy would mean that tenants would not be aware of how we manage our empty homes. It may also lead to the Council having an inconsistent approach in this regard.	Unlikely	Significant	3 Comfortable
2	Failure to have a policy to be able to recharge tenants would lead to homes being left in a worse condition, and an increase in repair costs to rectify the issues. In additional the Council would be unable to seek recovery of these costs from tenants despite tenants not complying with the terms of their tenancy agreement.	Unlikely	Significant	3 Comfortable
3	Failure to support tenants at risk of domestic abuse could lead to serious physical and emotional injury.	unlikely	Significant	3 Comfortable

## **10.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The Policies requested for approval will assist in providing a more effective repairs service for empty homes and that tenants acknowledge their responsibilities under the terms of their tenancy agreement. This will lead to homes being kept in a better condition.
- 10.2 The Domestic Abuse Policy will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of those tenants who may be at risk of Domestic Abuse ensuring that they remain safe and are sign posted to specialist services.

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix A – Empty Homes for Housing Policy
- Appendix B – Tenant Recharge Policy
- Appendix C – Domestic Abuse Policy Housing Services





# **West Lancashire Borough Council**

## **Empty Homes for Council Owned Housing Policy**

**April 2024**

<b>Owner / Job Title</b>	Rebecca Spicer – Repairs & Servicing Manager
<b>Service Area</b>	Property Services
<b>Group / Persons consulted</b>	Landlord Services Committee Your Voice Tenants' Group
<b>Version</b>	V1
<b>Issued Date</b>	April 2024
<b>Review by Date</b>	April 2026

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 West Lancashire Borough Councils owned homes become empty when a tenancy has ended, and a new tenancy has not yet started. Empty homes may arise due to formal termination of a tenancy, abandonment of a tenancy, the tenant transferring to another tenancy, eviction of the tenant, or the tenant's death.
- 1.2 As rent is not due on an empty home, this can represent a significant financial loss. This policy aims to keep financial loss to a minimum, whilst ensuring that a home is let to the right applicant as quickly as possible, in line with the Councils Allocations Policy. West Lancashire Borough Council aims to let every home to a tenant which is the best match for that home. However, on occasions, the Council may hold an adapted home empty, until it is allocated to an applicant best matched.

## 2.0 Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the Council's approach to dealing with empty Council owned homes to ensure that the Council provides an efficient and customer focused service which:
- Complies with regulatory and legislative requirements.
  - Ensures value for money in repairing empty homes and achieving the relet standard.
  - Balances the need to minimise rent loss whilst letting empty homes to the right applicant in terms of our Allocations Policy.
  - Maximises customer satisfaction in relation to the standard of a tenant's new home.
  - Is consistent with our Asset Management Strategy.

## 3.0 Aims

- 3.1 The Council aims to ensure that Council owned homes which become empty are re-let as quickly and efficiently as possible, with due regard to the needs of outgoing and incoming tenants, and the need to maintain homes to the agreed relet standard. The Council will do this by:
- Minimising empty home rental loss, the period that homes are empty and repair costs through effective coordination of Housing Management and repairs operations to re-let homes within agreed target times.
  - Ensuring effective, efficient, and accountable management of homes, whilst minimising avoidable costs.
  - Enabling effective monitoring and reporting of empty homes turnaround times.
  - Ensuring stringent cost control of repair costs whilst not affecting turnaround times.
  - Ensuring that tenants are aware of their tenancy obligations in relation to ending the tenancy e.g., requirement to give 28 days' notice, to return all keys on time and to fully clear the home and leave it in a clean condition.
  - Ensuring that repairs to homes are undertaken to enable the Council to re-let to the required standard (Appendix A) and that where appropriate "rechargeable" repair costs are met by the outgoing tenant or pursued post termination of the tenancy.
  - Making effective use of void periods to carry out upgrading or major repairs as appropriate and to co-ordinate with the major repairs programme regarding decant requirements.

- Incentivising take-up of empty homes where appropriate e.g. through offering a paint pack.
- Preventing end of tenancy arrears wherever possible.
- Sustaining tenancies to avoid homes becoming empty where possible by providing support and intervention for tenants to enable tenancies to continue.
- Ensuring incoming tenants are given all required information, documentation, and advice to allow them to move into their new home promptly at the agreed commencement of tenancy date.
- Achieving high levels of tenant satisfaction with the condition of homes at the beginning of the tenancy.
- Limiting the number of repairs required in the first few years after a home is relet.

## 4.0 Definitions

4.1 Throughout this policy some words or phrases used will be understood by some, but not all. The meanings of some key words/phrases used in this document are given below:

**Decent Homes Standard** - a standard set nationally which states that a Decent Home is one which meets all statutory requirements in relation to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, is in a reasonable state of repair, has reasonably modern facilities and provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

**Fair Wear and Tear** – the law defines fair wear and tear as “reasonable use of the premises by the tenant and the ordinary operation of natural forces.” ‘Natural forces’ relates to time and normal daily activities.

**Planned works** – refers to the replacement of elements (e.g. kitchens, bathroom, or boilers) within the home once they have reached the end of their useful life. This work can be programmed based on information on component life cycles and installation dates.

**Post-termination** – refers to the period immediately after a tenant has left their home.

**Pre-termination** – refers to the period after a tenant has given notice to leave but has not yet left their home.

**Recharges** – the cost of repairing or putting right damage or neglect to homes that are not as a result of "Fair Wear and Tear" and are deemed to be caused by the tenant. These costs are recharged to the tenant.

**Sign-up** – is where the new tenant/s are asked to sign the tenancy agreement and given the keys to their new home.

**Statutory Standards** – are standards laid down by the law which must be adhered to.

**Tenant Improvements** – is the term used for works carried out on their home by the tenant.

**Value for Money** – is the overall value based on cost, efficiency, and effectiveness.

## **5.0 Legislative Requirements**

5.1 This Empty Homes Policy for Council owned homes and the way in which services are delivered comply with the requirements of the following standards and legislation:

- Localism Act 2011.
- The Housing Act 1985.
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.
- Housing Act 1996 (Part 6).

5.2 Approved Code of Practice and guidance.

- British Standard 7671 As Amended (Electrical Installations)
- Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR.
- Equality Act 2010.

## **6.0 Associated Policies**

6.1 This policy has links with the following policies:

- Council's Repairs Policy
- Allocations Policy
- Recharge Policy
- Tenant Alterations Policy.

## **7.0 WLBC's Approach to Council Owned Empty Homes**

7.1 Empty Homes often require the input of multiple departments and primarily the repairs team, and lettings team.

7.2 The Customer Services team will begin the empty homes process by informing all key departments that a tenancy is terminating.

7.3 The repairs team will carry out a pre-termination inspection with the tenant. This is to help establish what works are required, and advise the tenant of any repairs that are their responsibility.

7.4 The Council's clearance team will clear the home of any items left by the previous tenant. It is however the tenant's responsibility to clear their home of all possessions and waste so a recharge may be applicable for this.

7.5 A surveyor from the repairs team will collect the keys from the Customer Services or relevant team and will then complete a joint inspection along with our contractor to establish the extent of the work required.

7.6 An Electrical Test (EICR), Gas Safety Inspection (LGSR) and Asbestos check will be undertaken when a home is empty in order to ensure that the home is compliant and safe for re-let.

7.7 Repairs to the empty home will take place.

7.8 A joint post inspection will take place by a repairs surveyor and contractor to ensure that all of the required repairs have been completed to the agreed standard.

7.9 An accompanied viewing of the empty home will be arranged with the prospective tenant. If the tenant wants the home, then all documentation is signed and the keys to the empty home are given to the tenant.

## 8.0 Recharges & Former Tenant Debts

8.1 When a tenant terminates their tenancy, they are still responsible for all outstanding debt until this has been paid in full. This debt will be pursued with the tenant.

8.2 If a home is left in poor condition, full of possessions or waste, and works are required due to tenant misuse or are considered rechargeable for any other reason, these will be completed during the period that the home is empty, and the cost will be recovered in line with the Council's Recharge Policy. It is the tenant's responsibility to ensure that the home is returned in a suitable state in order to avoid any potential recharge costs.

## 9.0 Monitoring & Targets

9.1 Empty Homes Performance will be monitored to ensure that targets are being met. An empty homes tracker is in place to assist with monitoring, which tracks each step from collection of keys to the commencement of a new tenancy.

9.2 The following will be monitored as part of our monthly Performance Management Framework

- Number of empty homes
- Average empty home turnaround time
- Average costs of repairing an empty home

## 10.0 Policy Review

10.1 This policy will be reviewed in line quarter one of 2026 or when a change in Legislation is received, there are best practice developments, or to address any operational issues with the empty homes procedure. Input will be sought from our residents (via the tenant security group or similar) prior to making any substantive changes.

## 11.0 Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version

## Appendix A

### Relet Standard

#### Relet Voids Minimum Standard – General Needs

Miscellaneous	<p>The property will be clean, safe, secure and in reasonable decorative order.</p> <p>An asbestos survey will be undertaken. Where an asbestos survey has previously been carried out a management survey will be undertaken. Where it hasn't a full invasive survey will be conducted.</p> <p>And EPC certificate will be provided where not in existence or the existing certificate is 10 or more years old.</p> <p>The property will be wind and watertight, secure, and free from structural problems, mould growth and rising or penetrating damp. Necessary repairs to remedy any issues identified will be carried out.</p> <p>An air freshener will be provided in each room.</p>
Rubbish/waste	<p>No rubbish or waste will be left in property including the loft space. Photographs will be taken of any waste/rubbish left for recharge purposes.</p>
Gardens/outside space	<p>No rubbish or waste will be left in the garden, including sheds and outbuildings and an assessment for health &amp; safety will have been carried out. Any trees/bushes which are significantly overgrown and either substantially blocking light and/or in a potentially dangerous condition will be cut back or removed if not protected by a Tree Preservation Order. Garden/outside space will be clear of rubbish when the new tenant moves in.</p> <p>Photographs will be taken of any waste/rubbish left for recharge purposes.</p> <p>Footpaths will be level, sound and free from trip hazards or obstruction. Hardstanding's and driveways will be in a safe condition and free from trip hazards.</p>

All gates and garage doors will open and close freely and will be fitted with a suitable latch or lock.

All drains will be free from blockages.  
All WLBC owned boundary fencing will be in place and will be safe and secure.

Fencing

Party fencing which is identified as the responsibility of WLBC will be in place and will be safe and secure. There will be a 2m length of 1.8m high privacy fencing adjoining the property followed by up to 1.2m fencing as per existing (usually ranch style) or similar approved for the remainder.

Roofs

All roof coverings will be sound and free from leaks.

Integral sheds and bin stores

No rubbish or waste will be left and an assessment for health & safety issues will have been carried out.

Former tenant's fixtures/fittings

Remove and dispose (unless otherwise advised) of any former tenant's fixtures and fittings and take photographs for recharge purposes.

### Decoration/finishes

First room entered in the property

This room will be of a good standard of decoration, with redecoration carried out where required.

Ceiling

Will be free from nicotine and/or water stains, bowing, large cracks or mould. Any polystyrene ceiling tiles and coving will be removed, and the plaster made good.

Walls  
Wall covering

As above and there will be no flaking plaster or signs of dampness. All plastered walls will be in good condition ready for redecorating and any artex finishing or sharp protrusions will be skimmed over.

Wallpaper will only remain in the property if it is sound and in good condition.

Plastered walls are to be free from graffiti  
Paintwork will be sound and clean.

Doors/windows

Windows will be clean.

Woodwork & metalwork generally

Paintwork will be sound and clean.



## Heating/hot water/gas

Gas fire/electric fire	Will be clean and in full working order.
Electric storage heater(s)	Where found, raise with WLBC to consider alternative heating provision. Where decision is made to retain, heaters will be clean and in full working order.
Air source heating	Will be clean and in full working order.
Gas boiler or Gas water heater	Will be clean, controls/time-switch, thermostat etc. in place and in full working order.
Electric water heaters (e.g., immersion)	Will be in good working order.
Gas cooking point	Will be provided where possible.
Gas/electrical safety check	<p>Gas will be capped off and a gas safety label fitted at meter position. Heating system will be inspected and any work to remedy any defects will be carried out.</p> <p>An electrical safety check will be carried out and a certificate provided prior to letting.</p> <p>Gas fired heating systems will be turned on and tested upon request from new tenant after occupying, and a copy of the LGSR will be provided to WLBC and to the new tenant.</p>

## Electrical

Light fittings	<p>Correct light fittings will be fitted in appropriate rooms (i.e., rose and pendant to lounge areas and bayonet fittings to bathroom). All will be clean and sound with no visible defects.</p> <p>Where provided fluorescent lighting will be working and diffusers free from debris and stains.</p>
Socket outlets	All light bulbs will be present and working. No burn marks, cracks or damage will be evident, and they will be securely fixed to the wall. A TV aerial will be present in the living room and will be fit for purpose.
Switches/pull-cords	The switch operates properly no damage evident. Pull cords will be clean.
Extractor fan (if there is one)	Will be clean and visually checked.
Electrical cooking point	Will be provided.

Smoke/CO alarm	<p>There will be a fully working smoke alarm at the property and any hard-wired smoke alarm will be serviced and cleaned.</p> <p>A carbon monoxide alarm will be present and in full working order.</p>
Heat detector	<p>A heat detector will be present in the kitchen and expiry date will have been checked.</p>
Meter and consumer unit	<p>Will be clean, intact, wiring visually sound and fuses labelled.</p>
Electrical safety test	<p>An electrical safety check will be carried out and a certificate provided. A comprehensive installation test will have been carried out to complete dwelling (all boards) including all Council installed appliances, all in accordance with the provisions of the current I.E.E. Regulations. NICEIC inspection report will be completed and returned to the Contractor Administrator immediately following test. The test includes earth loop impedance, operation of M.C.B's, and or R.C.D., polarity, earthing. Earth continuity of all water pipes, insulation resistance and earth continuity for all appliances, e.g., fans, downflow heaters, for which the Council are responsible.</p>

**Plumbing/sanitaryware**

Taps	<p>Taps will be clean, disinfected, in good working order and will not drip. Any items in need of replacement should be as per the kitchen/bathroom specification. If bath taps are in need of replacement and the property has a combi-boiler, replace with shower mixer tap. If the property does not have a combi-boiler, replace with standard bath taps.</p>
Bath	<p>Will be clean, disinfected, with no cracks or chips to surfaces. The sealant and panels will be intact and plugs and chains in place. Any items in need of replacement should be as per the bathroom specification.</p>
Showers	<p>Leave in situ any walk-in showers/wet rooms provided as disabled adaptations unless advised otherwise.</p> <p>A new shower curtain will be provided, and a new shower hose and spray will be provided if in situ. Any unsafe shower units</p>

	fitted by former tenants will be removed and walls/tiling made good.
Wash hand basin	Will be clean, disinfected, with no cracks or chips to surfaces. The sealant and panels will be intact and plugs and chains in place. Any items in need of replacement should be as per the bathroom specification.
WC	<p>A new WC ring seat and cover will be fitted and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The WC will be chemically cleaned.</li> <li>• The flush mechanism will work.</li> <li>• The pan and cistern will not be cracked or damaged.</li> <li>• The pan will be secure to the floor.</li> <li>• There will be no signs of leakage.</li> </ul> <p>Any items in need of replacement should be as per the bathroom specification.</p>
Kitchen sink & drainers	<p>This will be clean, disinfected, with no visual damage and the sealant will be intact. Sink will be free from leaks.</p> <p>Any items in need of replacement should be as per the kitchen specification.</p>
Pipework generally	Pipes will be securely fixed with no sign of leaks.
Rainwater goods (gutters, and downpipes and gulleys)	Will be in place, intact and functioning as designed, free from blockages/leaks.
Tiling to kitchen & bathroom walls	<p>Will be clean, disinfected, free from cracks, firmly fixed and the grouting will be clean and free from mould. A tiled splash-back will be present around the bath and wash hand basin at least two rows high, and tiles present to the shower area if a shower over bath is present.</p> <p>There will be a tiled splash back in the kitchen which is free from cracks and is securely fixed to the wall and grouted to a minimum of 450mm high.</p> <p>Any items in need of replacement should be as per the kitchen/bathroom specification.</p>
Flooring: kitchen/bathroom/WC	Kitchen flooring will be clean, disinfected and serviceable. It will be even with no cracks or splits and no tiles will be loose.

	Any flooring in need of replacement should be as per the kitchen/bathroom specification.
Flooring: other rooms	Flooring will be sound, even, and in reasonable condition to receive floor coverings. Any missing or broken floor tiles (including asbestos floor tiles)/floorboards will be replaced.  Laminate flooring in flats above ground floor will be removed.
<b>Joinery/fixtures</b>	
Windows	All windows will be in good condition, free from cracks, secure and will open and close freely. All windows will be safe and watertight.  Handles, stays, restrictors and catches (where fitted) will be intact and working. Glass will be free from cracks.  Double glazed units will be free from misting. Safety/fire-rated glass will be installed where necessary.  All upstairs windows will meet current safety regulations (e.g., restrictors/fire-rated glass fitted where required).  All window openings will be fitted with a curtain batten.
Staircase	The balustrades, treads and risers will have been checked for risk of trapping of children e.g., gaps between balustrades, etc. (In older properties banisters may not, unfortunately meet current specification).  A suitable handrail will be fitted to all stairs All internal doors will be present and will match.
Doors	Door & fittings will be sound and intact and door closers in place & operational. Doors will all open and close freely.  All fire doors will open and close as intended and any fire protection including intumescent strips and stopping must be intact.  Glass will be sound and safety/fire-rated glass will be fitted.

Kitchen units and worktops	<p>Privacy indicator locks will be provided on bathroom and toilet doors.</p>
	<p>Will be clean and disinfected, inside and out, serviceable and in sound condition. Cabinets will be in good condition, securely fixed to the walls and doors and drawers will open with ease. Worktops will be free from scratches, chips and burns and edges will be covered with edging strips.</p>
	<p>Any integrated kitchen appliances will be removed and three 620mm spaces will be left for kitchen appliances if in general needs accommodation, including connections for a washing machine, or two appliances if in sheltered accommodation.</p>
	<p>There will be at least a double base unit, a sink with double base unit, a double wall unit and 1.5m<sup>2</sup> of worktop (space permitting) and any replacement items will be fitted like for like, raising any issues with obsolete components to WLBC if necessary.</p>
	<p>WLBC will be notified of any kitchen which doesn't meet the specification as soon as it is identified, to enable a decision around its replacement.</p>
General	<p>All architraves and skirting will be complete and in good condition. Any missing/damaged items/fixtures will be replaced/repared e.g. skirting boards.</p>
	<p>Any damaged items will be made good/repared and if not damaged by fair wear and tear then photographs will be taken for recharge purposes.</p>
Condensation/mould	<p>There will be no signs of significant mildew or mould growth.</p>
Ventilation	<p>Vents and airbricks will be checked to ensure they are not blocked or sealed.</p>

**Main entrance/locks**

Front door	<p>All external doors will be in a good condition, safe, secure, and weather tight.</p>
	<p>All front doors on flats with communal stairwells will be FRA compliant including suitably operating door closers.</p>

	Locks will be changed and (in general needs properties) 2 keys will be provided.
	Doors will be fitted with a letterbox and a door number will be provided.
	A door mat to the inside of the front door will be provided.
Patio/rear door	Locks will be replaced, and keys will be provided.
Window locks	Keys for window locks (where fitted) will be on site and operational.
Secondary means of escape	Will be free from obstruction and fully operational.

### **Temporary Accommodation**

In addition to the above the following standards apply to temporary accommodation

- Locks will only be changed where advised.
- Property will be in good decorative condition.
- Electrical equipment provided by the Council will be inspected, PAT tested and labelled with certification provided.
- Any blinds will be clean, free from mould and in good working order, replacing as necessary.
- A key safe will be fitted and in good working order, replacing as necessary. A set of keys and/or key fob will be left in the key safe.

### **Relet Voids Enhanced Standard – General Needs**

As above for Relet Voids Minimum Standard – General Needs, but in addition:

Strip any wallpaper and prepare all walls, including plasterwork, prior to applying two coats emulsion to walls and ceilings; prepare all surfaces prior to applying two coats primer/undercoat and one coat gloss to all woodwork.

Ensure existing carpets are in good condition, clean and free from stains, and if not present, fit tight woven medium contract grade carpet to all room except kitchen and bathroom, preparing sub-base, laying underlay, gripper or tape, and cutting and fitting as necessary, door strips etc. Ease any internal doors as necessary.

### **Relet Voids Enhanced Standard – Sheltered Needs**

As above, but in addition:

Strip any wallpaper and prepare all walls, including plasterwork, prior to applying two coats emulsion to walls and ceilings; prepare all surfaces prior to applying two coats primer/undercoat and one coat gloss to all woodwork.

Ensure existing carpets are in good condition, clean and free from stains, and if not present, fit tight woven medium contract grade carpet to all room except kitchen and bathroom, preparing sub-base, laying underlay, gripper, or tape, and cutting and fitting as necessary, door strips etc. Ease any internal doors as necessary.

DRAFT







## **Income Recharge Policy**

Owner: Carl Wallace

Service Area: Housing Services

Job Title: Income & Financial Inclusion Manager

Version: 1

Issued Date: Draft 01 February 2024

Review Date: 01 June 2027

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## 1.0 Introduction

This policy outlines West Lancashire Borough Council's approach to the raising and collection of charges from its leaseholders, tenants and former tenants for charging for repairs and making good, damage to our property and leased properties.

Whilst the Council have a duty to repair tenanted homes, our tenants also have obligations to maintain their home as outlined in the tenancy agreement.

## 2.0 Policy Statement

It is a key priority to ensure the properties we let and homes our tenants live in meet the decent homes standard and that the obligations of both parties are followed.

We are mindful that rental income provides the funds to maintain homes and provide services; and supports the Council's business plan.

We will aim to ensure that the cost of putting things right falls to those who have not followed the terms of the tenancy agreement through the charging and recovery process.

## 3.0 Key Policy Aims

- We aim to encourage tenants to take responsibility for keeping their home in a good state of repair
- We want to ensure that the repairs budget is spent wherever possible on repairs caused by genuine wear and tear
- We want to ensure that resources are allocated fairly, and that so far as reasonably practicable, the costs of putting right disrepair arising due to neglect does not fall upon the majority of tenants that look after their homes
- To contribute to West Lancashire Borough Council's efficiency and offer value for money
- To ensure that when reported repairs are allocated to the correct priority in line with the repairs policy

This policy applies to all West Lancashire Borough Council tenants and anyone who resides in our properties under the terms of a tenancy agreement, mesnes profit charge, temporary accommodation or as a licensee. It applies to existing/current tenants and former tenants.

## 4.0 Legal and Regulatory

- Housing Act 1985 The Act introduced the secure tenancy regime for social housing tenants and defined how secure tenancies can be let, managed and terminated, including prescribed forms and grounds for possession.
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 This Act outlines various rights and responsibilities of both landlords and tenants, including repair responsibilities.
- Decent Homes Standard Introduced in 2000, this implemented a minimum standard that all public sector housing had to meet and was subsequently updated in 2006 to take account of the Housing Act 2004
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 This Act sets out the objectives of the Regulator of Social Housing and its role in relation to economic regulation and the setting and monitoring of consumer standards.
- The Equality Act 2010 The Act prohibits discrimination, harassment or victimisation based on protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation.
- Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 The Act introduced new grounds for possession for secure tenancies, including mandatory anti social behaviour grounds for possession

West Lancashire Borough Council's tenancy agreement sets out the individual responsibilities for landlord and tenant in relation to the maintenance of the property.

Section 6.17 of the West Lancashire Borough Council Tenancy Agreement states: -  
'You must repair or replace parts for the property and/or fixtures where damage has been caused deliberately (smashed windows or broken doors for example), or by neglect (not reporting a leaking pipe for example). This includes damage by your family (including children) and other people. If you do not do so we may complete any necessary works and charge you for it. In certain circumstances where damage has been caused through acts of vandalism, by people unknown to you, we may undertake a repair if you have reported the incident to the police and have been given a crime reference number.'

The Council may recharge a tenant for any repairs that it has to carry out, which fall within the scope of the tenant's responsibilities. These types of repairs are usually a result of: (not an exhaustive list)

- tenant misuse
- tenant abuse, through neglect, wilful damage, or carelessness
- the damage may be caused by the tenant, their family, or visitors to their home
- failure to return all keys and fobs on termination of a tenancy
- the removal of rubbish and/or household items left on the termination of a tenancy
- the reinstatement of any alterations that are either unapproved or that do not meet the council's re-let standard
- for gaining access and/or changing locks either at a tenant's request or a result of enforcement action or on termination of a tenancy
- Tenants mis-reporting repairs as an emergency when they are not

Where repairs are not due to normal wear and tear or component failure, we expect tenants to pay for these repairs as a rechargeable repair. This can be in full or, alternatively, the tenant may carry out the repair themselves.

Where a tenant reports a repair as an emergency to get a callout within 4 hours, and it is assessed as being deliberately mis-reported as an emergency, a fixed charge will be payable by the tenant. The fee will be explained by the call handling operative at the time the emergency repair is reported.

A recharge will not be applied to the costs of repairing fair wear and tear, or if the damage has been caused by a crime.

If the damage is due to crime, the tenant must have reported the crime to the police and a crime reference number obtained (these types of repair will then fall within the scope of the Tenancy Agreement).

## 5.0 The Policy

- We will make sure that our homes are a safe place to live in by keeping to our repair and maintenance responsibilities as required by the tenancy agreement, legislation, guidance, and good practice.
- When a repair is reported we will confirm if the repair is West Lancashire's responsibility or the tenants
- If the repair is a tenant's responsibility and the tenant will be recharged, our staff will offer advice on the recharge process

To keep these commitments, we will:

- Encourage residents to take a responsible approach to prevent damage to their home and West Lancashire Borough Council property.

- Enforce tenancy conditions to reduce anti-social behaviour and achieve value for money
- Seek to recover costs for undertaking repairs to our properties that have occurred by accident, negligence or deliberately by residents or third parties or mis-reporting repairs as an emergency
- Recover legal costs of any action that we need to take, to gain access to a property, in order to carry out annual safety checks or repairs that are damaging or affecting other properties

## 6.0 Tenancy Types and Leaseholders (Homes and Garages)

### Current tenants

- We only carry out rechargeable repairs where these are necessary to safeguard the welfare of the occupants, or to ensure the property does not deteriorate further.
- We will send a Council employee to carry out a property inspection and estimation of the costs
- At our discretion, depending on the repair, we may agree to carry out the work at the request of the tenant. The tenant would be asked to agree to pay for the work in full.
- We will secure a deposit or payment in full before the work starts
- A fixed charge will be payable where a repair is reported as an emergency and it is not assessed by the contractor as a genuine emergency
- Depending on the cost of the work, any health and safety issues and or financial circumstances, we can agree to an advance payment along with a payment plan to clear the balance.

### Former Tenants

- Where an outgoing tenant has told us they are leaving and has given 4 weeks notice, a pre-termination inspection will be carried out. The inspecting officer will provide a detailed list of rechargeable repair works that the tenant is expected to carry out prior to leaving their home. This will give an estimate of the costs should the tenant fail to carry out the works
- When the property becomes empty, officers or contractors will take photographs which may be used as evidence in the recovery procedures when the rechargeable works are invoiced
- Any work that has been listed, that is not made good by the tenant prior to and after leaving, will be invoiced as a rechargeable repair
- Where a property has been vacated with no notice, we will follow the process as above

- In addition to any damage, those leaving a property will be advised that they will be charged, for lock changes if keys are not returned, removal of rubbish or any belongings from the property
- We may negotiate payment terms in cases of severe hardship

## Leaseholders

Under exceptional circumstances repairs may be carried out to leaseholder properties. A charge for the works completed will be invoiced to the lease holder.

## 7.0 Immediate Risks to Health and Safety

Where there is an immediate risk to the health and safety of the tenant, their household or neighbours, a temporary repair will be carried out. Immediate risks to health and safety may include such as the following:

- Gas/electrical faults
- Flooding and any resultant damp or mould growth
- Insecure doors or ground floor windows
- Structural faults, trip hazards or dangers, which could lead to a personal injury claim

Where we are required to carry out compliance safety checks and are unable to gain access to carry these out, we will recharge any legal costs incurred when gaining permission from the court so that we can gain entry for compliance checks to be carried out.

## 8.0 Charges

- Current tenants will be charged the cost of carrying out repairs that are not fair wear and tear, the cost of the repair including Value Added Tax (VAT) plus a 10% administration charge. We will advise the tenant of the estimated cost of the work, prior to ordering the repair. If the full charges are paid in advance, the administration charge is waived
- A former tenant will be charged if repair works are required to an empty property after they have left (other than fair wear and tear). This includes charges to clear rubbish and/or household items left, or to reinstate unauthorised alterations or alterations which have not met the council's re-let standard
- We will recharge leaseholders for any repairs carried out that are rechargeable and not covered by the individual agreement
- Once a repair is identified as rechargeable, the tenant will be given a written breakdown and informed that they can request a review of the decision to recharge

- Officers may waive recharges in exceptional circumstances, taking into consideration vulnerability, risk to health and safety and an individual's circumstances
- The Council reserves the right to investigate the circumstances surrounding any damage and a recharge amount may be applied if it is reasonable to do so

## 9.0 The Collection of Recharges

Recharges can either be paid in full or tenants can agree a repayment plan. A range of options for payment are available.

## 10.0 Non-Payment Actions

West Lancashire Borough Council will follow the principles outlined in the Income Recovery Policy.

West Lancashire Borough Council reserves the right to enforce tenancy conditions if the current tenant fails to pay the debt in full as agreed. If necessary, we will take legal action to achieve payment, this may impact on the security of the tenancy.

West Lancashire Borough Council reserve the right, where there is an outstanding debt to:

- refuse a current tenant to transfer, have future rehousing requests approved, or to make it a condition to pay for a mutual exchange
- refuse to provide a reference for another landlord, or
- declare a debt in any reference provided

We also reserve the right to refuse non-essential planned maintenance and/or Improvement Works where there is an outstanding debt and/or court proceedings.

## 11.0 Challenging Decisions to Recharge

If a tenant is not satisfied with a response or service they have received concerning a rechargeable repair they can complete our feedback form which is found on [Customer Feedback - West Lancashire Borough Council \(westlancs.gov.uk\)](https://www.westlancs.gov.uk/customer-feedback)



## 12.0 Vulnerability and Financial Hardship

West Lancashire Borough Council aims to operate a repairs service which is fair and accessible to all. The recharge policy will be applied sensitively, taking into account factors such as severe health issues, learning difficulties, children in the household and financial hardship. Each case would be assessed individually if a payment plan is needed.

Families of a sole tenant who has died will not be recharged for repairs.

## 13.0 Performance Monitoring

The service will be benchmarked against top performing organisations to identify areas for improvement and best practice

- We will monitor the number and value of rechargeable jobs raised on day to day repairs and voids quarterly
- We will monitor the recovery of the rechargeable debt monthly and set challenging recovery targets each year
- We will monitor the legal costs charged for no access to carry out gas servicing

## 14.0 Further Information

To ensure the Council is delivering customer focused services, officers and tenants may be asked to become involved in reviewing the Service, complete feedback surveys and make suggestions for improvements and change.

## 15.0 Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version





# **West Lancashire Borough Council**

## **Domestic Abuse Policy – Housing Services April 2024**

<b>Owner / Job Title</b>	Nicola Bradley, Tenancy Services Manager
<b>Service Area</b>	Housing Services
<b>Group / Persons consulted</b>	Landlord Services Committee, Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator
<b>Version</b>	V1
<b>Issued Date</b>	April 2024
<b>Review by Date</b>	April 2027

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### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 West Lancashire Borough Council believes that none of its customers or their households should live in fear of violence from a current or former spouse or partner or any other member of their household.
- 1.2 This policy sets out how West Lancashire Borough Council will assist and support housing customers experiencing or threatened with domestic abuse.
- 1.3 As a Housing Provider our staff are in regular contact with our tenants and we are well placed to recognise the signs of domestic abuse. It is essential that we take all reports of domestic abuse seriously and work with the victim/survivor to offer support.

### 2.0 Scope

- 2.1 The Policy covers tenants of the Council and those living with them. Employees who are experiencing domestic abuse will be supported in line with the Councils Domestic Abuse Policy.

## 2.2 The Policy aims to:

- Put the safety of the victim and their family first.
- Create an environment where victims/survivors of domestic abuse feel that they can approach us and will be listened to.
- Provide information and support to enable victims to make informed decisions about their lives.
- To respond to any cases of abuse that may arise by working in partnership with relevant agencies.
- Work in partnership to offer support to perpetrators of domestic abuse who recognise and seek to change their behaviour.

## 3.0 Types of Abuse

### 3.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 provides a statutory definition of Domestic Abuse:

‘Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional.’

### 3.2 **Emotional or Psychological Abuse** can include: manipulating a person’s anxieties or beliefs or abusing a position of trust; silent treatment; being insulted, including in front of others; repeatedly being belittled; keeping a victim awake; threats towards pets, family, friends etc; using social media sites to intimidate the victim; persuading a victim to doubt their own sanity or mind (including ‘gaslighting’).

### 3.3 **Physical Abuse** can include: hitting, punching, kicking, slapping, hitting with objects, pulling hair, pushing or shoving, cutting or stabbing, restraining, strangulation, choking.

### 3.4 **Sexual Abuse** can include rape and coerced sex, forcing a victim to take part in unwanted sexual acts, refusal to practice safe sex or use contraception, threatened or actual sexual abuse of children.

### 3.5 **Financial Abuse** can include: controlling money and bank accounts, making a victim account for all their expenditure, running up debts in a victim’s name, allowing no say on how monies are spent, refusing to allow them to study or work.

### 3.6 **Discriminatory Abuse** is motivated by oppressive and discriminatory attitudes towards a person’s: Physical appearance; Learning disability; Mental ill-health; Sensory impairment; Race; Religion; Gender/ gender identity; Age; Culture; Sexual orientation; Appearance.

### 3.7 The definition includes honour-based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation and Family and Intergenerational abuse.

### 3.8 Children who have witnessed the abusive behaviour are also considered victims, however any concerns for the safety of children within a household will still be addressed through the Safeguarding Policy.

### 3.9 A personal relationship between the victim and perpetrator is key to the definition of domestic abuse. Domestic Abuse Act 2021 sets out how people can be ‘personally connected’ including if they are or have been in an intimate relationship, married, civil

partners, agree or have agreed to marry each other, have had, or have a parental relationship to a child or are relatives. There is no requirement for the victim to live in the same household as the abuser.

## **4.0 Our Approach**

- 4.1 There are a number of ways that we might receive a report of domestic abuse taking place in one of our homes. It may be made by the individual experiencing the abuse or by the perpetrator disclosing their own behaviour. It may be by a concerned neighbour, relative, or the police. Suspected cases may be brought to our attention by repeat repairs, repeated reports of loud noises, banging or shouting or a member of staff noticing a change in behaviour of a resident.
- 4.2 We understand that victims will often find it difficult to make a disclosure and ask for help. It is vitally important, therefore, that if a disclosure is made, it is dealt with in a sensitive and supportive manner, this will be supported by procedural guidance for our teams.
- 4.3 We will offer confidential advice over the phone, at our offices, at a home visit, or at a visit to a local venue of the customers choosing.
- 4.4 We will ensure that people experiencing domestic abuse are provided with information on appropriate services as early as possible. This will include signposting victims to specialist help and support including advice on the use of civil and criminal laws, to offer them protection and to prevent further abuse.
- 4.5 We will provide employees with training and guidance on how to identify the signs of domestic abuse, how to deal with a disclosure and Safeguarding.

## **5.0 Use of Powers**

- 5.1 By signing the tenancy agreement our customers agree not to commit acts of domestic abuse and to be responsible for the behaviour of their household and visitors. Section 7.11 states: 'You and they must not cause or threaten violence, harass, or use mental, emotional, financial or sexual abuse which would cause anyone who lives with you to leave or want to leave the home.'
- 5.2 Whilst not every victim/survivor will want to end their relationship, or want us to take action; where relevant we will make use of appropriate tools and powers, including injunctions, Notice of Seeking Possession, and possession proceedings. The actions we can take will be determined by the tenancy status of the victim and perpetrator.

We will maintain contact throughout the course of any investigation and subject to our duties of confidentiality, we will keep those involved informed of progress.

## **6.0 Housing Needs**

- 6.1 We will support victims to make decisions around their housing needs, whether they wish to remain in their home or to move. In accordance with our Allocations Policy,

we will award the appropriate priority band to those who are at risk in their current home due to domestic abuse.

- 6.2 Rent arrears will not prevent a person experiencing domestic abuse from moving, however a repayment plan will be agreed. Financial Advice will be offered to all victims whether they move or remain in their own home.
- 6.3 Where necessary we will arrange a Direct Let to allow a customer to move within our own stock quickly. This means that the customer will be offered a property without the need to view adverts and express their interest through bidding; whilst we may not always be able to source accommodation in the customers preferred areas, any offer will take into account the associated risks.
- 6.4 Where a victim/survivor of domestic abuse is rehoused or offered a new sole tenancy in their own home, we will grant a secure lifetime tenancy.
- 6.5 Where necessary we will facilitate emergency housing for a customer fleeing domestic abuse. Officers will make every effort to ensure a safe environment is provided for them and their families and will work alongside specialist agencies to provide advice and assistance.
- 6.6 We are aware that in some cases victims may have fled their home without their belongings, in these cases we will support by offering a furnished tenancy.

## **7.0 Other Support**

- 7.1 To reduce the risk of harm and provide peace of mind to customers who are experiencing domestic abuse and wish to remain in their own homes the Council operates the Sanctuary Scheme. The scheme provides and installs security equipment; such as door chains, viewers, window locks and personal safety alarms.
- 7.2 We will follow the Safeguarding policy if we believe a child is at risk due to an abusive relationship.
- 7.3 Where a perpetrator of domestic abuse acknowledges their behaviour, wants to change and consents to a referral being made we will assist them to access specialist support.
- 7.4 We will carry out repairs if damage has been caused to the home through an incident of domestic abuse.

## **8.0 Partnership Working**

- 8.1 We will contribute to regular Multi agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) meetings that are held to help those at high risk of harm. The purpose of MARAC is to provide a confidential forum where agencies are able to share information which will increase the safety, health and wellbeing of individuals and children related to the case. This will take place through the sharing of information, expertise and resources, and the development of multi-agency plans which identify appropriate interventions or other actions to safeguard individuals and their children.

## **9.0 Confidentiality**

- 9.1 The Council is committed to ensuring customer confidentiality.
- 9.2 We are fully compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR) around data processing.
- 9.3 We carry out a DPIA (Data Protection Impact Assessment) to assess the impact of envisaged processing operations on the protection of personal data.
- 9.4 We are experienced in processing sensitive personal data, and we have robust procedures in place for the gathering and recording of consent for processing this information and disclosure.
- 9.5 Although we aim to gain consent prior to any information sharing, there may be instances where we have a statutory duty to share information without consent for example where children are at risk.
- 9.6 Whilst we respect privacy and confidentiality and are mindful of our obligations under the Data Protection Act, investigating and preventing domestic abuse requires the ability to exchange information with statutory and non-statutory agencies.
- 9.7 A disclosure of domestic abuse will be treated in the strictest of confidence, unless we have a duty to disclose information in order to:
- Protect the victim
  - Prevent harm to someone else, or
  - Prevent or detect a crime.

## **10.0 Legislation**

- 10.1 The following legislation is relevant to and informs this Policy and our approach:
- Housing Act 1996
  - Family Law Act 1996
  - Protection from Harassment Act 1997
  - Human Rights Act 1998
  - Children Act 2004
  - Crime and Disorder Act 1998
  - Police and Justice Act 2006
  - Equality Act 2010
  - Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
  - Anti-Social Crime and Policing Act 2014



- Care Act 2014
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Clare’s Law (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme) 2014
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021

## 11.0 Links to Other Policies and Procedures

11.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following associated policies:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy & Procedure
- Safeguarding Policy
- Housing Allocations Policy
- Tenancy Agreement

## 12.0 Policy Review

12.1 This policy will be reviewed within 3 years or following changes to legislation.

## 13.0 Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version





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**Report of:** Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources

**Relevant Portfolio Holders:** Councillor N Pryce-Roberts

**Contact for further information:** Carl Wallace (Extn. 5230)  
(E-mail: Carl.wallace@westlancs.gov.uk)

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**SUBJECT:** Financial Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029

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Wards affected: Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To request approval of the new five-year strategy:
- Financial Inclusion 2024-2029

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the strategy detailed in section 1.1 be approved

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The council have successfully delivered on two previous financial inclusion strategies (2015-2018 and 2021-2024), supporting residents of the borough with multiple financial exclusion issues whilst developing strong partnerships with many agencies operating within the borough

## **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 The current financial inclusion strategy 2021-2024 is coming to an end and all actions have had successful outcomes with work continuing to ensure continued success.

## **5.0 Consultation**

- 5.1 To ensure that the focus of the strategy was relevant, we have worked in collaboration with our service users, partners and stakeholders. The feedback from this collaboration has been used to create the main focus of the strategy and the key objectives. The feedback generated has been through:
- Online Survey
  - In person sessions with tenants

- Partnership meetings with internal and external departments and organisations

The Council invited tenants and residents to take part in the Financial Inclusion Strategy review via online Survey. A face-to-face session was also completed to seek feedback to ensure we are providing the appropriate support in the correct areas.

We received 163 responses to our survey, with 76.7% of tenants and residents agreeing we are focusing on the correct areas of support and that we should focus on the following key issues:

- Health
- Digital Inclusion
- Expand support to rural areas
- Benefit take up
- Employment support
- Review options to improve food support

## **6.0 Financial Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029**

6.1 The financial inclusion strategy 2024-2029 has five main objectives:

- Invest in new and improve on existing external partnerships to grow the support available for all partners, stakeholders and customers
- To look at the viability of introducing social supermarkets to the borough and any other opportunities to
- Through partnership working we aim to extend support services to reduce gaps in support
- Working with partners we will aim to reduce barriers to training and employment for financially vulnerable groups.
- Provide regular benefit information sessions which will look to improve the level of benefit take up across the borough and reduce poverty

## **7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no detrimental financial implications for the council. The actions within the strategy will support additional revenue to the council and to residents of the borough

## **8.0 Risk Assessment**

8.1 The risks of not continuing with a financial inclusion strategy are:

- Partnership working to reduce inequalities will struggle to grow
- Irresponsible lending issues will not reduce
- Food and fuel poverty will not be reduced
- Furniture poverty will not reduce

- Continued lack of benefit take up which could impact on council revenue
- Increased court applications and potential evictions not only due to rental income but poor tenancy sustainment, increased hoarding cases/property condition etc
- Risk of reduced organisational reputation due to not being proactive regarding issues the community is facing

## **Health and Wellbeing implications**

The health and wellbeing implications of not having the strategy are:

- increased mental health issues for residents. This would be due to the reduced financial support and advice available.
- Low income, debt issues and lack of support can lead to symptoms of moderate to severe mental health issues
- Further isolation for vulnerable residents due to lack of support in the community
- Increased alcohol and substance abuse due to lack of support

## **Background Documents**

Financial inclusion strategy with actions 2024-2029

## **Appendices**

### A. Survey Responses

## B. Face to Face Recommendations

### 4. Recommendations

That the comments, observations, and feedback are considered and, changes made to the leaflet where possible.

That any changes that are made from the tenant/leaseholder feedback are forwarded to the Tenant Voice Team to enable tenants/leaseholders to be informed of the difference their involvement has made.]

### 5. Recommendations/Action Tracker

Recommendations
Ensure new strategy does not have acronyms.
Ensure new strategy has an explanation of what each stakeholder offers
Consider hosting in person IT training sessions to help people get online and access online support
Gather good news stories/positive lived experience. Share these at in person sessions as well as online/written docs
Consider working with the partners suggested by todays attendees in future
Carefully consider terminology used in strategy. For example, 'budgeting advice' covers a wide range of advice but people may be put off by the term or not understand the range of things that covers
Consider action plan for instances where there are long waiting times to receive help from our partners. Do we need to bring in other partners to cover gaps in our service and reduce waiting times?
Send directory of services link to attendees of todays session.

### 6. Next Steps

The feedback report will be forwarded to the Rebecca Griffiths (Financial Inclusion Team Leader) to consider. The feedback provided will help shape the new strategy. Once the new strategy has been drafted, we will provide you with a copy and invite tenants to provide their thoughts and feedback on the strategy before it goes to cabinet.

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# **WLBC**

## **Financial Inclusion Strategy**

### **2024-2029**

DRAFT

Author:	Carl Wallace/Rebecca Griffiths
Owner:	Carl Wallace
Date created:	19 February 2024
Next review date:	31 March 2029

## Background

### What is Financial Inclusion and why does it matter?

Financial inclusion means making financial products and services accessible and affordable for everyone who needs them.

Financial exclusion can affect people from a wide range of demographics: the old and the young are notably impacted as are people with disabilities, women, people facing mental health challenges and almost everyone on a low income.

People who are locked out of the “mainstream” financial system, are often penalised by having to pay more for everyday services and products. For example, limited digital accessibility often means people cannot access cheaper online prices. At the same time, they may be limited to accessing higher-cost credit, increasing the likelihood of becoming trapped in spiralling debt.

### Financial Inclusion is not an isolated Issue.

Financial exclusion seeps into other areas of people’s lives. It can perpetuate individuals’ difficulties, making them more susceptible to other concerns such as homelessness, mental health issues, economic abuse, and persistent debt.

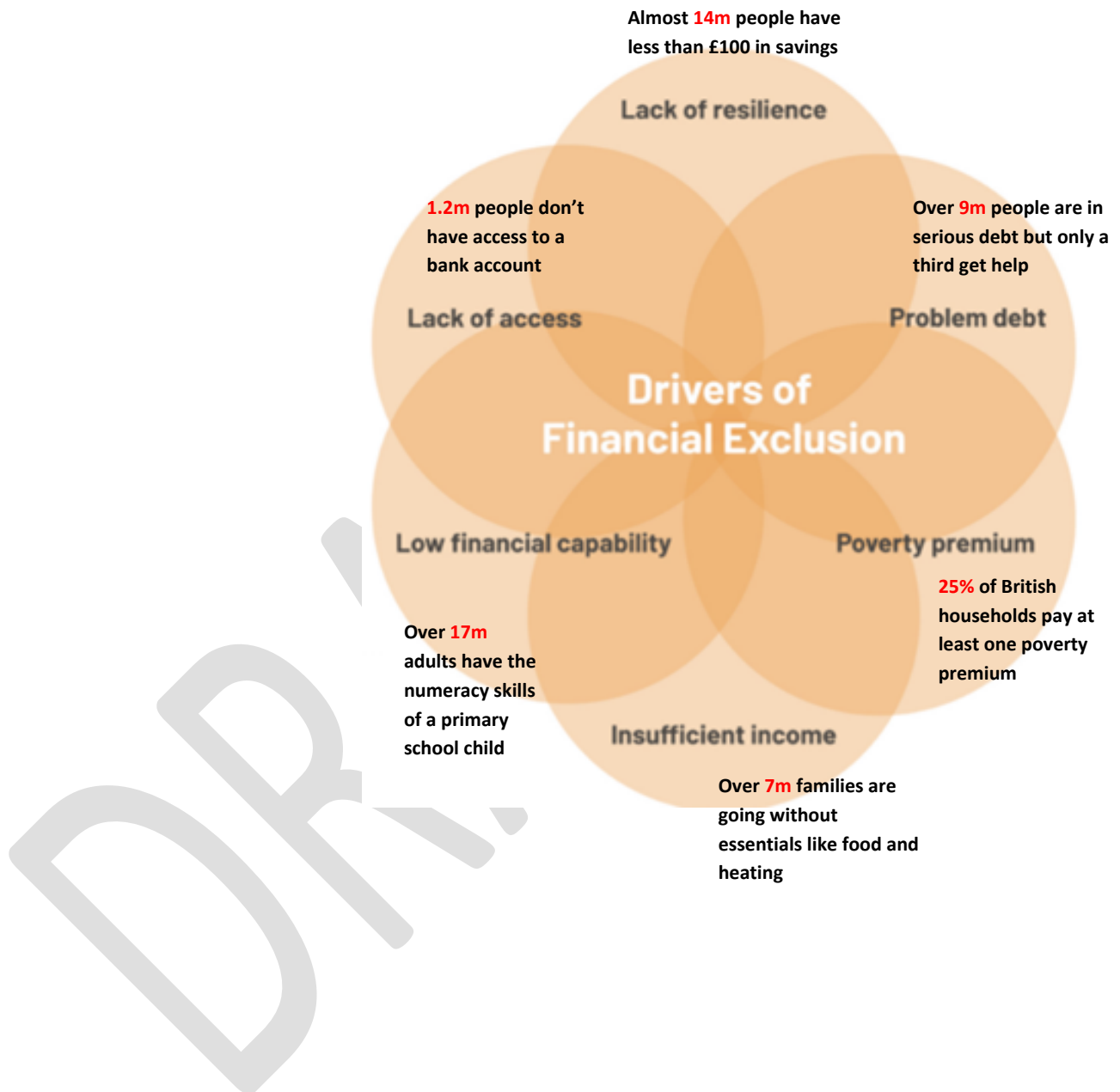
Enabling access and empowering people and communities with relevant skills and knowledge is vital if they are to make appropriate financial decisions. Access to financial services and access to good financial services is not the same thing. Giving people the tools to better manage their challenging circumstances not only helps individuals and families, but it also collectively develops entire communities and drives economic growth.

### Who is Financially Excluded?

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) Analysis shows that in their most recent survey 2019, around 7.1m people (one in seven, or around 14% of the adult population) in the UK fall into the definition of ‘financially excluded’. Citizens Advice data from January 2024 shows this has increased. Having poor financial knowledge or understanding can lead to costly credit or services which can reduce available income, leading to inability to budget and pay bills. This can lead to defaults on a credit file which can make residents financially excluded from accessing products and services at a reasonable cost and so paying a poverty premium.

## What is a poverty premium?

The poverty premium is the extra costs people on low incomes and in poverty pay for essential products and services.



## What is Poor Credit Rating / No Affordable Credit

A poor credit rating can occur from not paying bills on time or by owing too much money. A person with a poor credit rating will find it difficult to get a loan, credit card, mortgage, car loan and even a job if they are considered to have a low credit score.

- Should a resident with poor credit rating have an essential item such as a washing machine break, they would be unable to get affordable credit and would have to rely on options such as instalment payment options (buy now pay later BNPL).

Whilst these schemes may appear to be beneficial due to low or nil interest, extreme financial difficulties can occur from missed payments and multiple missed payment fees. 2022 shows that 17 million people have used BNPL. This figure has risen to 19 million as of 2023. A trend from 2023 shows that BNPL is often being used to buy food shopping.

- People who are unable to get high street credit feel they have no option but to turn to loan sharks (doorstep lenders). Loan sharks offer loans to those who have poor credit rating with extremely high interest and generally operate outside the law. It is estimated that 1.08m people in the UK are in debt to a loan shark

## Mortgage Arrears

According to FT Advisor in December 2023, 1 in 10 homeowners missed mortgage payments in 2023. Missing a mortgage payment will put a default marker on a credit file which would dramatically decrease a resident's credit score making it impossible to get affordable credit

## Welfare reforms

Over the past several years there have been multiple changes to welfare benefits with the biggest change being the introduction of Universal credit (UC). UC has replaced:

- Housing Benefit
- Job Seekers Allowance (income based)
- Employment and Support Allowance (income related)
- Income Support
- Tax Credits (both child and working)

Over the next few years over 2.5 million claimants nationally will be moved by managed migration to universal credit. Many claimants have shown the need for high levels of support when moving onto Universal Credit. Approximately £19m in benefits goes unclaimed each year. We need to continue to work with all partners to ensure full support is given to people moving on to universal credit to minimise the financial impact.

## Child Poverty

Child poverty describes when a child is raised with limited access to or, in some cases, no access to, the essential resources they need to survive and live well. Childhood poverty can lead to poor health outcomes in later life. Reducing it is key to improving health in adulthood and increasing healthy life expectancy.

According to Action for Children, in 2022 there were 4,200,000 children in poverty in the UK. This is an increase from 2015 of 9% nationally. With regards to West Lancashire there has been an increase of 29% (action for children) [Where is child poverty increasing in the UK? | Action For Children](#)

Two commonly used measures of poverty based on disposable income are:

- Relative low income: This refers to people living in households with income below 60% of the median in that year.
- Absolute low income: This refers to people living in households with income below 60% of median income in a base year, usually 2010/11. This measurement is adjusted for inflation (The median household income for 2023 was £33,000)

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data shows that around one in six people in the UK were in relative low income (relative poverty) before housing costs in 2021/22. This rises to just over one in five people once housing costs are accounted for.

Absolute low income is likely to rise in the short run: the Resolution Foundation forecast in September 2023 that absolute poverty will increase by 300,000, from 11.7 million in 2023/24 to 12.0 million in 2024/25. This will bring the rate to 18.0% in 2024/25, the same rate as 2019/20.

This is because real incomes are set to fall, and income is adjusted for inflation when measuring absolute low income.

## Food Insecurity

Foodbanks are in high demand within West Lancashire. Nationwide, in 2022, The Trussell Trust alone issued just on 3 million parcels with 348,000 in the North West alone. Within our money advice service, in 2023 we issued 591 foodbank vouchers this is an increase of 292 from the previous year.

Food insecurity is when a person is without reliable access to enough affordable, nutritious, healthy food. The main health issues related to food insecurity are:

- Diabetes (4.3 million people in the UK – of which 35,000 are young people)
- Obesity (approximately 17 million in UK, 6 million of these are children)
- Heart disease (2.3 million)
- Mental health

A 'Food Insecurity Forum' was formed in February 2022 in response to the 'Iconic Food Insecurities in West Lancashire 2021' report, which was commissioned by West Lancs Council to understand the severity and chronicity of household food insecurity across the borough. The forum brings together organisations, support services, charities and councillors to utilise a collective effort of resource for greatest impact.

A strategy action plan and framework were developed to provide a backdrop of what the forum would like to accomplish in tackling the root causes of food insecurity whilst building on the provisions already in place. For greatest impact the action plan is broken down into two strands strategic and operational with four key areas.

- Addressing the root causes of food insecurity (financial awareness/security)
- Support those most in need with access to food 365 days a year (Support eligible residents to access existing nationally funded support, including free school meals, HAF and healthy start vouchers)
- Sustainable food provision (Expansion of programmes to educate and create an environment which promotes healthy eating and builds resilience)
- Emergency food provision (Provision to support those in immediate food crisis)

Projects such as community cooking, food growing and budgeting continue to be established and developed in collaboration with partners working with communities and schools.

Other council departments, financial support services and employability teams produce ongoing work to support people on low income and at risk of poverty which continues to feed into the objectives and outcomes of the plan. There are many areas of support ongoing which is possible due to strong partnership working which include working with The Larder (local community group) to produce cooking on a budget programme. Creation of FUSS/Tippy Toes for income maximisation and benefit uptake campaigns.

The ongoing cost of living crisis continues to have an impact on people's ability to afford nutritious food. The strategy is currently being collaboratively reviewed and processes developed to monitor and measure impact to address current need and sustain an environment which helps people make healthy choices and reduces health inequalities.

### **Fuel Insecurity**

Fuel insecurity is very closely linked with food insecurity issues. Due to multiple issues since 2022, the UK has undergone a fuel cost crisis, 4 in 10 (3.26 million) energy bill payers have struggled with the increase in cost. This has exacerbated debt cycles, lack of ability to heat homes and increased mental health issues. This is a sharp increase based on 2018 statistics of 2.4 million households. It is anticipated that this increased to 3.53 million households in 2023.

Nationwide it is an ever-growing issue. Government statistics on fuel insecurity show that in 2018 it was estimated that nationally 2.4 million households were recorded as having fuel insecurity, and in West Lancashire this was 5,536 households (13.1%) this is also the national average which has increased from 10.3% which alone shows the severity of the energy crisis issue nationally. There are many organisations within West Lancashire who provide support from fuel insecurity which include, Citizens Advice have supported 320 residents, Our money advice team have supported 250

Issues with fuel and food insecurity link to the wider health inequalities in the borough where there is a difference in life expectancy of 8 years for those in Skelmersdale compared to Ormskirk, and food and fuel poverty can often be linked with those in social housing.

## Lasting Effects of Covid / Mental Health

According to Health Org, by May 2022 90% of the UK population had experienced at least 1 Covid-19 infection. This continues to be a significant barrier to employment and to increased levels of sickness nationally.

Mental health issues can be felt due to multiple issues which include, Financial Exclusion, bereavement, long term sickness disabled adults and unpaid carers. According to ONS, in 2022, 32% of adults have experienced moderate to severe mental health issues due to having to borrow more or use more credit than the previous year. 16% of adults reported moderate to severe mental health issues which is a sharp increase to pre Covid which was 10%

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/mentalhealth/articles/costoflivinganddepressioninadultsgreatbritain/29septemberto23october2022>

## Multiple debts

A variety of issues can cause debt. Some causes may be the result of expensive life events, such as having children or moving to a new house, while others may stem from poor money management, failure to meet payments on time or having a low household income where you are unable to pay your priority bills.

According to Citizens advice the UK average personal debt for 2023 was £8,247. In West Lancs, the average debt increases to £10,138.

According to UK Debt Service, as of January 2024:

- The average credit card debt was £2,452.
- Between May to July 2023, 279 people were declared either bankruptcy or insolvent. Daily, this equates to one person every 5 minutes
- 1,109 people a day between May and July were made redundant

The main causes for severe debts are multiples of the following:

- Arrears outstanding
- Mail order purchases
- Overdrawn accounts
- Hire purchase
- Credit / store cards
- Loans
- BNPL

## Poor financial knowledge or understanding

Having poor financial knowledge or understanding can lead to costly credit or services which can reduce available income, leading to inability to budget and pay bills. This can lead to defaults on a credit file which can make residents financially excluded from accessing products and services at a reasonable cost and so paying a poverty premium.

## No insurance

According to the Association of British Insurers 1 in 4 households in the UK do not have home contents insurance. There could be many reasons for not having home contents insurance for example poor financial knowledge or understanding and / or lack of ability to afford the insurance. With no insurance, if an emergency occurred it could result in available household savings being depleted or the need to rely on credit which may then stretch the household budget.

## Workplace, Wellbeing & Employability

UK parliament statistics published in January 2024 show the national unemployment rate is 4.2% which is approximately 1.9 million adults over 18. The latest figures show the figure for West Lancashire to be approximately 2,200 which is 4.1% of residents. There are many barriers to employment which include health issues, experience and training.

The Workplace, Wellbeing and Employability Team will work with residents to improve their employability within two main strands of support:

- working with residents of West Lancs to support them in to work (building confidence, supporting long term conditions, CV writing, Interview techniques etc)
- business networking, supporting employers to provide healthier, more sustainable work through workplace training (mental health awareness, stress awareness)
- Internally the team will be known as the "work wellbeing and employability team". To the community and partners the service being delivered will be known as "THE NEST" (networking, employability, support, training). Our venue will provide access to the team who will give 1-2-1 support, as well as usage of a computer suite for job searching/training. The service being delivered is funded by UKSP (UK shared prosperity, which is replacing ESF)
  - a. It will positively affect opportunities for education training and employment.
  - b. It will have a positive impact on people's health both mental and physical.
  - c. It will address local poverty levels by helping people back into employment.
  - d. It will promote equal opportunities in the local community, specifically working with residents and businesses within West Lancashire

## Who is most likely to be Financial Excluded?

Whole communities can suffer as a result of under-investment in financial services. It is therefore important that as a Council and housing provider, we prioritise services to deliver improvements and benefits by having innovative ways to maximise income and tackle financial exclusion for citizens across West Lancashire. This includes working in partnership with all internal and external partners to ensure there are no gaps in service.

Since Covid-19 West Lancs Council have provided a residential support service due to issues relating to:

- Help with paying rent / mortgages
- Mental health



- Council tax payments
- Council tax support
- Food & fuel insecurity
- Furniture poverty
- Debt issues
- Benefit issues

Our Money Advice Team have supported the Household Support Team to ensure that the most financially vulnerable have received support in making a claim for the fund which has been available since the pandemic.

## Current Provision

The current Financial Inclusion Strategy 2021 – 2024 was developed to:

- Support the delivery of one of the key Council priorities; *Everyone to be healthy, happy, safe and resilient.*
- Support the strategic goal of the Council to reduce inequality as outlined in the 2018- 2021 Health and Wellbeing strategy
- Supporting residents through change in the Welfare reforms which in terms of financial inclusion had a particular relevance to those renting homes from the Council.

So far, we have achieved:

- The introduction of the Free Uniforms for Secondary Schools
- Full time money advice support available for residents of the borough
  - This is a post we are looking at all options for possible extension
- The creation of a support service directory
- The creation of a one door approach providing easy referral system for all organisations
- Delivered a Financial Awareness and Employability culture day to 6 groups of year 11 students in partnership with UpHolland High
- Increased partnership working which provides increased support and knowledge between partners
- Educational sessions for residents relating to benefit take up, debt and improved links with mental health
- Pre tenancy support work to improve tenants ability to maintain a tenancy and reduced poverty

We are working with internal and external partners to reduce furniture poverty which, in turn will reduce residents accessing irresponsible credit to purchase essential items. This project is still in its infancy.

The Money Advice service consists of a team of 4 officers who provide money advice and support for Council tenants including debt advice and maximisation of income, through the theme of "Your Money Matters".

As well as supporting the implementation of the Financial Inclusion Strategy, the Money Advice team have:

- Contributed to £877,738 additional income being secured in 2022/23 for Council tenants through grant, benefits, backdated housing benefits, discretionary housing payments and support grant payments of this £319,375 was paid directly to tenants rent accounts supporting the sustainability of their tenancy.
- Supported 3,204 tenants with issues relating to and making new claims for Universal Credit (UC) since 2021 and continue to provide dedicated resources for those new to UC. Officers work jointly with the DWP offering services at the Job centre plus
- Offer drop-in sessions across the borough to support those seeking money advice at
  - Job Centre, Skelmersdale & Ormskirk
  - The Ennerdale Centre
  - The Birchwood Centre
  - Children Centres
- Contributed to the prevention of homelessness offering advice and support before enforcement action is taken for tenants and residents with rent / mortgage arrears.
- Offer a supportive affordability assessment and checks pre tenancy to ensure offers of accommodations are affordable and sustainable
- Carry out regular awareness campaigns and information updates on affordable credit and the Credit Unions

The Council now want to build on the success of the Financial Inclusion Strategy 2021 -2024 and the existing services that are currently delivered to ensure that there is a continued comprehensive range of appropriate financial wellbeing services, as well as offering the knowledge, skills and confidence to maximise residents own financial stability and reduce the negative impact financial hardship can bring to a person's overall health and wellbeing.

This will meet the Councils vision of being: *West Lancashire Together; the place of choice to live, work, visit and invest in.*

The Financial Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029 will build on the current policies and plans for service delivery relating to the homelessness strategy, the housing strategy, fuel poverty, food insecurity and wellbeing.

The strategy has been developed to build on the existing service provision with the key aim of empowering and enabling a West Lancashire wide supportive advice service.

### **Consultation which has supported the creation of the new strategy**

To ensure that the focus of the strategy was relevant, we have worked in collaboration with our service users, partners and stakeholders. The feedback from this collaboration has been used to create the main focus of the strategy and the key objectives. The feedback generated has been through:

- Online Survey
- In person sessions with tenants
- Partnership meetings with internal and external departments and organisations

The Council invited tenants and residents to take part in the Financial Inclusion Strategy review via online Survey. A face-to-face session was also completed to seek feedback to ensure we are providing the appropriate support in the correct areas.

We received 163 responses to our survey, with 76.7% of tenants and residents agreeing we are focusing on the correct areas of support (Appendix B). The feedback we received in relation to other areas we should be focusing on were health, digital inclusion, support not available in rural areas and it was evident from feedback from both tenants and residents that they are struggling to afford everyday basic needs due to the cost-of-living crisis.

At the face-to-face consultation, we asked tenants to provide us feedback regarding the current strategy and they advised that they would like to see good news stories or positive lived experience within the community moving forward.

We also consulted with various partners such as Trussel Trust, Children Family & Wellbeing Services, Department of Working Pensions and charitable organisations that support our vulnerable tenants. To encourage as many responses as possible, we shared our online survey with all partners and requested that they complete this to have their say in what they believed should be included in the strategy. It was apparent that challenges around digital inclusion and access to employment opportunities were a key theme from feedback from partners.

## **OBJECTIVES AND KEY WORK STREAMS**

The previous strategy identified 8 key delivery objectives, for services for tenants and residents.

These have been reviewed and remain relevant for all residents of the borough in the context of the changing landscape and need for financial services.

Following the above consultations, 5 key objectives have been identified for the future focus of the strategy based on:

- Increased usage of foodbanks and people utilising BNPL to buy food shopping
- Gaps in service based on area and support provision and benefit take up
- Links relating to employment loss and mental health issues, loss of a home, fuel and food insecurity and child poverty

## OUR 5 KEY OBJECTIVES

- Invest in new and improve on existing external partnerships to grow the support available for all partners, stakeholders and customers
- To look at the viability of introducing social supermarkets to the borough and any other opportunities to
- Through partnership working we aim to extend support services to reduce gaps in support
- Working with partners we will aim to reduce barriers to training and employment for financially vulnerable groups.
- Provide regular benefit information sessions which will look to improve the level of benefit take up across the borough and reduce poverty

In the following action plan there are many actions spread out over the 5 year strategy each action has an expected completion date, which will be followed by the milestones taken to get the action achieved.

Officers will commit to reviewing progress on the detailed actions quarterly and will provide an update on progress annually to Council.

We will hold regular meetings with stakeholders to monitor progress and develop new ideas and initiatives to meet emerging priorities.

We will continue to maintain and build partnerships with those who help to contribute to Financial Inclusion services for the Borough

### Thank-you to the Key Stakeholders who were involved:

- West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Services - Providing information and support to voluntary organisations.
- Citizens Advice – Independent Impartial Charitable Organisation
- NHS Clinical commissioning group – Responsible for the planning of health care.
- Birchwood Centre – Provides Support to our Homeless residents.
- Age UK – Provides Support to our Elderly Residents.
- West Lancashire Debt Advice – Charitable agency to reduce debt and poverty.
- Department of Work & Pensions
- More Positive Together
- Lancashire County Council Mental Health Services
- Free Uniforms for School (FUSS)

## Financial Inclusion Strategy: Action Plan

The Financial Inclusion (FI) action plan will be adjusted to respond to budgetary constraints, and emerging priorities

Actions	Resource/Lead	Outcome	Expected Completion Date	No/Comments and updates
<b>YEAR 1 2024-2025</b>				
Develop and undertake an Unclaimed Benefits campaign	RG	To ensure education is provided to residents regarding all area's aspects of benefit, focusing predominantly on Universal Credit and Managed Migration.	Ongoing through life of strategy	
Introduce a West Lancashire Community shop	RG	Providing affordable food for residents during the cost-of-living crisis	Ongoing through life of strategy	
Work with both internal and external partners to grow Refernet	West Lancs Council?	Ensure the uptake and use of Refernet internally by West Lancs Council employees to signpost support for tenants	Ongoing through life of strategy	
Link with external partners to grow the furniture re-cycle project	RG	Ensuring constant flow of stock and items to both tenants and residents of the Borough	Q4	

YEAR 2 2025 – 2026				
Continue to provide financial awareness to further education students	RG/MPT	Educating students on debt, rent & support within the Borough annually	Q1	
Develop partnerships with Social/Private Landlords to promote financial support available to private residents	RG	Remove barriers to private residents accessing support within the Borough	Ongoing through life of strategy	
Invest in new and improve on existing external partnerships	RG	Identify and create new avenues of support for tenants to remove gaps in service and increase support availability across the borough	Ongoing through life of strategy	
Ensure continuation of partnership working with "More Positive Together" to create employment opportunities	RG	Supporting vulnerable groups to reduce unemployment	Q1	
Develop a digital FI newsletter focused on new and existing tenants.	RG	Quarterly financial information sent to tenants. Promoted through surveys, sent out via email, displayed on social media	Q3	

<b>YEAR 3 2026 – 2027</b>				
Explore the need and ability of delivering out of hours Financial Awareness campaigns	RG	Assist low income families that may require financial support	Q2	
Create digital how to videos for residents based on current trends/themes	RG	Ensure the correct information is given to residents in relation to completing documents	Q1	
Explore the option of introducing an Online working group facility to residents	RG	Provide F-2-F online support to vulnerable residents in there home	Q1	
Explore options for cheaper alternative credit	RG	Investigate organisations who provide low cost credit options as an alternative to buy now pay later	Ongoing through life of strategy	
<b>YEAR 4 2027 – 2028</b>				
Investigate the provision of benefit appeals support	RG / Partnership working	Work with partners to consider the options of providing a benefit appeals process	Q1	
Explore possibility of introducing UC claim champions at outreach centres	RG / Partnership working	Consider viability of providing residents with UC claim champions through partnership working at community centres and other outreach centres to support managed migration to UC	Q2	
Create and promote School Holiday support index	RG/Helen Watson/Chantal Barton	To produce a support network of resources/available support for parents over the school holidays.	Q1/Ongoing through life of strategy	
Consider alternative options for banking	RG / Partnership working	To consider alternative options for residents who are unable to get high street accounts	Q4	

<b>YEAR 5 2028-2029</b>				
Managed migration of older adults to Universal Credit	RG / Partnership working	Work with partners to ensure the migration of older adults to universal credit is a smooth transition	Q1	
Create E-Learning programmes for residents around financial health and employment	RG	To educate tenants on reducing poverty	Q4	
Consideration of supportive surgeries in rural areas	RG / Partnership working	To consider viability of providing supportive surgeries with partners in more rural areas	Q2	
Community health support for those struggling with emotional / mental health issues	RG / KM / Partnership working	Evaluate the provision of community health support to assess the need of extending the provision	Ongoing through life of strategy	
Use current community centres to deliver digital support for Managed Migration	RG	Ensure that steps are taken to increase digital inclusion	Q4	





**CABINET: Tuesday, 26 March 2024**

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW &  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 14th March  
2024**

**LSC: 20th March 2024**

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**Report of: Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Portfolio Holder for Housing**

**Contact for further information: Nicola Bradley, Tenancy Service Manager (Tel:  
01695 585269)**

**(E-mail: [nicola.bradley@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:nicola.bradley@westlancs.gov.uk))**

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**SUBJECT: DRAFT HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPERS STRATEGY 2024-29**

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Wards affected: (All Wards);

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To consider and agree the Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Strategy 2024-29 subject to consultation

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

- 2.1 That the Strategy be considered and any agreed comments be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

- 3.1 That subject to consultation the Draft Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Strategy attached at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
- 3.2 That the Head of Housing, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, be given delegated authority to make updates and changes as required following public consultation, and thereafter to implement and deliver the strategy.

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced a duty on local authorities to regularly review homelessness in their area and to produce a Homelessness Strategy.

4.2 To inform the strategy the Council is required to carry out a Homelessness Review.

This review must cover:

- The current and future levels of homelessness
- The provision of services to prevent homelessness, provide accommodation for homeless households and support those at risk of homelessness
- The resources available to prevent and tackle homelessness.

4.3 The 2023 Review considered the legislative and policy context, and the impact of demographic change, the economy and the housing market on homelessness: identifying key issues and any gaps in service.

## **5.0 HOMELESSNESS REVIEW FINDINGS**

5.1 Some of the key findings from the Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Review 2023 were:

- Demand for housing is increasing.
- In line with the national trend, homelessness in the Borough is increasing.
- The numbers of homeless people needing to go into temporary accommodation is increasing as is their length of stay.
- Rough sleeping in the borough remains low, but those at risk of rough sleeping is increasing.

## **6.0 CURRENT POSITION**

6.1 The draft strategy has been developed taking account of the Homelessness Review, consultation with partners and feedback from customers.

6.2 The Draft Homelessness Strategy 2023-28, as attached at Appendix 1, outlines

- the Council's duties to homeless people.
- the national and local context including the recent changes in legislation which impact the way that homelessness is assessed and responded to,
- the progress we have made since the last strategy.
- how we work with partners to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- our vision and priorities.
- an action plan outlining the task we will undertake to achieve our strategic aims.

6.3 The vision outlined in the strategy is 'to prevent homelessness in West Lancashire, helping residents to find and keep their home'. To achieve our vision and stop the cycle of homelessness we will strengthen and build on our work with partners,

seeking out funding opportunities and develop new and innovative solutions to prevent and relieve homelessness.

6.4 The key objectives set out in the draft strategy are:

- Preventing Homelessness
- Relieving Homelessness
- Improve Support to Prevent, relieve and stop reoccurring homelessness.

6.5 The Action Plan which forms part of the draft strategy, details the actions that will be undertaken to ensure these objectives are met.

6.6 Following Cabinet approval of the Draft Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Strategy there will be a further period of public consultation, to allow stakeholders and the public to provide feedback. Authority is therefore sought for the Head of Housing, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to be given delegated authority to make updates and changes as required following the aforementioned consultation, and thereafter to implement and deliver the strategy.

6.7 In the event that feedback from the consultation requires a fundamental change to the Strategy a further report detailing the changes will be brought back before Members for consideration.

## **7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The actions contained in the draft strategy will help to improve the services provided to all who are faced with homelessness with the aim of preventing households becoming homeless.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are some financial/resource implications arising from this report in respect of specific tasks within the action plan. Where possible, these will be met using existing resources and external funding bids.

8.2 At present whilst some staffing costs are funded via the GRA, 3 temporary posts, and our homelessness prevention activities eg provision of temporary and hotel accommodation, Rough Sleepers Support Service, the provision of Sanctuary measures for victims of violence, payments toward rent in advance and deposits; are funded through the Homelessness Prevention Grant from central government and a successful bid to the Rough Sleepers Initiative 2022-2025.

8.3 The Homeless Prevention Grant is provided to the authority each year to support its delivery of services to prevent and tackle homelessness, funding for the next year will be:

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Homelessness Prevention Grant - 2023-24</b>	<b>Homelessness Prevention Grant - 2024-25</b>
West Lancashire	<b>£147,238</b>	<b>£155,412</b>

8.4 To complete many of the actions within the strategy we will work in partnership with key stakeholders in the voluntary sector to identify opportunities to seek external funding and deliver better outcomes.

## **9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

9.1 The actions referred to in this report are covered by the scheme of delegation to officers and any necessary changes have been made in the relevant risk registers.

## **10.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The Strategy aims to promote the wellbeing of our residents by providing help and support to those who are, or may become, homeless. People who have experienced homelessness are more likely to have poor physical and mental health, with poor health being both a cause and consequence of homelessness. By delivering the actions within the strategy to prevent, relieve and support those at risk of homelessness there will be a direct positive impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals.

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders, therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

### **Appendices**

1. Draft Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Strategy
2. Equality Impact Assessment



# **Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029**

## Introduction

### What is Homelessness?

The legal definition of homelessness is 'a person is homeless if they have no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere which is available for their occupation and which that person has a legal right to occupy' or has accommodation but it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy.

Homelessness can take many forms, and whilst people often associate homelessness with those sleeping on the streets, here in West Lancashire rough sleepers make up a very small minority of homeless households.

Most homeless people in West Lancashire find themselves homeless after their landlord follows legal procedures to evict them, because they are asked to leave by family or friends, or after being subjected to domestic abuse.

Delivering a high-quality service to those facing homelessness is our priority and we will make sure that all those who need our help are given the advice and support they require. We aim to develop and shape services to meet changing needs and demand and be innovative and seek out new funding opportunities and develop partnerships to prevent and tackle homelessness in West Lancashire.

### What are our duties toward homeless people?

The main provisions for dealing with homelessness are contained in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The Council has a duty to provide information and advice about homelessness and a duty to investigate where we have reason to believe that someone is, or is threatened, with homelessness. A person is threatened with homelessness if it is likely that they will become homeless within 56 days.

**Prevention duty** - A local authority must take reasonable steps to help the applicant stay in their accommodation, for example we may do this by negotiating with landlords.

**Relief Duty** – where an applicant is homeless and eligible, we must take reasonable steps to help them secure accommodation for at least 6 months. We will work with the applicant to develop a Personalised Housing Plan setting out the actions that both parties will take.

In cases where the applicant does not have a local connection to the area a referral can be made to an authority where they do have a connection.

**Interim Accommodation** – where the applicant is homeless, eligible and in priority need, the Council has a duty to provide interim accommodation. In West Lancashire we primarily use dispersed units of our own housing stock to discharge this duty.

**Main Duty** – following the relief duty if someone is still homeless, eligible, has a priority need and is not intentionally homeless the Council has a duty to find them suitable accommodation. We often discharge the main duty through an offer of accommodation with the Council, or a Registered Provider.

**Priority Need** - those considered to be in priority need include:

- Households with dependent children and pregnant women
- Victims of domestic abuse
- 16 & 17 year olds
- Vulnerable people eg older or disabled, care leavers, veterans

The Council delivers its homelessness service through a team of specialist officers who form part a multi-functional team managing the Councils housing register and its housing stock. The team follow the code of guidance and refer to current caselaw to ensure duties, investigations and assessments are conducted in accordance with legislation.

### **Why do we need a strategy?**

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on local housing authorities, to develop a homelessness strategy at least every five years.

For the purposes of the 2002 Act, “homelessness strategy” means a strategy formulated by a local authority for:

- a) preventing homelessness in their district;
- b) securing that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people in their district who are or may become homeless;
- c) securing the satisfactory provision of support for people in their district:
  - i. who are or may become homeless; or
  - ii. who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again.

The Homelessness Strategy for West Lancashire provides an opportunity for the Council to analyse recent homelessness trends and establish our objectives to prevent and tackle homelessness over the next five years. This is the first strategy developed since the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, which fundamentally changed the way we work with residents experiencing homelessness.

## National Context

The number of homeless presentations nationally is increasing,

Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total number of households assessed	292,690	305,680	284,330	294,620	311,990

More people are housed in temporary accommodation with 104,510 households in temporary accommodation at the end of March 2023 compared to 80,720 in March 2018.

There have been many changes since West Lancashire's last Homelessness Strategy, including changes to legislation, the impact of the Covid 19 Pandemic, and the cost-of-living crisis.

Recent changes in legislation have significantly changed the way that homelessness is assessed and responded to. These include:

### Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which created 2 new duties:

- **Duty to prevent homelessness** - an enhanced prevention duty extending the period a household is threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days, meaning that housing authorities are required to work with people to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage; and
- **Duty to relieve homelessness** - a new duty for those who are already homeless so that housing authorities will support households for 56 days to relieve their homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation.

### The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Domestic Abuse Act strengthens the support available to victims of domestic abuse. The Act extends priority need to all eligible victims of domestic abuse who are homeless because of being a victim of domestic abuse. The 2021 Act brought in a new definition of domestic abuse which housing authorities must follow to assess whether an applicant is homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse.

### Rough Sleeping

The government has pledged to end rough sleeping by the end of 2024, publishing a refreshed strategy Ending Rough Sleeping for Good in September 2022. There were 3,069 people estimated to be sleeping rough on a single night in autumn 2022 in England, this is an increase of 26% from 2021.



## Local Context

The number of homeless presentations in West Lancashire

Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 (projected)
Total number of households assessed	221	243	241	290	372	487

This strategy closely links to the Housing Strategy and reflects the Council's vision, **West Lancashire together; the place of choice to live, work, visit and invest.**

Our corporate priorities:

Priority	Area of Focus
<b>Create a clean and environmentally sustainable borough</b>	Build resilience to climate change and reduce our carbon footprint
	Reduce waste production and increase reuse and recycling
	Enhance and improve a safe, built environment
	Preserve the natural environment, biodiversity and landscape
<b>Generate prosperity in our borough</b>	Attract investment, support businesses and direct wealth into the local economy and support cooperatives
	Provide opportunities for regeneration, housing and economic business growth
	Identify the housing needs of the borough and work with partners to address them
	Attract high quality job opportunities and support people into employment and training
<b>Foster inclusive and healthy communities</b>	Reduce health and wellbeing inequalities
	Design services around residents and communities
	Support our Armed Forces and vulnerable residents
	Provide safe, quality and affordable homes as a social landlord
<b>Manage a resilient, financially strong Council</b>	Maintain a balanced budget and transparent decision-making
	Continue to improve our services and deliver value for money
	Attract, retain and develop an engaged, skilled and motivated workforce including through an Employee Recognition Scheme

## Progress since the Last Strategy

### We have:

- Embedded the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 into our services.
- Worked with other Registered Providers of Social Housing to develop affordable housing.
- Maximised the delivery of affordable housing through Section 106 agreements.
- Updated the Councils Allocations Policy to improve outcomes for homeless applicants and ensure an adequate turnover in units of Temporary Accommodation.
- Developed a Financial Inclusion Strategy which is in the process of being refreshed.
- Secured Homes England Investment Partner status, enabling the Council to directly benefit from Homes England grant which in turn supports the Council to build affordable housing
- Established Tawd Valley Development Company (TVD) which supports the development of Homes England grant funded units and other residential / commercial development opportunities in line with its Business Plan. TVD have delivered 84 units for affordable rent with more in the pipeline.
- In partnership with TVD the Council has delivered 13 homes on its new Rent to Buy tenure.
- As part of a Lancashire wide bid, assisted the Liberty Centre to secure £200k funding from the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government which enhanced Domestic Abuse service provision in the Borough.
- Supported Birchwood to deliver a complex needs service funded by Lancashire County Council
- Provided Council land and worked in partnership with Birchwood, Registered Provider (Calico Homes) and Homes England to enable the development of a 24 bed Foyer for young people.
- Utilised new burdens funding to fund a Domestic Abuse Co-Ordinator to assist the Council meet its obligations under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Launched and later extended the Rough Sleepers Support Service to provide accommodation with support for up to 2 years, to those either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.
- We have recruited additional resources in the Homelessness team, including a Temporary Accommodation Officer to offer support to individuals whilst in interim accommodation and assist with finding a permanent home.

- Worked with Lancashire County Council's Refugee Integration Team to support refugees under the Syrian Resettlement Programme, Afghanistan Relocations & Assistance Policy, and the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- Utilised Discretionary Housing Payments to prevent homelessness.

## **Partnership working**

We appreciate that to provide better outcomes for those facing homelessness a partnership approach is essential, we therefore aim to build on and extend our collaborative working over the lifespan of this strategy.

The Homelessness Service is provided by specialist advisors based within a multi-disciplinary team providing the Councils housing management services, including lettings, tenancy management and Anti-Social Behaviour; ensuring customers are provided with the support they need finding and moving into their new home.

We provide a Furnished Tenancy Scheme to support new and existing tenants to access essential items of furniture and white goods to help them move in and sustain their tenancy and following feedback from customers we have recently introduced new packages supplying just white goods and/or carpets.

The service works closely with Rent & Money Advisors who offer a range of advice to help people keep their home including, help with budgeting, assisting with benefit claims, debt advice food bank vouchers, and applications for funding for home essentials eg white goods.

To prevent Homelessness and create more positive futures the service links into the Councils More Positive Together project which engages with residents who may need help to improve their skills, wellbeing and employment prospects.

The service works closely with other statutory and voluntary agencies, to prevent and relieve homelessness and to ensure the best outcomes for those facing homelessness this includes Social Care, the Liberty Centre, Probation Services, Police, Mental Health services and local community groups.

We have worked with neighbouring districts and partners to develop the Lancashire Care Leavers Joint Housing Protocol, which is delivered through regular meetings of the Leaving Care Lasting Homes Panel.

The Council leads the West Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Partnership, who are focusing on Health in Housing as a key priority.

The team is represented on the Lancashire Armed Forces Covenant Network and supports the rehousing of armed forces personnel through its Allocations Policy.

The service has a good working relationship with HM Prison & Probation Services and is represented at regular Central Lancashire Prison Leaver Meetings to aid accommodation outcomes for individual prison leavers.

We are part of the Local Priorities & Genga Group which brings together a multi-agency team, including Police, Community Safety team, Police, NHS, Probation

services, Social Care Domestic Abuse Services together to tackle local issues and organised crime.

We attend regular meetings of MARAC, working with partners to ensure survivors of domestic abuse can access the help and support they need. The Council partners with the Liberty Centre to operate a Sanctuary scheme to provide additional security measures to allow people at risk of ongoing abuse to stay in their own homes.

Together with the West Lancashire Liberty Centre and Edge Hill Students Union, we have developed a social media campaign, 'Don't be a bystander'. The campaign aims to help encourage people who think that a friend, relative or colleague who is suffering from domestic violence, to get support, advice or assistance.

In partnership with Birchwood we provide 10 units of accommodation with support, to Rough Sleepers or those who have a history of homelessness and who have complex needs that may be preventing them from accessing or maintaining their own accommodation.

## **Homelessness Review**

To inform this strategy, a review of homelessness was carried out early in 2023. The purpose was to:

- Review the current and likely future levels of homelessness.
- Identify the people at risk of homelessness.
- Identify the main causes of homelessness.
- Review the homelessness prevention measures carried out by the Council.
- Review the accommodation and support options available for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

## **Key findings from the Review**

In West Lancashire:

### **Housing Register**

Demand for Social Housing is increasing with the number of active applications with West Lancashire HomeFinder, the Council's choice based letting scheme, increasing from 938 in April 2018 to 1365 in April 2023. (1676 in Feb 2024)

The proportion of applicants experiencing a higher level of Housing Need has also increased, with 20% of applicants now in the High Priority Category (Band B) compared to 10% in 2018.

There has been a significant increase in the time taken for applicants in the High Priority (Band B), which is the banding awarded to those accepted as having a homeless duty owed to them, to be rehoused. Applicants in Band B are having to wait on average, over 5 months longer, to be rehoused than in 2018/19.

## **Homeless Applications**

Homelessness Presentations and numbers of cases owed the Prevention, Relief and Main duties are all increasing. In 18/19 the Council received 221 Homeless presentations, this increased to 372 in 22/23 and is projected to rise further to 487 in 23/24.

The main reasons for homelessness remain, the ending of private rented tenancies, family and friends no longer able to accommodate and domestic abuse.

## **Temporary Accommodation**

The numbers of homeless people needing to go into temporary accommodation is increasing, with 23 households accommodated in 2018/19, compared to 50 in 2022/23. The projected number for 23/24 is 82. The length of stay in temporary accommodation increased by on average 40 days to 99 days in 22/23, with projection for 23/24 rising to 114 days.

## **Rough Sleeping**

Whilst the last rough sleepers estimate recorded five rough sleepers; there are a significant number of people particularly single persons who are sofa surfing and therefore at risk of rough sleeping at any time.

## **Support**

There is a lack of housing related support services in the borough, which is a concern as a higher proportion of those presenting as homeless have a history of mental health issues, rising from 41% in 2018/19 to 54% in 2022/23.

## **Social Housing Stock**

Whilst the Council has undertaken a sustained programme of development over the past few years, Right to Buy sales continue to exceed new build completions, reducing overall stock levels.

## **Home Ownership**

Average house prices are high whilst income levels are lower than average, making it more difficult to get on the property ladder, and as the mortgage interest rate increases many are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain mortgage payments.

## **Private Rented Sector**

Whilst rent levels in Private Rented sector are mid-range for Lancashire, there is an affordability gap for those claiming benefits as LHA (Local Housing Allowance) rates are below market rent levels. Whilst LHA is set to increase in April 2024, this may have limited impact if private rents continue to increase.

The private rented sector is gradually reducing. This may escalate further as private landlords face the challenges of tax changes, cost of living crisis, increases in interest rates, concerns about tenants' ability to pay and the impending removal of s21 notices i.e., no fault evictions.

## **Our Vision**

**To prevent homelessness in West Lancashire, helping residents to find and keep their home.**

To achieve our vision and stop the cycle of homelessness we will continue to work collaboratively with our partners, seek out funding opportunities and develop new and innovative solutions to prevent and relieve homelessness. This Strategy outlines our key priorities and actions that we will take over the next 5 years to achieve this.

The Action plan will be reviewed every 6 months in the first year and then annually, to ensure that it remains relevant; and to consider any emerging priorities and actions.

### Preventing Homelessness

- We will:
  - Identify Homelessness at an early stage
  - Develop partnerships to maintain people in their home
  - Provide better outcomes at Prevention stage
  - Involve people who have had experience of homelessness to improve our service
  - Ensure those discharged from institutional settings have accommodation and services in place
  - Deliver easy access to specialist advice to reduce risk of homelessness
  - Build on our relationships with Registered Providers and Private Landlords.
  - Prevent repeat homelessness by getting people tenancy ready

### Relieving Homelessness

- We will:
  - Take timely action to relieve homelessness.
  - Identify innovative solutions to increase the supply of temporary accommodation.
  - Provide support to those in the Councils Temporary accommodation to reduce length of stay and get tenancy ready.
  - Investigate the feasibility of delivering specialist forms of housing.
  - Encourage and enable development of affordable homes across the borough.
  - Review the impact of the Allocation Scheme on people who are at risk of homelessness
  - Make sure people can access good quality homes in the Private Sector
  - Create a framework for closer working with Registered Providers

### Improve Support to Prevent, relieve and stop reoccurring homelessness

- We will:
  - Ensure that people have access to ongoing support when they move on to their own tenancies,
  - Help shape support for those suffering domestic abuse
  - Provide timely high quality financial advice to those who are, or are at risk of becoming homeless
  - Offer high quality support to new tenants to take up and sustain their tenancy
  - Review the provision for Rough Sleepers
  - Promote awareness of available support

## Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Strategy 2024-29 – Action Plan

### Objective 1 Preventing Homelessness

Action	Task	Responsible Officers	Timescale
Identify Homelessness at an early stage.	Implement Triage Service on a pilot basis.	Tenancy Service Manager/Homefinder Team Leader/Senior Homelessness Officer	April 2024
	Deliver training for partner agencies to help them identify and refer those who might be at risk of homelessness at an early stage.	Senior Homelessness Officer	Dec 2024
Develop partnerships to maintain people in their home	Work across services and organisations to proactively prevent and reduce homelessness.	Tenancy Service Manager/Homefinder Team Leader/Senior Homelessness Officer	April 2025
Provide better outcomes at Prevention stage	Develop a Homelessness Prevention Partnership linking voluntary, and statutory organisations.	Tenancy Service Manager/Homefinder Team Leader/Senior Homelessness Officer	Sept 2024
	Prioritise Homeless prevention cases on Housing Register at earliest opportunity, offering support to identify all housing options.	Triage & Homelessness Officers	June 2024



	<p>Creating links to local services; offering opportunities to improve physical and mental health, education, leisure and cultural activities; and providing access to training, volunteering and employment</p>	<p>Homefinder Team Leader/Senior Homelessness Officer</p>	<p>December 2024</p>
<p>Involve people who have had experience of homelessness to improve our service</p>	<p>Carry out feedback survey with customers who have approached the Homelessness service, to inform strategy.</p> <p>Use data, feedback and evidence to understand ways to work smarter to manage demand and to inform how we improve prevention and relief intervention services.</p>	<p>Tenancy Service Manager</p> <p>Tenancy Service Manager/Homefinder Team Leader</p>	<p>Complete 2023</p> <p>July2024</p>
<p>Ensure that when people are discharged from institutional settings, they have accommodation and services in place to help them avoid homelessness, including good health support.</p>	<p>Review and develop protocols for care leavers, prison leavers and hospital discharge</p> <p>Provide early advice and housing options services to people leaving the armed forces and prioritise veterans for housing and support.</p>	<p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p>	<p>Dec 2025</p> <p>June 2024</p>

<p>Deliver easy access to specialist advice to reduce risk of homelessness</p>	<p>Review team structure to ensure it offers resilience and is fit for purpose.</p> <p>Review service to ensure it is as accessible as possible via telephone or face to face, or through digital channels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve advice available online.</li> <li>• Promote service and key messages on social media.</li> </ul> <p>Ensure staff are well trained, up to date with homelessness case law and have the expertise required to prevent homelessness using a variety of tools and techniques.</p> <p>Expand links to mediation services to maintain or repair relationships whilst longer term housing solutions are identified.</p>	<p>Tenancy Services Manager/ Homefinder Team Leader</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer/Homefinder Team Leader</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p>	<p>April 2024</p> <p>Sept 2024</p> <p>June 2024</p> <p>Dec 2024</p>

	Expand our understanding and service offer to ethnic minorities, the LGBT+ community and other minority groups.	Tenancy Services Manager/ Homefinder Team Leader	April 2025
Build on our relationships with Registered Providers and Private Landlords.	Develop pre-eviction protocols with RPs to notify of impending possession proceedings.  Investigate options for introducing a Call Before You Serve Scheme Offering advice to Private Landlords prior to serving notice.	Senior Homelessness Officer/ Housing Strategy & Development Programme Manager  Tenancy Services Manager/Homefinder Team Leader/Senior Homelessness Officer	April 2026  April 2026
Stop repeat homelessness by getting people tenancy ready.	Develop Pre-Tenancy Training Package  Develop homelessness employment pathways for people who have recently lost employment or who are otherwise looking for work.	Financial Inclusion Team Leader/Homefinder Team Leader/Neighbourhood Team Leader  Tenancy Services Manager/Homefinder Team Leader/Community & Wellbeing Manager	April 2024  August2024

## Objective 2 Relieving Homelessness

Action	Task	Responsible Officer	Timescale
Take timely action to relieve homelessness	Update Allocations Policy to allow matching of Homeless applicants to suitable properties outside CBL bidding system.	Tenancy Services Manager	Complete July 2023
	Develop allocations procedures to ensure fairness and transparency	Tenancy Services Manager/Homefinder Team Leader	Complete September 2023
Find innovative solutions to increase the supply of temporary accommodation	Work with voluntary and private sector to find innovative solutions for the provision of temporary accommodation.	Tenancy Service Manager/Homefinder Team Leader/Senior Homelessness Officer/Birchwood	April 2025
	Work with TVD to investigate use of Modular housing solutions.	TVD/Head of Housing/Tenancy Services Manager	April 2024
	Develop cost recovery charging model for Council temporary accommodation.	Tenancy Service Manager/Principal Finance Business Partner	Dec 2024
Provide support to those in the Councils Temporary accommodation to reduce length of stay and get tenancy ready	Work with partners including Health & Wellbeing Partnership to develop an integrated support service including finding settled accommodation, provide financial advice, health advice and	Tenancy Services Manager/Homefinder Team Leader/Senior Homelessness Officer	Dec 2025

	<p>support finding training/employment.</p> <p>Ensure support needs are identified and referrals are made to relevant services.</p>	Triage and Homelessness Officers	August 2024
Investigate the feasibility of delivering more specialist forms of housing in partnership with private sector landlords	<p>Consider options for acquiring/working with private sector to develop houses of multiple occupation to provide more housing options for young people on low incomes.</p> <p>Develop options for future use of the Heversham properties (previously Crisis Centre)</p> <p>Drive the development of new Refuge provision to support victims of Domestic Abuse.</p>	<p>Tenancy Services Manager/Homefinder Team Leader/Senior Homelessness Officer</p> <p>Birchwood/ Housing Strategy &amp; Development Programme Manager</p> <p>Housing Strategy &amp; Development Programme Manager, Liberty Centre</p>	<p>April 2025</p> <p>April 2026</p> <p>April 2026</p>
Encourage and enable development of affordable homes across the borough.	Utilise data to drive the direction of TVD future developments to ensure that new affordable housing addresses the needs of homeless people and is the correct size, type and in the right location to meet our housing need requirements.	Head of Housing Services/ Tenancy Services Manager/Tawd Valley Developments	Ongoing

	<p>Develop a plan for investing Council Right to Buy receipts to meet our housing need requirements.</p> <p>Bring back long-term voids into use and identify opportunities for maximising units through redesign of empty homes.</p>	<p>Head of Housing Services/ Principal Finance Business Partner</p> <p>Head of Housing Services/ Tenancy Services Manager/Investment Manager/Tawd Valley Developments</p>	<p>October 2024</p> <p>April 2027</p>
Review the impact of the Allocation Scheme on people who are at risk of homelessness.	Review allocation outcomes for homeless people, including waiting time and length of stay in temporary accommodation.	Tenancy Services Manager	July 2024
Make sure that people can access affordable, good-quality homes in the private-rented sector,	Review private rented provision. Develop relationships with larger landlords in West Lancashire and neighbouring areas	Tenancy Services Manager/Homefinder Team Leader/Senior Homelessness Officer	Jan 2026
Create a framework for closer working with Registered Providers	Establish partnership forum for RPs working in West Lancashire	Housing Strategy & Development Programme Manager	May 2024

**Objective 3 Improve Support to Prevent, relieve and stop reoccurring homelessness.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Ensure that people have access to ongoing support when they move on to their own tenancies,	Investigate options/funding opportunities for resettlement services	External Grant funding Officer/Tenancy Services Manager/Homefinder Team Leader	July 2025
Help shape Support for those suffering domestic abuse	Ensure any victim of domestic abuse has somewhere safe to stay and receive support.	Homelessness Advice & Prevention Team	June 2024
	Develop Domestic Abuse Policy for Housing Services	Tenancy Services Manager	April 2024
	Consider options of becoming member of Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance and look at options for achieving accreditation.	Tenancy Services Manager	Sept 2024
	Review Sanctuary scheme to ensure that it is fit for purpose.	Homefinder Team Leader	June 2025
Provide timely high quality financial advice to those who are homeless.	Develop a coordinated network of support, to offer those in temporary accommodation money advice and help into work where appropriate.	Senior Homelessness Officer/Financial Inclusion Team Leader	July 2024

Offer high quality support to new tenants.	<p>Develop new more flexible Furnished Tenancy Packages</p> <p>Carry out a review of Tenancy Services focusing on how we support new and existing tenants to maintain their tenancies</p>	<p>Tenancy Services Manager/Neighbourhood Team Leader</p> <p>Head of Housing/Tenancy Services Manager</p>	<p>Complete December 2023</p> <p>April 2025</p>
Review the provision for Rough Sleepers	<p>Develop close links with the third sector investigating options for joint working to improve outcomes for rough sleepers.</p> <p>Explore options and funding for provision of outreach services.</p> <p>Work with partners to investigate options for short term accommodation/sit up service linked to Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)</p>	<p>Tenancy Services Manager/Homefinder Team Leader/Senior Homelessness Officer</p> <p>External Grant funding Officer/Tenancy Services Manager/Homefinder Team Leader</p> <p>External Grant funding Officer/Tenancy Services Manager/Homefinder Team Leader</p>	<p>December 2024</p> <p>Aug 2025</p> <p>Sept 2024</p>
Promote awareness of available support	<p>Promote services and mechanisms for reporting rough sleeping.</p> <p>Develop media campaigns to promote advice and support services.</p>	<p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p> <p>Senior Homelessness Officer</p>	<p>December 2024</p> <p>December 2024</p>





## Equality Impact Assessment Form

<b>Directorate: Housing</b>	<b>Service: Tenancy Services</b>
<b>Completed by: Nicola Bradley</b>	<b>Date: 24.1.24</b>
<b>Subject Title: Homelessness &amp; Rough Sleepers Strategy 2024-2029</b>	
<b>1. DESCRIPTION</b>	
Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:	Yes <i>*delete as appropriate</i>
Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:	No
Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:	No
Is a budget being set or funding allocated:	No
Is a programme or project being planned:	No
Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:	Yes
Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty ( <b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations</b> ):	Yes
Details of the matter under consideration:	Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Strategy 2024-2029
<i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> to any of the above go straight to Section 3</i> <i>If you answered <b>No</b> to all the above please complete Section 2</i>	
<b>2. RELEVANCE</b>	
Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders):	Yes/No* <i>*delete as appropriate</i>
If <b>Yes</b> , provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff or Councillors (stakeholders): <i>If you answered <b>Yes</b> go to Section 3</i>	
If you answered <b>No</b> to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups: <i>You do not need to complete the rest of this form.</i>	
<b>3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION</b>	
Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	

<p>If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?</p>	<p>General public, other statutory and third sector agencies.</p> <p>The highest proportion of homeless presentations are made by applicants aged 25 – 44.</p> <p>52% of presentations were from males</p> <p>In terms of household groups the largest number of applications are from single males followed by lone female parents.</p>
<p>Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?</p> <p>Age Gender Disability Race and Culture Sexual Orientation Religion or Belief Gender Reassignment Marriage and Civil Partnership Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p>Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes</p>
<p><b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b></p>	
<p>In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?</p>	<p>The highest proportion of homeless presentations are made by applicants aged 25 – 44.</p> <p>In terms of household groups the largest number of applications are from single males followed by lone female parents.</p> <p>Over the last five years, the main reasons given for homelessness have consistently been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• end of assured shorthold tenancy</li> <li>• domestic violence</li> <li>• parental eviction</li> <li>• non-violent relationship breakdown</li> </ul> <p>The number of homeless presentations from non-UK Nationals increased from 15 in 2018/19 to 30 in 2022/23.</p> <p>There are increasing numbers of people presenting as homeless following positive decisions on their Refugee status, as they are given notice to leave Serco</p>

	<p>accommodation once a decision is made. The majority are young single males.</p> <p>A high proportion of those presenting as homeless have a history of mental and physical health issues.</p>
<p>What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preventing Homelessness</li> <li>• Relieving Homelessness</li> <li>• Improve Support to Prevent, relieve and stop reoccurring homelessness.</li> </ul>
<p>What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?</p>	<p>Consultation was carried out with service users in June 2023</p> <p>Key findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•70% were satisfied with the service received from the Homelessness team</li> <li>•Only 2 people were in temp accommodation, and both said they were satisfied.</li> <li>•60% felt they received the necessary support</li> <li>•60% felt there was nothing more that could have been done to prevent their homelessness.</li> </ul>
<p>What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?</p>	<p>Data relating to national, regional and locals homelessness presentations and the outcomes of these</p> <p>Data about demographic change, the economy and the housing market impacts on homelessness</p>
<p>If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:</p>	<p>Once Agreed by Cabinet the Draft strategy will be subject to public consultation to be carried out with customers and other interested agencies and support groups.</p>
<p><b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b></p>	
<p>In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?</p>	<p>There will be a positive effect on all those who face homelessness, with an action plan of activities to identify those at risk and focus on early intervention to prevent homelessness. We will work with voluntary and private sector to look at developing new services which meets the needs of those with protected characteristics.</p>
<p><b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b></p>	
<p>If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or</p>	<p>There is no negative impact.</p>

desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g. legislative or financial drivers etc.).	
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	<p>All actions detailed in Strategy Action Plan</p> <p><i>If no actions are planned state no actions</i></p>
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	1 year after implementation by Tenancy Service Manager,







LSC: 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024

CABINET: 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024

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**Report of:** Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources, Head of Legal & Democratic Services

**Relevant Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Pryce-Roberts

**Contact for further information:** Paul Waring, Neighbourhood Team Leader (Tel: 01695 585217)

(E-mail: paul.waring2@westlancs.gov.uk)

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**SUBJECT: REVISED ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

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Wards affected: (All Wards);

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To consider and agree the revised Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

2.1 That the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy attached at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

2.2 That the Head of Housing, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, be given delegated authority to make minor updates and changes as required to this policy.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) policy sets out how West Lancashire Borough Council investigates and responds to reports of ASB relating to residents in the Councils housing stock, what constitutes ASB; how we work with partners to seek an effective resolution; and how we aim to support reporters and deal with subjects.

3.2 In 2023 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act increased the regulatory requirements of the Council as a landlord, a primary focus of the regulation is ASB and one of the main requirements is for social landlords to be proactive when tackling ASB.

- 3.3 To ensure we meet our regulatory obligations; we are currently working with an external consultant called Resolve, they are a centre of excellence solely focused upon community safety and anti-social behaviour. They are reviewing the way we provide our ASB services, which includes our current policy.
- 3.4 The current ASB policy focuses on tenancy enforcement compared to the revised policy, which is more customer focused.
- 3.5 We recently held a focus group with tenants and leaseholders and an online consultation to gather feedback on the revised ASB policy. The feedback told us that.
- the draft policy is clear and easy to understand.
  - The policy outlines clearly how you can report ASB.
  - The consensus was customers would be willing to report incidents of ASB to us.

#### **4.0 AIMS OF THE POLICY**

4.1 The aim of the draft revised policy is to:

- Provide clear service standards that are outcome-oriented, including initial timescales.
- The statement section is the core of the policy and is intended to be clear and concise with regards to the organisations responsibilities.
- Clearly indicate how residents can report ASB.
- Offer a range of preventive tools, for intervention and enforcement that can be used in conjunction and in combination with each other.
- Promote partnership working to build stronger communities.
- Be transparent and informative with regards to data sharing and when and how safeguarding information can be shared.
- Make it clear for customers how they access the Community Trigger.
- Support victims and witnesses.

#### **5.0 IMPLEMENTATION**

5.1 Subject to approval, the implementation of the new policy will be delayed until wider changes to the service are made.

#### **6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 This Policy formalises our approach to supporting tenants who are affected by incidents of ASB, which allows the Council to help support tenants in sustaining their tenancy.



## **7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications arising from this report.

## **8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

8.1 The actions referred to in this report are covered by the scheme of delegation to officers and any necessary changes will be made in the relevant risk registers.

## **9.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The Policy aims to promote the wellbeing of our tenants by providing help and support to those affected by anti-social behaviour.

### **Background Documents**

#### ***Either***

\*There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

\* There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders, therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been considered in the Recommendations contained within this report.

### **Appendices**

1. Revised Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
2. Equality Impact Assessment



# Appendix 1



## Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

### Contents

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Owner: Paul Waring  
Job Title: Neighbourhood Team Leader  
Service Area: Housing Services:  
Version: 1  
Issued Date:  
Review by Date: 26<sup>th</sup> March 2027

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy sets out how West Lancashire Borough Council (the Council) investigates and responds to reports about anti-social behaviour (ASB) relating to residents in the Council's housing stock, what constitutes ASB; how we work with partners to seek an effective resolution; and how we aim to support reporters and deal with subjects, in line with the effective use of legal tools at our disposal and in conjunction with our tenancy agreements.
- 1.2 The Council aims to: minimise the impact of anti-social behaviour on neighbours and the local community and engage in early intervention and prevention strategies to help tenants sustain their tenancy whenever possible.
- 1.3 The language in this policy will refer to Report, Reporter and Subject. Please see explanation of each one below.

**Report** – Is a report of ASB.

**Reporter** – Is the person reporting the ASB incident.

**Subject** – is the person alleged to be causing the ASB.

## 2.0 Definition of ASB

- 2.1 The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 Section2(1) defines **anti-social behaviour** as:
  - conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, or distress to any person,
  - conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or
  - conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

## 3.0 Multi-Agency Partnership Working

- 3.1 The Council recognises that sometimes responsibility for tackling anti-social behaviour needs to be shared between with partner agencies.
- 3.2 West Lancashire Community Safety Partnership is committed to multi agency problem solving. The Borough Council is the lead agency, and we work closely with our partner agencies including but not limited to Lancashire Constabulary, Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service, Lancashire County Council), Lancashire and Cumbria Integrated Care Partnership and the Probation Service to reduce anti-social and nuisance behaviour. Working together, these agencies combine resources and share information to tackle crime and disorder, including serious ASB in West Lancashire

## 4.0 Policy Statement

- 4.1 The Council believes that everyone has the right to quietly enjoy their home and live without interference, in peace, free from the fear of threat of intimidation, harassment, or abuse of any kind. We promote the view that individuals have the right to their chosen lifestyle providing it does not impact adversely or spoil the quality of life of others.
- 4.2 We are committed to tackling all forms of anti-social behaviour. We will take positive action, working closely with local partnerships and multi-agencies, taking a collaborative approach to tackling ASB.
- 4.3 The health and safety of our tenants, leaseholders and our colleagues are always our main priority. All tenants and residents who wish to report an incident of ASB will be assessed for their risk and vulnerability. This will decide what further controlled measures may need to be taken.
- 4.4 We are also working to give people and communities the confidence and ability to make sure they have a good quality of life. A significant part of this work is to encourage people suffering from the effects of ASB to report it. In particular:

We will allow ASB to be reported in different ways, including in person, in writing, over the telephone and online. Reports can be made to any member of West Lancashire Borough Council staff.

We will:

- contact you within 1 working day for urgent cases and within 5 working days for non-urgent cases.
- put an officer in charge of each case and give you the officer's details.
- agree an 'action plan' with you and agree how often you would like to be updated on the case.
- review cases at least once a month (but we will usually close cases after three months if they have been dealt with or the ASB does not happen again).
- risk assess every report at the beginning of a case.
- interview the person who is said to have behaved in an anti-social manner, in a way that does not put you, other residents or our staff, contractors or partners at risk.

- look for other ways of obtaining evidence, for example using CCTV noise monitoring equipment from our Environmental Enforcement Team and the Noise App.
  - keep you up to date on the progress we are making and confirm all developments and update you in the way you want.
  - analyse reports of ASB to see if there are any patterns to the behaviour, then decide on aims and work with partners to deal with the issues we have found.
- 4.5 The Council is not an emergency response service. Serious cases of ASB where there is actual, or an immediate risk of harm to person or property, should be reported to the Police or other appropriate emergency service by dialling 999/101.
- 4.6 We will seek to refer tenants to relevant support services where required, to ensure the appropriate level of support can be provided. Where a safeguarding concern is raised we will assess what is the most appropriate action to take and liaise with Lancashire County Council and the Police, if necessary.
- 4.7 We will ensure all reporters are treated in a fair, equitable and consistent manner and we consider the needs and vulnerabilities of our reporters when we respond, investigate, or take enforcement action during the management of ASB reports.
- 4.8 We will use a range of interventions (for example Mediation, Acceptable Behaviour Agreements and warning letters, this list is not exhaustive) to deter or prevent ASB and where appropriate take legal action such as civil injunctions, and possession proceedings.
- 4.9 We will ensure that staff are well-trained, have the knowledge and confidence to identify and investigate incidents/reports of ASB.
- 4.10 We recognises that not everything can be deemed to be anti-social behaviour despite it being perceived as such and intervention from the Council is not the best solution. Residents should understand that the most effective resolution is often for neighbours to resolve these disputes locally and amicably between themselves. This course of action, whenever appropriate, will be encouraged and advice and guidance can be provided.
- 4.11 We will assess each case on the information available and the actions taken will be proportionate and bespoke to the circumstances of each case. Typically, the Council will use informal methods to try and resolve a report of ASB in the first instance. However, in priority cases, such as when there has been a threat of violence, legal action may be the first course of action.
- 4.12 During the course of an investigation, there may be a number of reasons why the Council cannot take action. These reasons may include:
- Establishing that the incident did not happen.

- Not having enough evidence to prove the matter to the relevant standard of proof.
- Finding the issues reported are not what we consider anti-social.
- Not being able to investigate fully due to non-cooperation of the reporter/witness.
- The ASB has stopped and the likelihood of further ASB is minimal.

The reporter will be notified at the earliest opportunity if we determine that we cannot take action and we will close the case.

## 5.0 Data Protecting and Information Sharing

- 5.1 The Council is committed to ensuring customer confidentiality.
- 5.2 We are fully compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR) around data processing.
- 5.3 We carry out a DPIA (Data Protection Impact Assessment) to assess the impact of envisaged processing operations on the protection of personal data.
- 5.4 We are experienced in processing sensitive personal data, and we have robust procedures in place for the gathering and recording of consent for processing this information and disclosure.
- 5.5 Although we aim to gain consent prior to any information sharing, there may be instances where we have a statutory duty to share information without consent for example where children are at risk.

## 6.0 Support for Victims and Witnesses

To minimise the impact to individuals, households and the wider community, the Council will aim to respond quickly and effectively.

We will:

- respond sensitively to victims and witnesses of anti-social behaviour.
- we will adopt a high standard of confidentiality.
- we will complete a risk assessment and put in place any measures identified as required, such as door and window locks.
- we will adopt a victim-centred approach in responding to harassment and hate crime.
- we will agree an action plan and refer to and work with appropriate agencies where extra support needs are identified.
- we will provide support for any court appearances.
- we will signpost you to any agencies such as [Victim and witness services - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

## **7.0 Support for Subjects**

The Council will offer support to subjects, where necessary and appropriate, to help them make the changes necessary to prevent a re-occurrence of the ASB and to help sustain their tenancy. This will be done with the support of other agencies if needed.

## **8.0 Community Trigger**

The Community Trigger is a process which allows residents to ask the Community Safety Partnership to review the responses to their reports of antisocial behaviour.

The trigger may be used if you believe we have not responded to your reports. It cannot be used to report general crime or ASB. Further information can be found on the Council's website.

## **9.0 Equal Opportunities**

- 9.1 The Council is an equal opportunities organisation.
- 9.2 Our approach to equality recognises that people who provide and use our services come from diverse backgrounds and have different experiences and needs.
- 9.3 We are fully committed to promoting equal opportunities and aim to provide services that are fair and that everyone can access.
- 9.4 As a service provided by a public body, we must also have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty in relation to all aspects of our Housing Service.
- 9.5 We value the differences in the communities we serve and recognise that groups and individuals may be excluded or suffer because of their ethnic background, religion, sex, age, disability, sexuality, or sexual identity.
- 9.6 We are committed to treating the residents of West Lancashire fairly and state that the services we provide will be readily accessible to all groups of people without discrimination.
- 9.7 We will continually review our procedures and practices to make sure that no individual or group is put at a disadvantage, either directly or indirectly.
- 9.8 We will support reporters who need documents interpreting and translated and assist anyone with disabilities or literacy challenges who require additional or alternative support.



## 10.0 Publicity

- 10.1 The Council wants tenants and the wider community to be aware of successful legal actions we have taken to counteract anti-social behaviour.
- 10.2 Unless the Court orders against publicity, the Council will publicise successful possession applications, civil injunctions and where necessary in collaboration with Lancashire Constabulary, criminal behaviour orders, where appropriate.
- 10.3 By publicising successful outcomes, our aim is to ensure that local people are fully aware of these legal actions and help to appropriately enforce them; reassure the public about safety in their community; increase the confidence of the public in the council and the Police's ability to work together, act as a deterrent to the subject; reassure people reporting anti-social behaviour and the wider community that successful action is being taken.
- 10.4 In every case the Anti-Social Behaviour Team will consider whether the publicity is necessary. We will also consider the human rights of the public and the human rights of the subject, what the publicity should look like and whether the publicity is proportionate.

## 11.0 Our Approach

- 11.1 In writing this policy we have carried out assessments to ensure we are considering:
- Privacy and Data Protection
  - Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
- 11.2 We will meet our legal obligations under the following legislation (this is not an exhaustive list).
- ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014
  - Housing Acts 1985 and 1996
  - Crime and Disorder Act 1998
  - Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2018
  - Housing Act 2004
  - Equality Act 2010
  - Serious Violence Strategy 2018
  - Environmental Protection Act 1990
  - Race Relations Act 1976
  - Human Rights Act 1998
  - Data Protection Act 1998

## 12.0 Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version

# Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment Form



**Directorate: Transformation, Housing and Resources**

**Service: Housing Services**

**Completed by: Paul Waring**

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**Subject Title: Anti-Social Behaviour Policy**

## 1. DESCRIPTION

Is a policy or strategy being produced or revised:

Yes

Is a service being designed, redesigned or cutback:

No

Is a commissioning plan or contract specification being developed:

No

Is a budget being set or funding allocated:

No

Is a programme or project being planned:

No

Are recommendations being presented to senior managers and/or Councillors:

Yes

Does the activity contribute to meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty (**Eliminating unlawful discrimination/harassment, advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations**):

Yes

Details of the matter under consideration:

Introduction of revised Anti-Social Behaviour Policy to ensure we meet our regulatory obligations and ensure we are supporting victims and witnesses.

*If you answered **Yes** to any of the above **go straight to Section 3**  
If you answered **No** to all the above **please complete Section 2***

## 2. RELEVANCE

Does the work being carried out impact on service users, staff, or Councillors (stakeholders):

Yes/No\*

If **Yes**, provide details of how this impacts on service users, staff, or Councillors (stakeholders):

*If you answered **Yes** go to **Section 3***

If you answered **No** to both Sections 1 and 2 provide details of why there is no impact on these three groups:  
*You do not need to complete the rest of this form.*

## 3. EVIDENCE COLLECTION

Who does the work being carried out impact on, i.e. who is/are the stakeholder(s)?	Council Tenants, Leaseholders and the wider community
If the work being carried out relates to a universal service, who needs or uses it most? (Is there any particular group affected more than others)?	<p>The Policy will be applied to any Council tenant who requires support when they are impacted by ASB.</p> <p>The Policy will also apply to Leaseholders who also require support.</p> <p>Residents who are impacted by Hate Crime maybe affected more than other groups.</p>
<p>Which of the protected characteristics are most relevant to the work being carried out?</p> <p>Age Gender Disability Race and Culture Sexual Orientation Religion or Belief Gender Reassignment Marriage and Civil Partnership Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p>Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes No No</p>
<b>4. DATA ANALYSIS</b>	
In relation to the work being carried out, and the service/function in question, who is actually or currently using the service and why?	<p>Between 01/01/23 and 31/12/23 we dealt with 168 ASB cases.</p> <p>Out of the 168 we dealt with 2 hate crime incidents, 10 alcohol and 15 drug related incidents.</p> <p>The rest consisted of different type of ASB such as noise nuisance.</p>
What will the impact of the work being carried out be on usage/the stakeholders?	<p>The impact of the policy will be better outcomes and support for victims.</p> <p>We will link in with partners to support those at risk i.e., Hate Crime. It will also improve our neighbourhoods and help tenants sustain their tenancies.</p>

	The Policy will also improve transparency and create a more consistent approach when dealing with ASB.
What are people's views about the services? Are some customers more satisfied than others, and if so what are the reasons? Can these be affected by the proposals?	<p>We recently carried out a face to face focus group with residents and we did an online consultation on the revised ASB policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall consensus was they found the policy clear and easy to understand.</li> <li>• The policy outlines clearly how you can report ASB.</li> <li>• The consensus was customers would be willing to report incidents of ASB to us.</li> </ul>
What sources of data including consultation results have you used to analyse the impact of the work being carried out on users/stakeholders with protected characteristics?	<p>The council has a current ASB policy, we have revised it to ensure we are meeting our regulatory obligations and to be more pro-active when dealing with ASB cases.</p> <p>There will be more positive outcomes for tenants, and we will be taking a more proactive approach and supporting victims and witnesses of ASB.</p>
If any further data/consultation is needed and is to be gathered, please specify:	
<b>5. IMPACT OF DECISIONS</b>	
In what way will the changes impact on people with particular protected characteristics (either positively or negatively or in terms of disproportionate impact)?	<p>The policy will have a positive impact. We will be more proactive in our approach and more visible in our communities.</p> <p>The policy is more customer focused and victim centred.</p>
<b>6. CONSIDERING THE IMPACT</b>	
If there is a negative impact what action can be taken to mitigate it? (If it is not possible or desirable to take actions to reduce the impact, explain why this is the case (e.g., legislative, or financial drivers etc.).	Each ASB case will be considered on a case by case basis to ensure the individual needs of the customer are considered.
What actions do you plan to take to address any other issues above?	No actions

	<i>If no actions are planned state no actions</i>
<b>7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING</b>	
When will this assessment be reviewed and who will review it?	The EIA will be reviewed along with the ASB policy every 3 years



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**Report of:** Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing and Resources

**Relevant Portfolio Holder:** Councillor G Dowling

**Contact for further information:** Marc Taylor (Extn 5092)  
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**SUBJECT: USE OF COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY MONIES ON  
BURSCOUGH SPORTS CENTRE**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To authorise the allocation of up to £600,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy monies towards the refurbishment of the Burscough Sports centre.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That a sum of up to £600,000 be taken from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to be used towards the refurbishment of Burscough Sports, subject to Council approval of the total cost of the scheme.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Members will be aware that the Council are taking steps to improve facilities at Burscough Sports. The objective of this project has been set to undertake a partial upgrade and refurbishment of key areas of the building, creating facilities that appeal to a much wider audience, generating additional usage, participation, and sustainable revenue. This investment in the facility means it should remain viable for a period of at least 10 to 15 years.
- 3.2 In June 2023 Cabinet approved the use of £320,000 of CIL funding to progress the project to RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Stage 4, Technical Design. This stage is where the detailed architectural and engineering designs and specifications are produced, and a detailed design programme is finalised ready for construction to start. Following this Cabinet meeting Alliance Leisure were appointed as the professional design team for the project and are on course to complete RIBA Stage 4 in April 2024.

## **4.0 PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 At the time of writing this report, Officers are working with the design team to ensure that the proposed works will meet policy requirements and offer good value for money. The total capital cost of the project will depend on the final schedule of works and specifications that are agreed but is expected to be just over £3m.
- 4.2 The eligibility of this project for CIL has previously been reviewed and confirmed as it will increase and enhance the infrastructure required to support new development. In addition to the £320,000 CIL funding identified above for design works, it has previously been agreed to allocate £326,000 from the Council's capital budget and £60,000 has also been received from the West Lancashire Community Leisure Trust for this project.
- 4.3 Given the total estimated capital cost of just over £3m and the funding identified to date, it is anticipated that up to a further £600,000 CIL funding (total CIL £920,000) could be required with the balance of the funding for the scheme then provided by borrowing.
- 4.4 Leisure consultants, FMG Consulting, have projected the revenue position of Burscough Sports following the renovation taking into account all expenditure and income, including debt costs. These projections show that it should be possible for Burscough Sports to operate at a small surplus based on a reasonable set of assumptions. This financial assessment will need to be revised and updated once the capital costs and funding package have been firmed up to ensure that the project remains affordable and viable.
- 4.5 A further report will be brought back to Council once the design process concludes RIBA stage 4. At this point the capital and revenue costs of the project should be clearer and the appropriate budget approvals can be sought. It is currently planned that Council approval for the project will be sought in April so that the construction works have the necessary lead in time and can take place between June and December. Completing the works in this period will help to minimise disruption in terms of visitor numbers and loss of revenue. It will also enable the renovated facilities to be open by January, which is the peak month for gym membership enrolment.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Medium Term Financial Forecast is showing that the Council is facing a challenging financial position, and the long term investment decisions that will be made on Leisure Facilities will need to take into account this difficult context.
- 5.2 There are sufficient CIL monies available to provide the funding of up to £920,000 required for this scheme. Prioritising CIL monies for this scheme will however reduce the amount of funding available for other potential schemes.



- 5.3 Final expenditure and funding budget approvals will be sought from Council when RIBA stage 4 has been completed and there is greater certainty on the financial position of the scheme.

## **6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no significant sustainability impacts associated with this report and, in particular, no significant impact on crime and disorder.

## **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The further use of CIL monies would enable the Council to use funding that is already in place to progress this project. The element of risk in using CIL would be the potential requirement to repay the funding to the CIL pot if the project does not progress. Council will review the financial viability of the scheme before it is formally approved once RIBA stage 4 has been completed.

## **8.0 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The continued development of the Council's Leisure services will:
- Promote good health and wellbeing and enable people to flourish
  - Prevent and tackle the causes of ill health
  - Empower people in vulnerable, deprived and disadvantaged communities to realise their full health potential
  - Develop and support effective and high quality health and wellbeing services
  - Encourage and enable all people to take a role in identifying and addressing barriers to improve health and wellbeing
  - Increase people's independence throughout their life and their ability to lead full active lives.

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

