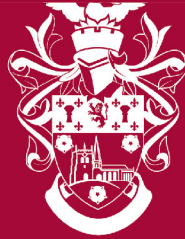


WEST LANCASHIRE
BOROUGH COUNCIL



APPENDIX 1

Council Plan Annual Report 2019/20



Council Plan Annual Report 2019/20



WEST LANCASHIRE
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Our Council

Welcome to West Lancashire Borough Council's Annual Report. West Lancashire is served by a Borough Council, County Council, 19 Parish Councils, one Town Council and one Parish Meeting. There are 54 elected Members for 25 wards; a boundary review will begin during 2020/21. As a Borough Council, working in partnership with these organisations as well as the police, fire service, NHS, businesses, schools, colleges, university and other stakeholders is vital for delivering lasting improvements for the benefit of the borough. Council policy is determined by Councillors, with advice from officers. The Cabinet is the Executive Councillor body for the Council.

The Borough Council provides services for around 114,000 people or 50,243 households (including approximately 5,880 council homes) as well as businesses and organisations. Services are delivered by around 420 full time equivalent staff (not including employees managed through our secondment agreement with Lancashire County Council/BT Lancashire Services).

Our main function as a Council is of course to deliver services and to make improvements to all of our communities. To do this we have a corporate plan with a vision and corporate priorities to provide a clear strategic direction for the organisation. Our plan allows us to co-ordinate financial and staffing requirements to support our priorities. The plan is regularly reviewed to make sure it remains in line with current thinking and the environment in which we operate. Service delivery throughout the Council supports our priorities with particular projects identified as contributing significantly to meaningful change for the borough.

Success as a Council depends on our staff who are the face of the Council representing the whole organisation. We are committed to ensuring that staffing levels are appropriate for delivering services and that the workforce is equipped to meet our commitments to the community and wider stakeholders whilst fulfilling their own potential through learning and development. We continue to promote our health and wellbeing initiatives for staff, such as free blood pressure checks and access to mental health support services through the Able Futures service and personal counselling services. To further establish an environment where our values can flourish, we have recently undertaken detailed work with staff to better understand the Council's culture. This will allow us to develop an Our People Strategy that will establish how we support and develop staff and how we want staff to work together to deliver excellent services.

Our Future

Over the past year an extensive review of service delivery and design of the organisation resulted in recommendations designed to make more of the Council's potential. We have been transparent with staff about the reasons for change which are to achieve financial viability, service sustainability and a consistent and quality based customer experience.



We have now begun the implementation of these recommendations as the Our Future programme. The top tiers of the new management structure were introduced in November 2019, giving us a two directorate model led by a Chief Operating Officer and overseeing the strategy from Cabinet. This essentially establishes a 'whole place' directorate concerned with delivering good quality, connected services that will work alongside a directorate that through information and a corporate services role enables the Council to deliver those services, innovate and thrive. The final changes to the operating model were put in place from 1 April 2020.

Operational structure is only one aspect of Our Future. Staff involvement will continue during implementation of the other aspects since the benefits from Our Future will be evident in every area of the Council. We will now also be working on changes to our culture, to income generation, to ICT, to introduce Agile and New Ways of Working and to carry out Service Area Reviews to facilitate the continued transformation. To allow this to be taken forward, training in Transformational Change was given for senior managers. Our Future will result in greater efficiency in how we function as an organisation including ensuring value for money, for example by taking advantage of the strengths offered by digital services, and targeting our financial and staff resources on services with outcomes that support our priorities for the benefit of the borough.

Vision and Priorities

Our vision is to be a Council which is ambitious for West Lancashire – our Economy, Environment and for Health and Wellbeing. We are ambitious for our economy, and for inclusive growth in West Lancashire, retaining and growing good quality jobs, increasing skills levels and encouraging business and wealth generation. This is matched by our ambitions for a good quality, clean, built and physical environment, and for ensuring the conditions are in place for people in West Lancashire to live healthy and fulfilling lives. These ambitions are reflected in the priorities and key projects that have been identified. Delivering our vision for the borough are key projects aligned with three priorities:

- Deliver tangible and visible improvements in the Borough
- Engage and Empower Our Local Communities
- Actively Promote the Borough as a Great Place to Live, Work, Visit and Invest

Deliver Tangible and Visible Improvements in the Borough

Several projects were identified as contributing strongly towards achieving this ambition. Highlights of the progress made in 2019/20 are given below.

Completing the review of the Local Plan

Meeting the needs for the Borough's growth and development

In September 2019, the Council embarked on the preparation of a new 15-year Local Plan for West Lancashire. The Plan will ensure that land use plans for the Borough remain in line with evolving national planning policy and local needs. The Local Plan will contain the vision and strategy for development in West Lancashire. It will make sure that the new homes, jobs and services required by communities are located in the most sustainable places and also provide the framework for delivering the necessary infrastructure facilities and other development to make this possible.

The process and timescales for preparing the new Local Plan are outlined within the Local Development Scheme. Taking around three years, the full review will involve extensive consultation, starting with an initial public consultation in autumn 2020, and culminate in adopting a new Local Plan once it has passed through an independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate.

Developing new leisure facilities as leisure and wellbeing hubs

Helping people of all ages to live active lives and enjoy healthy lifestyles

We are replacing our existing leisure facilities in Skelmersdale and Ormskirk with two new Leisure and Wellbeing Hubs. We will be looking to incorporate health services into the facilities where possible to provide a wider range of opportunities for promoting health and wellbeing in the community and also help to reduce build and operational costs.

881,757

annual visitors to leisure centres & swimming pools



During the year we appointed project management consultants and completed site surveys for the proposed sites. We also held our community consultations in the summer to discover what residents felt about the proposals for the hubs including public exhibitions, paper-based feedback and a dedicated westlancshubs.co.uk site for online survey. Plans for both hubs include swimming pools, fitness suite and studios, café and soft play, whilst the Skelmersdale Hub plans also include tenpin bowling and climbing walls. Work is now underway around the tender process with plans for both hubs to be operational in 2023.

Delivering retail, housing and public realm improvements with a focus on Skelmersdale Town Centre

Building new commercial, leisure and residential development

The first on-site work for our main Skelmersdale development began in January 2020 with clearance works for the start of Phase 1 delivery. This will see new shops created to house Lidl and B&M Bargains, a play area for Tawd Valley Park, a new high street, and enhancements to public areas outside Skelmersdale Library. We have already worked with our partners and housing developers to secure development of over 200 houses on residential sites adjacent to the town centre. The scheme is being implemented in partnership with Homes England and St Modwen. It will secure regeneration alongside existing property and environmental enhancements across a large area of land within and surrounding the town centre. The Phase 1 scheme is expected to be completed in late Spring 2021.



Establishing a Development Company

Bringing investment and growth to the Borough

Tawd Valley Development Company (TVD) started trading in 2019/20. The initial business plan includes the delivery of a mixture of market-for-sale properties and much needed affordable homes. During the first twelve months of operation the focus has been to establish the governance and financial arrangements for the company. The Board of Directors is made up of two Council nominees, the Corporate Director of Transformation & Resources and the Head of Finance, Procurement & Commercial Services together with two independent members, who bring a wide range of commercial expertise to support the board effectiveness. These arrangements have been further solidified with the appointment of the Company Executive Management Team. The legal and financial documents have been prepared and agreed by all parties, with relevant documentation filed with Companies House.

TVD has worked with the Council's planning officers and other stakeholders to bring forward the four, phase one development sites. This consultation work has resulted in a number of scheme redesigns which have made improvements to the scheme layouts, however this has resulted in the loss of a number of units on some of the sites. The revision now includes a total of 71 new homes. The impact of these changes has been appraised and included in a refresh of the Business Plan which was approved by the Council in February. Two of the schemes now have planning approval with the remaining two scheduled for April, and a start on site expected in June / July. In addition to the phase one sites, work is now ongoing to appraise sites identified for phase two.

Ormskirk Eastern Gateway

Creating a key gateway to the town centre

A successful bid to Historic England for the Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) funding has meant that alternative proposals to original plans for a Moor Street Gateway can now be delivered. Among other projects, the new proposals include the creation of an Ormskirk Eastern Gateway encompassing a revamped bus station, new cycle and pedestrian links between the town centre, bus station, rail station and Edge Hill University and new public realm improvements. Lancashire County Council has committed some funding to upgrade the bus station and contribute towards the Edge Hill Cycle Link and so with HAZ funding and Section 106 contributions the Council will be able to partner with the County Council to deliver this Gateway to Ormskirk. Earlier public feedback on Moor Street and Wheatsheaf Walks schemes previously gathered will be fed into the plans.

Implementing the Route Optimisation Round Review

Improving reliability for residents

Collection rounds for domestic waste, recycling and garden waste were reviewed and revised to ensure that they could provide a more reliable service and were being delivered in the most economical way. Issues such as additional grey bins, weekly sack collections and collections from rural properties were all considered along with the necessity for assisted collections and additional containers for large families. The number of households per round were balanced to ensure rounds are now provided as a fortnightly service and completed within a standard working day. Information was provided to residents and staff ahead of the successful launch in November 2019 and refinements continue to be made to ensure any anomalies are addressed. We continue to promote and educate residents on the benefits of recycling to help achieve greater recycling participation rates and this year's online launch of our chargeable Garden Waste collection service commenced on 11 May. It was initially envisaged that this would include an additional payment option of subscribing via Direct Debit, however due to the COVID-19 situation, this was postponed and will be finalised and launch at a later date.

Implementing the Clean and Green Service

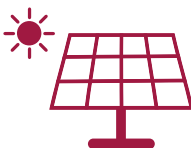
Providing multi-skilled teams to care for neighbourhoods

Our new Clean and Green Service went live on 1 April 2019 delivering a set of agreed service standards aimed at improving the quality of the local environment. These standards include monitoring litter bins, dog fouling and frequency of grass maintenance. During the first season staff have adopted the new standards and different ways of working. We have recruited into key posts to manage the new teams and upskilled staff with additional competencies across a broader service area, the training of staff will continue into season two and will also include refresher training as required. This enables staff to take a greater pride within the designated neighbourhoods that they work in by carrying out tasks that previously would have been outside of their role giving a more efficient way to maintain the local environment. Electronic schedules for grass cutting, emptying of litter bins and street cleansing activities were prepared but have been temporarily delayed due to impacts on resource from COVID-19. It is envisaged that the second year of the Clean and Green Service will deliver greater improvements on performance.

Other work streams have supported this priority, for example the Ormskirk town centre improvements were delivered through the upgrade to the path between Ormskirk bus and rail stations to a **shared use footpath/cycleway**. This path will be formally opened when new lighting heads arrive which are currently held in transit due to the COVID 19 shutdowns across Europe.

Following a review by the Corporate and Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a **Policy for the Provision of Litter Bins** was created to allow consistent and efficient litter bin provision and collection whilst ensuring the most appropriate bin types are used in prioritised locations. Our current **fleet hire and maintenance tender** expires in March 2021, the Fleet Tender opportunity has gone to the market and the successful bidder will be identified and awarded the contract in July 2020 with a commencement date for delivery of April 2021. **Solar panels** were installed on West Lancashire Investment Centre.

Solar panels will result in savings of over 28,000 kg of CO2 per year



Engage and Empower Our Local Communities

A number of projects were identified to help achieve this ambition. Highlights of the progress made in 2019/20 are given below.

Delivering the Tawd Valley Park Master Plan

Implementing environmental and recreational enhancements

The local community continued to play an integral part in planning and implementing the improvements to the Tawd Valley Park. The Friends of Tawd Valley volunteer group have established well and had extensive involvement in the whole development, not only with tasks around the park, but also organising events, fundraising, writing bids and encouraging greater community involvement to make the future of the park sustainable. Much of this community engagement was temporarily suspended at the end of the year due to the impact of Covid-19, however this will be re-established as soon as the situation allows.

Follow us @ParkTawd and Tawd.net



The Friends are co-ordinated through the Friends of Tawd Valley Facebook page and website and are keeping members up to date on the situation. Such an extensive scheme also involves essential collaboration between a number of partners: Groundwork, the Environment Agency, Lancashire County Council, the River Douglas Catchment Partnership, SHARES, local schools, West Lancs College and West Lancs CVS. During the year, the collaborations have resulted in the construction of the Tawd Valley cycleway, creation of footpaths through the northern zone of the parkland, planting of a community orchard, woodland and meadow management. Preparations were also made for the development of a community cabin in the Tawd Valley Allotment site, and extensive public consultation steered the design and planning process for a new mountain bike track.



Facilitating the asset transfer of existing leisure facilities in North Meols

Facilitating the continued operation of the Leisure Centre

After a review of options to sustain the operation of Banks Leisure Centre, North Meols Parish Council (NMPC) agreed to take on the transfer and running of the facility from West Lancashire Borough Council, and the operator Serco. The Parish Council's local knowledge will help move the facility into a more community focussed operating model whilst continuing to provide the existing sports elements so that the facility remains a valuable community asset. During the year, NMPC held consultation on their plans with the community and a business plan was developed. NMPC also began to shadow Serco in the operation of the leisure facility and was due to take over the lease from April 2020. This has however been delayed due to the impact from COVID-19 and further discussions are being undertaken to hopefully allow the transfer to take place later in the year.

Delivering Digital Inclusion Initiatives

Helping people get online

Digital development of Council services for customers continues to expand to meet both efficiency and public expectations. In parallel to this, through digital inclusion initiatives, we want to develop confidence in basic online skills with those members of the community who are less confident in this area or signposting access routes for those who do not have personal access to online services. Some government services and many lifestyle opportunities are only available digitally, so it remains important that we are able to help people get online. We do recognise though that for some customers more established contact routes must be retained.

We gave help to 99 individuals to make or maintain their online claim for Universal Credit



With our partners West Lancs CVS we completed a 12-month digital inclusion project, Buzz-IT. This included supporting national campaigns such as Get Online Week (GOW) and National Libraries Week in October. The GOW events in Up Holland and Burscough were used to promote digital training opportunities to residents through the Good Things Foundation free digital training platform Learn My Way, which WLBC are a network centre for, as well as showcasing the Council's online services to further strengthen our customer service. Buzz-IT also involved digital support and engagement with community groups and local organisations throughout the year.

In total the project's engagement with voluntary sector groups and organisations resulted in 28 community engagements, 21 meetings (project information/ link up to other initiatives within the local VCFS, the public sector and the health economy) and three digital planning meetings.



32% of tenants with a garage or property now pay by direct debit

A Digital Champions & Planning Toolkit for use in local centres, libraries and by charities or other organisations has been developed and shared to ensure the sustainability of engaging residents at those centres in the future. We also held regular drop-in's for digital support at our Customer Service Points to promote the Council's online services and the use of the customer-available ipads. Staff and elected members training was delivered during 'lunch and learn' sessions to promote Learn My Way to those who could benefit as part of their regular customer contact.

24,734

Council self-service accounts are now set up



64,990

online payments through the website

Implementing the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Putting in place the right conditions for people in West Lancashire to live healthy and fulfilling lives

The strategy actions recognise that health is directly or indirectly linked to a number of our council services, for example housing, community safety, environmental health and leisure services. To emphasise these links consideration of health and wellbeing implications have been embedded into all Council report templates.

During the year we became one of the partners in the new West Lancashire Partnership along with Lancashire County Council, NHS West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group, Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust, Virgin Care, GP practices, including Primary Care Networks and West Lancashire CVS. This group ensures a West Lancs wide approach to the provision of health and care integration. Other actions have included securing external funding for the continuation of our More Positive Together and Active West Lancs programmes. Our health promotions programme of training, talks and workshops on a wide range of health issues to increase local skills and knowledge were also maintained and workforce wellbeing initiatives such as weight management courses introduced.

Ourlancashire.org.uk is a new directory of health and wellbeing support networks and services for everyone (funded by Lancashire PCC)



Other work streams that support this priority include the launch of Voicescape to gain feedback on a **tenant's experience** once a repair has been completed via an automated call and keying in a response. The Corporate and Environmental Overview & Scrutiny Committee began work on a **Financial Inclusion Strategy** review. Consultation on the draft **Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy** aimed at helping among the most vulnerable in our society was held. A **Customer Engagement Strategy 2020-2022** and action plan was developed and approved. We helped launch, support and promote the free, West Lancashire Partnership's support helpline **West Lancs Together** for vulnerable and isolated people as part of the response to the COVID-19. We also established the Burscough Community Hub to facilitate the distribution of food to those households where family or friends were unable to provide support.



10 Community Talks and 5 Community Action Days held to promote relationships between agencies and the community

Actively Promote the Borough as a Great Place to Live, Work, Visit and Invest

Promoting and celebrating the borough has remained a top priority for the Council and we have made considerable progress in this priority, particularly in the key projects for 2019/20 outlined below.

Promoting the Council's role and West Lancashire's achievements including through digital communications

Meeting the changing needs of customer information

We have continued to investigate and develop ways to engage customers with the work of the Council. Working with partners and diverse stakeholder groups we are extending the effectiveness of how we communicate our responsibilities, accessibility of services, key policies and programmes in line with our priorities thereby promoting a positive image of the borough and its achievements.

648,500
visits to westlancs.gov.uk



We introduced a graphic design, photography and video production resource into the team which has greatly enhanced the quality and engagement level of the content which we cannot do through traditional press. Having this resource in house has not only brought value for money saving and efficiencies but has helped boost our social media followers and two way engagement. The speed at which key messages can be shared across these platforms has been invaluable in our support of residents and businesses during COVID-19 and provided a platform to quickly mobilise the vulnerable residents' service, calls for help and for residents to connect with the Council at this critical time.



Join nearly 6,000 followers on @westlancsbc

Engaging businesses and communities to enhance and promote Ormskirk and the wider West Lancashire visitor economy

Helping ensure social and economic viability

A wide range of events have been promoted during the year helping bring in visitors and animate the town centre and wider West Lancashire area. The Christmas event has proved extremely popular since its move to a Sunday two years ago and the introduction of a Christmas market and specialist entertainment. Promotion through the Discover Ormskirk website and supporting social media (Instagram and Facebook) is very positive and allows us to gauge the public response to events.

35,000 visits to DiscoverOrmskirk.com



Involvement with Marketing Liverpool, Marketing Lancashire and the Lancashire District Tourism Officers allows us to exchange good practice, information and take advantage of wider promotional opportunities, including the group travel exhibition that was attended at the back end of 2019.

The Ormskirk Town Centre Management Group provides a place for partners to work together on agreed strategic plans for improving Ormskirk, it also takes on board communication from the independent retailers through the Ormskirk Town Centre Action Group. This was established with, and is now lead by, one of the Management Group partners. A Town Centre Stakeholder ‘experiential’ event was held in April, to try and encourage retailers to embrace consumers’ desire for experiences, and a visual merchandise workshop was offered in October, to upskill retailers into ways they could improve their visual appeal.



Ormskirk saw an annual footfall count of
5.2million

Enhancing and promoting Skelmersdale and wider West Lancashire business economy

Championing Skelmersdale’s strengths and opportunities as a place to do business.

The Skelmersdale Place Board and Skelmersdale Ambassadors continue to drive the promotion of Skelmersdale. A new Place Plan was agreed at the January Place Board. Three successful Skelmersdale Ambassadors breakfast events were held, to help facilitate the success and growth of Skelmersdale’s future through businesses and partners. The letstalkskelmersdale.com website underwent some amendments, receiving 3.8K visits in the year and Let’s Talk Skelmersdale’s social media presence was also expanded to Facebook to reach a wider audience for event attendees.



Follow us on twitter @ltskelmersdale and
linkedin.com/skelmersdale

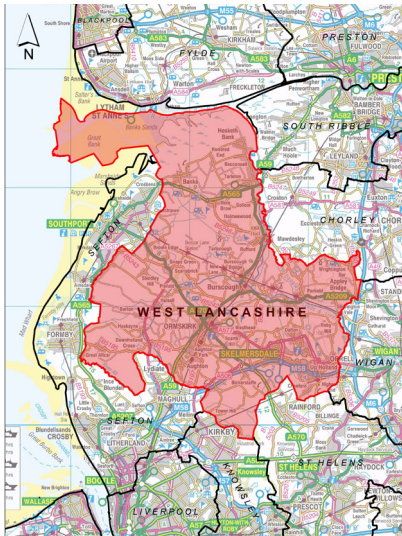
During the unprecedented and extremely worrying time for businesses as a result of COVID-19 the focus has moved to building the localised online application for the Governments Small Business grants and officers have been heavily involved in processing and paying these as well as providing information and signposting for the various financial schemes available.

Engaging with Liverpool City Region and Lancashire authorities

Working across the region for the good of the Borough

We are also continuing to promote West Lancashire's profile and ambitions within the wider regional agenda by engaging with Liverpool City Region and Lancashire Authorities. Rather than current specific project goals and outcomes we are developing opportunities to work collaboratively across the Lancashire and the wider area as appropriate. This includes our attendance at Greater Lancashire Plan, Lancashire Economic Development Theme Group and Lancashire Economic Development Officers' Group meetings. We have also maintained involvement with Liverpool City Region through associate membership of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

Other work streams that support this priority include our continued investment in the condition of our housing stock. The **annual report to tenants** highlighting performance and achievements was published. The **Yellow Hammer Walking Route** was re-launched with the Gorse Hill Nature Reserve. The business-focused **Let's Talk Skelmersdale** website, and supporting LinkedIn page, continues to feature Skelmersdale's strengths as a place to do business by sharing news, providing information for business support, employment and skills, lifestyle and education. The Chapel **Gallery** was transferred to new operators to ensure a sustainable future. We held 98 Thursday/Saturday **markets** and one extra market day in the run up to Christmas. We also provided a market for the Gingerbread Festival and a small number of food stalls for the MotorFest and a large food and craft market at the Christmas of Tales event. The Ormskirk Night Market Co. held four Friday evening food and drink markets on Moor Street during the summer.



Managing the budget

The challenging financial climate facing the Council means that it is essential that budgets are effectively controlled and that financial targets are achieved.

On the Council's General Revenue Account (which covers all services apart from the Council's housing stock) a favourable budget variance of £78,000 was achieved in 2019/20, or 0.6% of the total budget. This continues the trend of strong financial management that has been demonstrated in previous years and means that this account currently has a healthy financial position.

However the latest medium term financial forecast projects a significant budget gap in 2021/22, and this will be a key challenge for the Council to address particularly given the coronavirus pandemic, which is creating additional financial pressures. The primary means to address this position is through a Sustainable Organisation Review process, which will deliver large scale efficiencies, additional income and savings over a medium term time scale.

A favourable budget variance of £0.737m, or 2.9%, has been achieved this year on the Housing Revenue Account (which covers all costs and income associated with the Council's housing stock). This strong performance means that this account is well placed to make further investment in the housing stock, including building new homes.

Performance

The Council Plan projects are resourced and managed through budget and service action planning. They are monitored directly by the relevant service areas and through budget reports, service action plans, the corporate risk register and individual project reports to committees, Member Updates and working groups as appropriate.

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

We aim to keep the public well informed about all our services, how we run things and how we are working to achieve value for money. As well as specific consultation for particular projects, we have a continuous customer engagement programme for housing services and a citizen survey. This survey is used to gather views to better understand the usage and opinions of Council services, gauge community safety perceptions, and receive views on the Council as a whole. During the year, public opinion was directly sought to inform significant projects including the Leisure and Wellbeing Hubs and Ormskirk Town Centre Public Realm Improvement Works as well as on our overall Customer Engagement Strategy.

Performance Data

The Council's Corporate Performance Suite is aligned to the corporate priorities and actions. A set of performance indicators (PIs) spanning various service areas are also reported quarterly to Members to help the authority understand how well it is performing.

The suite contains a range of PIs and data items aimed at highlighting performance in key service areas. The suite facilitates monitoring of service levels and therefore whether the organisation is on track to achieve its priorities.

Not all the indicators relate to operational performance. We also include information that helps demonstrate that we are operating as an efficient organisation.

From the performance information available 61% of targets for available PIs in the suite were met or exceeded in 2019/20. This reflects that overall the Council is continuing to maintain a good level of performance in many of our frontline and support services, despite significant pressures on resources.

The performance suite is monitored quarterly by Cabinet and scrutinised by the Corporate & Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The annual outturn is provided in Appendix A.

Highlights

West Lancashire benefits from a broad base of organisations and individuals who create diverse activities for the Borough. The Council is involved with a variety of partners helping to stage a range of events throughout the year which contribute to making the Borough a vibrant and pleasant place to live. All our activities and events are promoted via our website, press releases, Facebook and Twitter account. The following is a selection of events and actions from throughout the year, many of them dependent on working with other organisations, and improving the operation of our own organisation.

April 2019

- A new **Clean and Green** service launched following a review and restructure of the grounds maintenance and street scene services.
- An **Ormskirk Town Centre Stakeholder** evening meeting was held so Ormskirk town centre businesses could hear about how the OTC Management Group are working together with partners and businesses to improve Ormskirk as well as how to get involved in future town centre initiatives and events.
- The **Great British Spring Clean** concluded in April. Action at Tawd Valley saw 4 trolleys and 35 bags of rubbish cleared away from the site.

May 2019

- Voters in 18 West Lancashire Wards and 10 Parish areas were polled on Thursday 2 May in the 2019 **local elections**. **European Elections** took place later in the month on 23 May with the local verification and count process taking place on Sunday 26 May. The vote saw a turnout of 34.79%.
- Local dog lovers came to the first **West Lancs Dog Festival** in Beacon Country Park on 19 May which included mini health checks for dogs and grooming demonstrations.
- Examples of sights, smells, sounds and tastes of what life was like 900 years ago were on display at the two-day Ormskirk **Medieval Festival** at Coronation Park.

June 2019

- With the help of the local community, the Countryside Rangers held a **Bioblitz** weekend at Beacon Country Park on 22/23 June to record as many of the park's plant and animal species as possible.
- **Skelmersdale Ambassadors** hosted a high profile breakfast event at West Lancashire College where Lord John Prescott was a special guest speaker
- Our **Home Care Link Service** was audited with a recommendation for accreditation to the new Quality Standards Framework for the technology enabled care industry.
- West Lancashire honoured the service and sacrifices made by our armed forces at a special event to mark **Armed Forced Day** on Monday 24 June.

July 2019

- A **Neighbourhood Planning Referendum was held in July**. Prepared by Burscough Parish Council, the Burscough Parish Neighbourhood Plan contains a vision, objectives and planning policies for the area, covering a time period to 2027.
- July marked the 100th anniversary of the 1919 Housing & Town Planning Act and the provision of Social Housing. To mark this anniversary we ran our **100 days for 100 years of social housing** social media campaign on @westlancsbc on Twitter and Facebook
- The annual Green **Fayre** was held on 20-21 July in Beacon Country Park.

October 2019

- A **Halloween evening** event at Coronation Park (Ormskirk) was held with music, dance, scary walks through the woods and a fancy dress competition.
- **Get online Week** saw public events in Up Holland and Burscough, with residents coming along to find out about support we can offer to help them increase their digital knowledge and confidence online.
- West Lancashire Community Safety Partnership worked on its **Bright Sparx** campaign to tackle any anti-social behaviour issues in the run up to Mischief Night and Bonfire Night.

August 2019

- **Ormskirk Motorfest** event was held at the end of August with record footfall in the town. Organised by Aintree Circuit Club, the event is supported by the Council.
- Two of West Lancashire's most popular parks retained their **Green Flag Award** status. Coronation Park (Ormskirk) and Beacon Country Park (Skelmersdale) have maintained Green Flag status for 12 and 13 years respectively.
- Views were sought from residents and businesses online and via a consultation event around plans to improve **Moor Street and Wheatsheaf Walks**.

November 2019

- A **by-election** was held on 21 November in Birch Green.
- Changes to refuse and recycling collections **Route Optimisation** was introduced for a third of our residents from 12 November
- The Council adopted its new operating model following the Sustainable Organisation Review and began to implement the **Our Future** programme that will see all the approved recommendations from the review put into practice. Further structure changes were to follow in April.
- Ormskirk's **Christmas of Tales and Lights switch on** was held on 24 November.

September 2019

- The annual flag raising ceremony to mark **Merchant Navy Day** was held.
- The Council was successful in a bid for Government funding Historic England's High Street **Heritage Action Zone** scheme which aims to create lasting improvements to town centres for the communities who use them by supporting economic and cultural growth, and enhancing local historic character.
- The Council was shortlisted for the Inside **Housing Development Awards** in the Best development (up to 50 homes) category for its Walmsley Drive scheme.

December 2019

- **The General Election** was held on 12 December with a West Lancs turnout of 72%.
- A Christmas-themed event was held for tenants and residents at the **Evermoor Hub** as part of the 100 years of council housing celebrations during the year.
- December's **full Council meeting** met and made decisions including agreeing to develop a strategy to make WLBC a 'single-use plastic free' authority by the end of 2020, approving the revised Parish and Town Council Charter for West Lancashire and approving a revised Statement of Licensing Policy.

January 2020

- A new free service for staff and Councillors was launched. **Able Futures** is an early intervention mental health support service helping with issues such as anxiety, grief, stress or depression.
- Clearance works began for the **Skelmersdale Town Centre development**.
- The Rangers held **winter walks** with a five-mile Rufford Ramble and seven-mile walk around Ormskirk and Aughton.
- Public consultation was begun on the design of a new **mountain bike track**. Working with Architrail and Sport England the facility will be installed at Tawd Valley Park.

February 2020

- The Council was registered with the **Disability Confident Scheme** aimed at encouraging employers to think differently about disability and take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop disabled people to make the most of the talents disabled people can bring to the workplace.
- As part of **National Apprenticeship Week** we celebrated our own success with apprenticeships and helped promote apprenticeships in the Council at the WL College Apprenticeship Hub.










March 2020



















- Many planned events, activities and authority business was deferred or cancelled as the Council's resources began preparation and eventual mobilisation of the local multi-agency response to the **COVID-19 pandemic** through the Lancashire Resilience Forum.

Strategy Review

A Cabinet strategy session in early 2020 reviewed the existing Council vision, values and priorities in light of what has been achieved, the operating environment and the Council's new operating model. It was recognised that there had been significant progress towards achieving the existing Council Plan and a more extensive revision rather than a refresh was appropriate. A new draft Council Plan has therefore been developed for 2020 onwards. The draft Plan will undergo stakeholder consultation and the feedback used to refine the final Council Plan to be brought back to Full Council. The current Council Plan will remain in place until the intended adoption of the new Council Plan in October 2020.

Appendix A: Performance Information 2016/17–2019/20

Icon key	
	On target (within 0.01%) or exceeded
	Off target (within 5%)
	Off target (by 5% or more)
	Data only (no target)
	Performance improved on previous year
	Performance declined on previous year
	No change on previous year
	Comparison not possible
	Not collected and/or reported at this time or previous calculations not comparable

Performance Indicator	Results 2016/17-2019/20				Targets 2019-20	2019/20 vs 2018/19	2019/20 Result	Note
	2016/17 Value	2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2019/20 Value	Annual 2019/20			
ICT1 Severe Business Disruption (Priority 1)	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%			
ICT2 Minor Business Disruption (P3)	98%	99%	99%	99%	97%			
ICT3 Major Business Disruption (P2)	96%	100%	100%	100%	98%			
ICT4 Minor Disruption (P4)	99%	99%	99%	100%	98%			
ICT5 Advice & Guidance (P5)	100%	100%	100%	100%	98%			
B1 Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support new claims and change events	6.41	5.63	6.16	7.73	12.00			
B2 Overpayment Recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments (payments received)	£311,409	£294,695	£370,939	£377,501	£195,000			
B4 Benefits Local authority Error Overpayments - Lower threshold	£96,867	£76,048	£49,034	£59,555	£111,205			
R1 % of Council Tax collected	96.74%	96.51%	96.46%	96.29%	97.10%			

Performance Indicator	Results 2016/17-2019/20				Targets 2019-20	2019/20 vs 2018/19	2019/20 Result	Note
	2016/17 Value	2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2019/20 Value	Annual 2019/20			
R2 % council tax previous years arrears collected	26.82%	26.78%	25.88%	23.68%	24.5%	↓	⚠	
R3 % of Business Rates Collected (NNDR)	97.72%	98.18%	98.22%	98.02%	97.20%	↓	✅	
R4 Sundry Debtors % of revenue collected against debt raised	95.06%	95.78%	96.95%	94.36%	89.1%	↓	✅	
BV8 % invoices paid on time	98.48%	98.50%	98.21%	98.34%	98.75%	↑	⚠	Relating to just under 46,000 invoices
CIT01 % feel West Lancs is safe & secure to live	79%	78%	N/A	68%		↓		Survey carried out May-July 2019. Comparison year on year is with previous survey in 2017/18
CIT02 % satisfied with cleanliness of streets	56%	54%	~	52%		↓		As above
CIT03 % satisfied with how WLBC runs things	57%	48%	~	51%		↑		As above
CIT05 % satisfied with local area as a place to live	80%	74%	~	69%		↓		As above
CIT06 % satisfied with sports/leisure facilities	27%	30%	~	27%		↓		As above
CIT07 % satisfied with parks and open spaces	52%	50%	~	49%		↓		As above
CIT08 % residents agreeing that WLBC provides value for money	35%	30%	~	28%		↓		As above
CIT12 % of people satisfied with household collections for domestic waste	85%	86%	~	85%		↓		As above
CIT13 % of people satisfied with household collections for recyclable materials	78%	79%	~	78%		↓		As above
CIT14 % of residents who feel the Council keeps them well informed about its services and benefits	49%	42%	~	43%		↑		As above
CIT16 % of residents feel that they belong to their local area	72%	67%	N/A	65%		↓		As above

Performance Indicator	Results 2016/17-2019/20				Targets 2019-20	2019/20 vs 2018/19	2019/20 Result	Note
	2016/17 Value	2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2019/20 Value	Annual 2019/20			
ER01 Apprenticeships created from Council intervention	27	15	12	0				Council's apprenticeship grant funding has been fully utilised and no longer available for this work.
ER04 Apprenticeship vacancies within the borough	254	182	62	~		~		No figures to date due to post holder who collected data leaving and current work priorities
ER05 Benefit claimant count in West Lancs	1.9%	1.9%	~	~		~		As above
ES01 No. grass cuts undertaken on the highway between April-October	N/A - PI not developed at this time			7	8	/		
ES02 No. grass cuts undertaken in Sheltered Accommodation between April-October	N/A - PI not developed at this time			9	10	/		With the exception of Crosshall Court which received 10 cuts
ES04 % locations inspected falling into categories A/B - Litter (cumulative)	N/A - PI not developed at this time			99.15%	85.00%	/		Data provided by APSE
ES06 % locations inspected falling into categories A/B - Dog Fouling (cumulative)	N/A - PI not developed at this time			100%	85.00%	/		As above
ES07 % locations inspected falling into categories C/D - Overflowing Litter Bins (cumulative)	N/A - PI not developed at this time			10.53%	10.00%	/		As above
ES08 % locations inspected falling into categories A/B - grounds maintenance (includes grass and shrubbery) (cumulative)	N/A - PI not developed at this time			92.53%	85.00%	/		As above
ES11 % locations inspected falling into categories C/D - Detritus (cumulative)	N/A - PI not developed at this time			4.16%	15.00%	/		As above
ES14 Average of missed bins per fortnight (recycling / green)	N/A - PI not developed at this time			84	50	/		Changes to bin rounds made in November 2019
ES15 Average of missed bins per fortnight (recycling / blue)	N/A - PI not developed at this time			96	50	/		As above
ES16 Average of missed bins per fortnight (garden waste / brown)	N/A - PI not developed at this time			65	50	/		As above
ES17 Average of missed bins per fortnight (refuse / grey)	N/A - PI not developed at this time			99	50	/		As above

Performance Indicator	Results 2016/17-2019/20				Targets 2019-20	2019/20 vs 2018/19	2019/20 Result	Note
	2016/17 Value	2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2019/20 Value	Annual 2019/20			
ES18 Flytip incidents reported	N/A - PI not developed at this time			1,283		/		Reflects data recorded on Service Now. Does not include flytips identified and removed by Clean & Green staff.
HS14 % non-decent council homes	0.25%	0.07%	0.07%	P	0.10%	P	P	
HS1 % Housing repairs completed in timescale	97.22%	97.37%	95.22%	97.15%	98.00%			This service will be provided by the contractor Wates from April 2020.
HS27 % of properties with a valid Landlord Gas Safety Record (homes and buildings)	N/A - PI not developed at this time		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%			
HS28 % of properties with a valid Electrical Installation Condition Report (homes and buildings)	N/A - PI not developed at this time		98.8%	97.6%	100.0%			
HS29 % non-domestic that require an asbestos management survey/re-inspection	N/A - PI not developed at this time		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%			
HS30 % of non-domestic properties with fire risk assessment in place	N/A - PI not developed at this time		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%			
HS31 % of properties covered by water hygiene risk assessment (homes and buildings)	N/A - PI not developed at this time		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%			
HW01 No. attending health, wellbeing and sport activities & courses	N/A - PI not developed at this time			11,134		/		
NI 154 Net additional homes provided	305	177	351	622				Draft figure - subject to (minor) potential change Monitored through the Local Plan
NI 155 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	95	71	23	210				
NI 157a Processing of planning applications: Major applications	87.10%	97.22%	97.56%	93.10%	75.00%			Relates to 29 applications determined in the year.
NI 157b Processing of planning applications: Minor applications	88.85%	88.31%	89.91%	87.50%	80.00%			Relates to 224 applications determined in the year.
NI 157c Processing of planning applications: Other applications	90.56%	93.05%	94.25%	91.21%	85.00%			Relates to 535 applications determined in the year.
NI 159 Supply of ready to develop housing sites	106.3%	105.5%	103.0%	P		P		Data will not be available due to preparation time and impact of COVID Monitored through the Local Plan

Performance Indicator	Results 2016/17-2019/20				Targets 2019-20	2019/20 vs 2018/19	2019/20 Result	Note
	2016/17 Value	2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2019/20 Value	Annual 2019/20			
NI 191 Kerbside residual household waste per household (Kg)	493.94 +	500.32	485.62	541.32	500			Based on estimated/non-verified figures
NI 192 Percentage of kerbside household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	48.53% +	42.95%	43.76%	41.39%	50.00%			As above
TS1a Rent collected from current and former tenants as a % of rent owed (excluding arrears b/f).	N/A - PI not developed at this time			101.74	100.04	/		
TS11 % of rent loss through dwellings being vacant	1.79%	1.59%	0.94%	0.87%	0.99%			
WL24 % Building regulations applications determined within 5 weeks	62.20%	51.00%	50.00%	50.57%	50.00%			A total of 176 decisions were made on Full Plan submissions during the year. All but 5 of the decisions were made within 2 months of the submission being made equating to 97.2%
WL85a Website: no. visits	516,776	592,447	657,969	648,500				
WL85b Website: no. online forms submitted	11,204	13,581	15,541	26,580				
WL85c Website: No. of payments processed online	45,134	73,679	69,607	64,990				
WL90 % of Contact Centre calls answered	93.0%	81.7%	72.2%	85.9%	88.0%			115,142 calls into the contact centre. The final two quarters of the year were above target
WL108 Average answered waiting time for callers to the contact centre (seconds)	60	145	250	121	145			
WL122 % Vehicle Operator Licence Inspections Carried Out within 6 Weeks	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
WL123 % Apprenticeships Started Each Year Within WLBC	N/A	0.17%	3.70%	0.74%	2.30%			Target is 2.3% headcount of the workforce.
WL124 Observations/incidents CCTV operatives involved in	6,045	5,633	5,509	4,400				

Performance Indicator	Results 2016/17-2019/20				Targets 2019-20	2019/20 vs 2018/19	2019/20 Result	Note
	2016/17 Value	2017/18 Value	2018/19 Value	2019/20 Value	Annual 2019/20			
WL125 Arrests that CCTV operators were involved in	282	282	266	200				
WL126 No. incidents identified by CCTV operators in general monitoring	1,525	1,634	1,654	1,550				
WL130 No. Service Now Customer Accounts	N/A - PI not developed at this time			24,734		/		
WL131 No. Social Media Followers (WLBC FB, Twitter)	N/A - PI not developed at this time			9,567	8,521	/		Target based on increasing by 5% each quarter
WL132 FTE working days lost due to sickness absence per average FTE	N/A - PI not developed at this time			10.46	8.08	/		
WL133 No. visitors to Chapel Gallery	N/A - PI not developed at this time			~		/		This PI was discontinued following the transfer of the Chapel Gallery
WL140 % staff feeling committed to helping achieve Council aims and objectives	N/A	87%	93%	~		~		No survey carried out during 2019/20
WL141 % staff who feel the Council is a good organisation to work for	N/A	74%	78%	~		~		No survey carried out during 2019/20
WL142 % staff proud to work for the Council	N/A	66%	68%	~		~		No survey carried out during 2019/20
WL143 % of external calls to back office answered	N/A - PI not developed at this time			84%		/		Relates to 210,000 calls into back office

General notes on the 2019/20 suite

WLBC continues to collect certain PIs originating from the previous Best Value and National Indicator sets for its own performance management purposes although national reporting no longer exists. PIs and targets are reviewed annually and agreed by Cabinet. Data that is pending will be published when available on the council website.

Our satisfaction survey results help us better understand how our services are perceived in the community. For 2019/20, the timing of the survey was reviewed and moved to May. This avoids restrictive timings due to purdah (as it will take place after known elections) and other key mailings such as Council Tax and annual canvas letters. Due to the change no survey fell within 2018/19.

+ Data restated since previous publication – NI191 2016/17 previously reported as 504.95; NI192 2016/17 previously reported as 47.38%. Both improved outturns due to corrected administrative error

P data pending

Reporting of PIs is dependent on collection mechanisms remaining in place. Satisfaction (CIT_) indicators are collected via the Citizen & Stakeholder Survey and some items require staff survey.

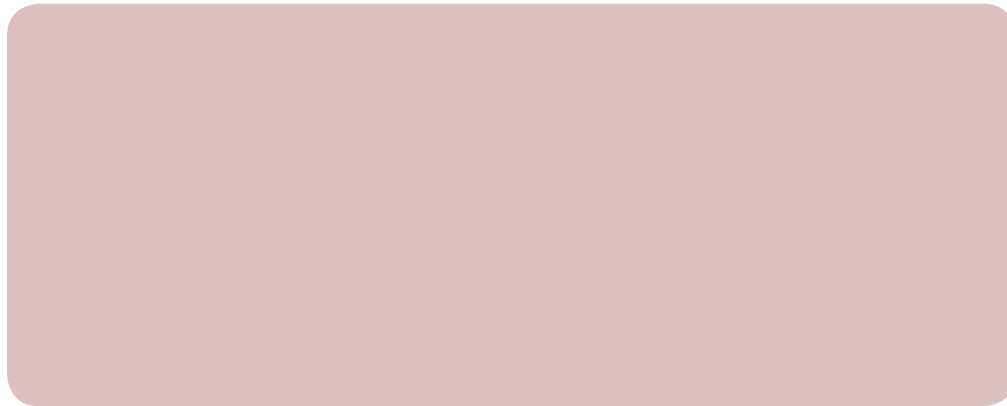
Annual Report in other formats

The Annual Report can be provided upon request in other formats including audiotape, CD, in large print, Braille and other languages.

Telephone 01695 577177 or visit our website www.westlancs.gov.uk

Introduction

Leader of the Council
Councillor Ian Moran



Chief Operating Officer
Jacqui Sinnott-Lacey

