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Burnley Borough Council's Strategic Plan

Update February 2021

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Burnley Council's vision 10 year vision for the borough:

Burnley and Padiham will be places where families choose to live because of our clean, safe neighbourhoods, beautiful parks and unspoilt countryside. Businesses will choose to invest in our borough because of our skilled workforce, our diverse, competitive, modern economy and a supportive council.

Our values:

One Burnley –Leading the Way

One Council –Working Together

One Team –Ambitious for Burnley

- T -Together
- E -Enterprising
- A - Ambitious
- M -Meeting Customer Need

Burnley Council: adapting to change

The Covid-19 pandemic will continue to have significant impact on all our lives in 2021. Burnley Council will do everything it can to help the borough bounce back from its effects

In 2021, we will continue to support the most vulnerable with essential supplies, housing, and self-isolation payments. We will operate an efficient grants programme to all eligible local businesses. We will keep everyone informed about the latest rules and guidance. The council's priority in the first half of the year remains the defeat of the virus through a local test and trace service, and supporting health partners to deliver the vaccination programme.

At the end of 2020, we published two new strategies that set out our plans for recovery. [Burnley's New Economy: A Strategy for Recovery and Growth](#) is our plan to help local businesses. We also committed to providing greater assistance to young residents whose employment prospects have been damaged by the pandemic.

We also published a [community recovery plan](#) that sets out how the council and its partners will tackle social isolation, poverty, debt, and poor mental health. We will do this by building on the success already achieved by the Burnley Together partnership.

The borough will recover from the pandemic, so this strategy also contains our longer-term objectives, including our contribution towards the biggest issues facing the town and the nation. Amongst these is the greatest challenge of our time: climate change.

There is, however, considerable uncertainty in the budget outlook; the council's prudent Medium-Term Financial Strategy shows that we need to plan for a possible cumulative budget gap of £4.1m over the next four financial years. This adds to the pressure on the council to make savings and find ways of raising income to protect priority services that help make the borough a cleaner, greener, safer and more prosperous place to live.

Our strategic plan guards against a "salami-slicing" approach to budget cuts. With a clear vision for the borough's future, the council will stay focussed on what really matters, and will adopt innovative ways to resource those priorities.

We are a confident, positive organisation, and together with our partners, we have a strong track record of delivering positive outcomes for the people of Burnley and Padiham.

Our guiding principles

In leading the transformation of the Council, the Executive and Management Team have worked to the following principles:

- Burnley Council is pragmatic. The Council is not ideologically committed to a specific model of local government organisation. This means that the Council is open minded about how to achieve savings. It will pursue joint working arrangements, or seek to outsource services to the private sector, where there is a clear business case.
- A business case for change must take into account the impact on the local economy, as well as the cost and benefits in terms of service quality and efficiency gains. It will implement changes following appropriate consultation with residents and employees.

Who is this document for?

The strategy is prepared to help Elected Members and officers execute the Council's business in a well-planned and effective manner. While it is primarily for an internal audience, it is also a public document. Local residents and businesses can use this document to stay informed about the Council's plans for the Borough. The Council's Executive members report progress against the strategic commitments at Full Council meetings.

What is the purpose of the Strategic Plan?

1. The Strategic Plan describes how the Council will make its vision for the Borough reality.
2. The Strategic Plan unifies the Council's service units, and is used to articulate common purpose.
3. Strategic analysis helps anticipate and prepare for change. The strategic planning process helps the Council audit internal capacity, informing decisions about resource allocation (staff, budgets, technology, equipment, and premises).
4. Finally, the Strategic Plan encourages dialogue amongst different service units in the Council. This in turn should lead to more joined up working as council officers identify points of connection at the level of outcome, output, process or input.

The plan is structured around the themes of People, Places, Prosperity and Performance.

This structure helps:

- breakdown departmental silos, so that Service Units are encouraged to think collaboratively about how to achieve corporate objectives;
- ensure that the Council focuses on a balanced range of priorities, so that interventions are mutually supportive. For example, the Council wants to encourage business growth so that local people have access to good, well-paid jobs (an objective under the *prosperity* theme). But to achieve this we must make sure that educational attainment improves (an objective under the *people* theme) and that, also, the environment for doing business is good thanks to clean streets and safe neighbourhoods (an action under the *places* theme);
- design services around the needs of citizens and businesses that we serve, rather than around the structure of the Council.

The strategic plan does not cover every service delivered by the Council. The emphasis is on planning for major change and challenges, and defining priority actions linked to corporate objectives. But an overriding concern of the Council is to protect core services. Though budget pressures could mean changes to how we provide services, the Council will continue to provide good quality frontline services that are a priority for local residents. An overview of these services is set out below.

Burnley Council Services

- We collect rubbish, recyclable or non-recyclable, from every household and clean every street. Resident satisfaction with waste collection has increased significantly following changes to how we manage collections in some neighbourhoods, and collections were not affected by the pandemic.
- We own and manage the historic Towneley Hall that attracts tens of thousands of visitors every year.
- We manage over 550 hectares of parks and green spaces including five Green Flag Parks. The large increase in park users during the pandemic shows how important they are to wellbeing.
- In partnership with Burnley Leisure, we fund three quality leisure facilities (St Peter's, Padiham and the Prairie), and the Mechanics theatre which attracts top names in comedy, music and the arts.
- We work with businesses to support job creation, business growth, and inward investment. We delivered a business grant programme during the pandemic that awarded well over £20 million in grants to over 2,000 businesses.
- We prosecute those who commit environmental crime in the borough.
- We support victims of antisocial behaviour and work with the police to take action against anti-social behaviour.
- We deal with around 2,500 calls and, during normal times, nearly 400 visitors every week at our contact centre.
- We award benefit to around 10,500 households a year and assess over 66,000 changes in circumstances.
- We provide a quality advice and enforcement service for vulnerable households and individuals and work to tackle homelessness.
- We provide public protection services: we conduct food safety checks on food establishments; we carry out health and safety inspections of warehouses and retail premises; we license pubs and clubs and taxis; we investigate environmental pollution complaints about noise, smoke and private water supplies; and we provide CCTV monitoring. During the pandemic we have contacted hundreds of individuals and business to help reduce transmission in the community, and helped set up testing stations and vaccination centres and the Burnley Together partnership to help protect the most vulnerable families and individuals.
- We work with the police and community organisations to help foster stronger community relations.
- We process around 500 planning applications per annum and aim to ensure that new development in Burnley is built to high design standard. We also protect the heritage of the town through conservation areas management and listed building protection, and take enforcement action to protect the quality of life of Burnley residents against unauthorised building activity.
- We conduct local land searches for buyers of land or property.
- We plan and deliver major regeneration projects, in partnership with the private sector.
- We manage car parks so parking in Burnley is easy.
- We ensure that taxpayers' money is spent prudently and that the Council allocates resources within its means by providing a professional treasury management and audit service.
- We make sure local citizens have a democratic voice, through proper and effective management of elections.

What do we want to achieve during 2021 and beyond?

People - creating flourishing, healthy and confident communities

What are the challenges and opportunities?

The closure of leisure venues has significantly impacted on the income of Burnley Leisure: re-starting cultural life and promoting access to affordable, quality leisure facilities will be a priority.

Higher rates of hospitalisations from Covid-19 highlights that reducing health inequality is a significant challenge in Burnley. For example, alcohol related hospital admissions, the number of incapacity benefit claimants for poor mental health, and deaths from smoking are all higher than the national average. Levels of worklessness due to ill health are also high. As a district council, we are well positioned to influence and deliver many measures that can help prevent ill health, both through our key functions and our enabling role. Our quality parks and green spaces are a “Natural Health Service,” and our housing services, environmental health function, our role in improving community safety, and in particular our partnership with Burnley Leisure, are all key. Perhaps our biggest long-term contribution to preventing ill health is our commitment to help grow the local economy. Poverty is a significant cause of poor health, so we want to help more local people into secure, decently paid jobs, as described in the prosperity theme of this strategy.

Increasing educational attainment and skills remains a top priority for the borough. The Council will continue to work with partners in the education sector to help maintain the focus on this.

What do we commit to?	Lead
PE1- We will work with partners to make the borough a place of aspiration, including supporting efforts to increase education attainment and skills development.	Chief Executive Leader
PE2- We will continue to develop the leisure and cultural offer in partnership with Burnley Leisure.	Chief Operating Officer Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing
PE3- We will work with partners to provide necessary support systems to reduce homelessness and to end rough sleeping in the borough.	Head of Housing and Development Control Executive Member for Housing
PE4- We will work on the wider determinants of poor health and will deliver our COVID-19 community recovery plans	Head of Policy and Engagement Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing

Places: making the Borough a place of choice

What are the challenges and opportunities?

Resident feedback tells us that maintaining the cleanliness is a priority with reducing dog fouling is a key local concern.

Compared with the Lancashire average, a higher proportionate of residents live in private rented accommodation. Unfortunately, not all of this accommodation is managed to a good standard, with some neighbourhoods blighted by incidents of antisocial behaviour, long term empty properties or properties that are unfit for habitation.

We are proud to maintain a significantly higher than average proportion of greenspace per head of population. Evidence suggests that access to parks and nature has major health benefits, as well as making the living environment attractive. Indeed, park use increased significantly during lockdown. Our parks are therefore a key asset in making the borough a good place to live and work. In addition, the Council has an obligation as a community leader to play a part in reducing harmful carbon emissions and responding to climate change.

The Council recognises that we are facing a climate change emergency that threatens our future. The Council will deliver reductions in single use plastic, bring forward de-carbonisation measures and will enable the uptake of electric vehicles and will provide financial support to help green businesses and shops.

What do we commit to?	Lead
PL1- We will implement a range of initiatives to maintain a clean, safe, attractive and environmentally friendly borough. This will include a focus on reducing dog fouling.	Head of Streetscene Executive Member for Community and Environmental Services
PL2- We will improve the management and condition of rented accommodation.	Head of Housing and Development Control Executive Member for Housing
PL3- We will work with partners to improve quality and choice in the borough's housing stock.	Chief Operating Officer Executive Member for Housing
PL4- We will implement our 2015-25 Green Space Strategy.	Head of Green Spaces and Amenities Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing
PL5- We will prepare and deliver a new Climate Emergency Strategy.	Head of Housing and Development Executive Member for Resources and Performance Management
PL6- We will invest in our heritage assets for the benefit of this, and future, generations.	Head of Finance and Property Management Executive Member for Resources and Performance Management

What are the challenges and opportunities?

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Burnley benefitted from a decade of employment growth and investment. For many years now, economic forecasts have shown that places such as Burnley, who are over-dependent on manufacturing, would continue to suffer job losses as the sector retracts and whilst this has not necessarily been the case in Burnley, there is a danger that the impact of COVID-19, the formal withdrawal of the UK from the EU, and any subsequent economic downturn could accelerate this trend and expose any underlying weaknesses in the economy. It is therefore vital that we respond, by providing businesses, people, and places with the support and interventions necessary to enable them to continue to operate in an ongoing pandemic and economic slowdown, whilst still continuing to address underlying issues and opportunities for future economic growth. The document [Burnley's New Economy: A Strategy for Recovery and Growth](#) sets out the issues and actions in detail.

With a retail catchment area of 300,000 people, Burnley is a major retail and service centre in Pennine Lancashire. The town centre has benefitted from significant investment in public realm, attracting new occupiers such as Primark. The council, in partnership with other key organisations, has developed a Town Centre and Canalside Masterplan setting out opportunities to diversify the leisure offer, introduce town centre living. The Council will progress key projects including "Pioneer Place", to deliver the masterplan.

The development and growth of UCLAN over the next four years will have a transformational impact on the town. The Council and UCLAN will work in partnership with the business community to deliver higher level skills and degree level apprenticeships as well as leverage the expertise of the University and other funding streams to support business innovation, business scale up and new business starts. The Council has also supported the expansion of Burnley College through a £7million loan.

By promoting Burnley as an investment opportunity, and by improving travel connections and kick starting development to attract investors, the Council is dedicated to getting the most out of Burnley's key assets: its rural setting, its proximity to the regional growth hub of Manchester, the economic development potential of Burnley's land and its education and skills infrastructure. The Local Plan will act as the key supporting framework for encouraging employment and housing investment, with the aim of maintaining the recent trend of private sector job growth and growing the borough's skilled workforce.

The Council is ambitious for Burnley. The devolution of powers from central government is an opportunity for the borough. To ensure that Burnley punches above its weight and gets a fair deal, the Council's Executive and Management Team will make sure that the business case for Burnley is heard at sub-regional, regional and national decision-making levels.

The Council will also prioritise its spending towards businesses within our local economic area and will encourage partners in the local public sector to do the same.

What do we commit to?	Lead
PR1- We will contribute to the strategic direction of local, sub-regional and regional partnerships, and will position the borough for economic development investment.	Chief Executive Council Leader
PR2- We will proactively support the borough's businesses to innovate and expand, and make the borough a natural choice for business relocation.	Strategic Head of Economy and Growth Executive Member for Economy and Growth
PR3- We will deliver the Town Centre and Canalside Masterplan, and strategic projects in Padiham Town Centre.	Strategic Head of Economy and Growth Executive Member for Economy and Growth
PR4- We will implement the Local Plan, delivering new housing, employment sites, and infrastructure.	Strategic Head of Economy and Growth Executive Member for Economy and Growth
PR5- We will support UCLan's expansion, transforming Burnley into a University Town.	Chief Executive Council Leader
PR6- We will delivery our COVID-19 economic recovery plan.	Strategic Head of Economy and Growth Executive Member for Economy and Growth

Performance- ensuring a continuous focus on improvement in all aspects of the Council's performance

Due to the lockdown, the council faced a projected budget deficit of £1.2m in 2020-21. While an estimated £1.1m is to be received through the Government's sales, fees and charges income compensation scheme, there is also an estimated deficit of £1.2m on the Council's Collection Fund. The Government announced financial support to help meet this deficit, as part of the Spending Review, and has introduced legislation that allows the balance of the deficit to be collected over the next three financial years. However, the longer-term effect of the pandemic on the economy, and consequently on council income, is a significant risk to the Council's finances.

The Council has a duty to deliver value for money for tax payers. The budget outlook remains challenging: services cannot continue to be delivered in the same way as in the past. New service delivery models will be required to achieve efficiencies. If services have to be cut the Council will be clear about the process that has been followed in reaching these decisions.

In September 2018, the council was told it "should be proud of its achievements" following a review of its services and plans for the borough by an independent peer review team. The Council will continuously improve service delivery, and will adapt to the needs of its customers.

What do we commit to?	Lead
PF1- We will manage our contract with Liberata robustly, so it delivers value for money and good services.	Chief Operating Officer Executive Member for Resources and Performance Management
PF2- We will adopt a Medium Term Financial Strategy that will put the Council on a sustainable financial footing. This strategy will set the framework for preparing annual budgets, ensuring the annual budget strategy is set within the context of the longer-term outlook.	Head of Finance and Property Management Executive Member for Resources and Performance Management
PF3- We will develop our digital strategy, so that more residents transact with us online and we will continue to deliver services more efficiently.	Chief Operating Officer Executive Member for Community and Environmental Services
PF4- We will deliver our Organisational Development strategy, ensuring we plan for the structures and capabilities that the organisation needs, and empowering our workforce to deliver the objectives of the Strategic Plan. This will include embedding hybrid working patterns where this improves productivity.	Head of Policy and Engagement Executive Member for Resources and Performance Management