

A woman with glasses and a young child with curly hair are laughing heartily in a garden. The woman is leaning over the child, who is wearing a blue t-shirt. They are in front of a brick house with a white window frame. The scene is bright and cheerful.

Lancashire

County
Council



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Council Plan 2025-2030

Building a better Lancashire

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Welcome to our Council Plan, which outlines our vision and priorities through to 2030.

We are rightly ambitious and want to build a better Lancashire so everyone can live their best life.

This ambition is based on Lancashire's remarkable strengths. Our strong sense of community can be felt across all our cities, towns and villages. Our natural environment and heritage make our county a great place to live and visit. And with the second largest economy in the North West, our dynamic businesses continue to lead the way, with many best in class and world-renowned.

We are also mindful of the challenges we face. Our economy can be even more productive and create further opportunities for local people. There is more we can do to make our communities safer. And we must respond to the increasing numbers of residents who need support. Throughout all of this, we must continue to deliver good quality and efficient services at an affordable cost. This plan does not include every single thing we do or every service we provide but it gives a lot of detail about the actions we will take to build a better Lancashire.

By building on our strengths, we are confident we can address these challenges. The county council will play its part by developing and innovating into the best council we can be. We will tackle the root causes of the challenges we face, with a relentless focus on delivery.

But it's not just about the county council. We are at our best when we work alongside residents, communities and other organisations to make change happen. We are committed to working together and we want to ensure everyone can do their bit to make a difference.

With this in mind, we invite everyone across our incredible county to work alongside us and build a better Lancashire.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philippa Williamson".

County Councillor Philippa Williamson
Leader of Lancashire County Council



Our vision

We are building a better Lancashire where everyone can live their best life through stronger communities, a growing economy and high-quality public services.

Our ambitions



Better lives for all

We will ensure more children and young people have the best start in life, families are more resilient, adults are supported to live more independent lives, and that everyone can live a healthy and happier life.



Economic ambition

We will work with the business community to equip people with the right skills to secure rewarding work, invest in Lancashire, improve transport and digital connectivity, and grow the local economy.



Stronger communities

We will ensure our communities are safer and more resilient, encourage people to play their part, promote our rich heritage and culture, and protect our environment for future generations.



Thinking differently

We will focus on delivering high-quality public services, providing the right help at the right time, embracing digital and technological innovation and developing the best possible workforce.

Our values

- Supportive
- Innovative
- Respectful
- Collaborative

Working together

- With residents
- With partners
- With councillors
- With colleagues

Being accountable

- Managing performance
- Delivering our priority programmes
- Balancing our budget

Building on our achievements

This plan builds on our previous Corporate Strategy, which has guided several impressive achievements that we are seeking to build on. These include:



13,976
Carers supported.



Crossing guards help
107,000 children get to
school safely every day.



Approved **15** new
children's homes.



311,328 daytime
support sessions delivered.



2,000 Supported
Living homes made
available to help to people
live independently.



We record around **50,000**
contacts with families each
quarter through services
delivered at **29** Family Hubs.



The Lancashire Skills
Pledge helps over **250**
businesses with bespoke
recruitment support.



Supporting **14,000**
businesses, creating
3,500 jobs and adding
over **£100m** to our
economy since 2013.



More than **21,000**
children trained in **bike and
pedestrian safety**.



We assist customers with
17,000
queries each week.



Helped **4,060** people with a learning
disability, **12,353** people with a
physical disability and **3,771** people
with a memory or cognition need.



Improving and promoting
bus services increased
journeys by **9%** in two
years.



Our Shared Lives service is rated **'Outstanding'** by the Care Quality Commission.



Opened the **ambitious** Preston Western Distributor and the M55 to Heyhouses Link Road.



2.5m visitors borrow around **3.2m** books from our **64** libraries and attend **26,000** events each year.



Supported **143** new apprentices at **90** businesses with a further **100** places approved.



2,235 people have been supported through **54** Skills Bootcamps



Reduced the county council's carbon emissions by **27%** over the last five years.



Working with families, we reduced the number of children needing care by **13.5%** in two years.



Helped **1,912** eligible people to claim welfare benefits, securing them **£5.4m** overall.



Resurface around **750,000m²** of road and manage a network of more than **4,300** miles.



Expanding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision, including new units in Nelson and Burnley.



Our **£19.8m** Lancashire Economic Growth and Development Investment Fund powers key sectors like cybersecurity.



41,798 Health Checks for people over 40.



An aerial photograph of a lush green landscape. In the foreground, there are rolling green hills and fields. A multi-lane highway with several cars is visible on the left side. In the background, a tall, thin church spire rises above a line of trees. The sky is clear and blue. A white graphic element consisting of a line with four right-pointing chevrons is positioned in the upper right corner.

Our ambitions



Better lives
for all





We want Lancashire to be the best place to raise a family, to thrive as an adult and remain independent for as long as possible. With strong communities and good local services, many of our residents have a good standard of living and quality of life.

Lancashire is already a great place to live, however, we know that access to quality education and healthcare can significantly impact on many of our residents, with a 10-year difference in life expectancy across Lancashire.

We also know that many of our vital support services for people with the most complex needs are under significant pressure. There is a real opportunity to tackle the root causes of these needs in a timely way rather than dealing with their symptoms.

This way we can deliver better outcomes for residents and avoid unsustainable pressures on local services.

Our approach is to work at an early stage with people and families to prevent, reduce or delay the need for more intensive support. We also want to build on the strengths of each person, working with families and the wider community so that people can feel more independent. When our help is needed, we want to make sure it is of the highest quality.

How we will make a difference

Each child can get the best start in life to help reach their full potential

We want to ensure that our children and young people are supported every step of the way to get the best start in life.

Key actions we will take include:

- Improving our information, advice and guidance, so that families are aware of the support available to them in their community.
- Supporting our youngest children and their families through our early years services, enabling all young children to be ready for school.
- Developing our network of Family Hubs which bring together local services such as health visiting, parenting support and access to employment in one place.
- Ensuring high-quality and accessible childcare is available.
- Securing access to great education for all of our 177,000 pupils across our 627 schools. This includes ensuring that we have sufficient school places to meet the needs of our residents.
- Helping the small number of our schools that are not performing as well, and taking a 'Team around the School' approach to ensure we provide joined-up assistance.
- Continuing our efforts to reduce student exclusions through inclusion hubs and alternative provision and address the rising numbers of children in Elective Home Education where this is not in the best interests of the child.
- Reducing the numbers of Children Missing Education.
- Introducing a new approach to supporting children and families who are new to Lancashire, as they transition into our schools.

- Taking concerted action to close the gap between more disadvantaged pupils and their peers and increasing the number of children and young people who are in either education, employment, or training.
- Ensuring our education is inclusive and that support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is timely and based on good communication with parents, schools and wider agencies.
- Reviewing our approach for home to school transport to ensure it meets the needs of children and their families.
- Supporting more children and young people to feel safe and make a positive contribution with access to activities in their community.
- Creating opportunities for children and young people to have their say about what matters to them.
- Helping our children and young people to move into adulthood and employment.

Families are supported to be resilient

We will work with children and families at an early stage and support families to be more resilient. Key actions we will take include:

- Providing early help through our Children and Wellbeing service, based on a Think Family approach, which joins up support and builds up the resilience of families in need.
- Continuing to deliver our nationally recognised family safeguarding approach which builds on the strengths of families and works with them to find their own solutions, helping more children to safely remain living with their families.
- Doing all we can to support families to feel safe through targeted youth support and our safeguarding and domestic abuse services.

- When children do need to be in our care, we will ensure this is as close to home as possible, particularly through foster carers, kinship care, adopters and accommodation within the county.
- Investing in more homes for children in our care, which will be better at meeting their needs as well as being more cost effective. Our Children's Home Service will manage 30 homes that can care for up to 100 children.
- Continuing to take our role as corporate parents seriously, ensuring our looked after children are able to access a range of opportunities and support through our organisation and our partners.
- Focusing on supporting young people who leave care to transition to adulthood and an independent future with the right opportunities, accommodation and support.

Residents enjoy more independent and fulfilling lives in supportive communities

When Lancashire's residents need our help, perhaps because they are older or if they have disabilities, we want to support them to be independent, live their best lives and get the right help in their community. Key actions we will take include:

- Improving information, advice and guidance to Lancashire's residents, through our Wellbeing and Early Support service so that they can get the support they need in their communities.
- Working with our valued partners in the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector (VCFSE), to ensure more adults can be supported.
- Supporting our carers with access to information, peer support and respite options.





- Responding quickly if a crisis happens. For example, following a fall or hospital admission, we will offer short-term support for up to six weeks to enable people to regain skills, confidence and their independence, so that they can live at home safely - where it is possible for them to do so.
- Embedding an approach across adult social care that builds on residents' strengths. We will ensure that our adult social care teams assess eligibility in a timely way and provide support that helps people live their best lives.
- Supporting social prescribing so that residents can receive referrals that meet their health and wellbeing needs by participating in community activities.
- Working with our NHS partners, we will support residents to come home as soon as they are medically fit following a hospital admission. This allows an assessment to take place in a comfortable and familiar home setting.
- Offering 'technology enabled care' where it's suitable to support people to be more independent.
- Using our Shared Lives service to match adults who have learning disabilities, mental health issues, or other needs with approved carers and their families so that they can live in a place they can call home.
- Helping people with learning disabilities to secure paid employment.
- Strengthening our partnerships with housing providers to support people through programmes such as adaptations to their homes, Extra Care Housing for older adults or supported living for adults with disabilities.
- Supporting working age people who need social care with an enablement service. This provides longer term support for up to 12 weeks to help people to learn new skills around travel, in their home, managing their finances and keeping fit, healthy and safe.

- Enhancing a number of care services provided directly by the county council to ensure they meet local needs.
- Equipping and supporting our care workforce to deliver their best for our residents. This includes adapting our culture, based on trust, empowerment and shared values across all our teams.
- Strengthening our relationship with the NHS to deliver joined-up care, acting as a leading partner in the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB).

Everyone can have a healthy and happier life, regardless of circumstances or background

We know that a large part of health and wellbeing isn't just about health services, but also about wider factors such as employment, social contact, good quality housing and the natural environment. Key actions we will take include:

- Working with our partners to take action to improve health and wellbeing for all and aiming to see faster improvements for more disadvantaged communities.
- Delivering key programmes to enhance early years support, promote healthy lifestyles, improve mental wellbeing and tackle barriers to employment.
- Commissioning high-quality public health support that meets the needs of Lancashire's residents including alcohol and substance misuse, weight management, stop smoking and sexual health services.
- Working with our health and wellbeing services so that they can identify issues at an early stage and prevent conditions from escalating.

- Advocating for regional and national policies and programmes on prevention and early help.
- Increasing benefit take-up to support people in vulnerable circumstances.
- Distributing SIM cards and repurposed devices to address digital poverty.



What success will look like

- More residents have a good quality of life.
- More people living healthier and happier lives at home or closer to home for longer.
- Narrowing the gap in health and life expectancy between more and less prosperous areas.
- Helping more people and families at an earlier stage, avoiding the need for more intensive services, such as being placed into the care of the county council.
- More residents having a better experience of local services.
- Higher levels of educational attainment and progress for all children and young people.
- More inclusive and sustainable services that meet the needs of children with SEND.

Working together

We will only build a better Lancashire by working together. The following sets out how the county council will play its part, but also how residents can play a role:

Our best

- Improving information, advice and guidance about activities and services in your area that can help you and your family's wellbeing.
- Delivering quality and joined-up support for children and families.
- Working with schools to raise attainment for all and to meet the needs of children with SEND.
- Intervening early where necessary to strengthen personal and family resilience.
- Strengthening support and investment in communities and building people's strengths to help keep them well and independent.
- Taking targeted action to improve health and wellbeing across the county.

Your best

- Collaborating with your child's school to provide the support they need to thrive in education.
- Being clear on your goals and strengths, so that we can support you to live your best life.
- Accessing local support when you need it.
- Considering being a foster carer, adopter or Shared Lives carer.
- Volunteering within your community.
- Eating well and being active.

Related plans

- Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-26
- Housing with Care and Support Strategy 2018-25
- Lancashire Carers Strategy 2024-27
- Lancashire Children and Young People Plan 2022
- Lancashire Children Looked After Sufficiency Strategy 2021-24
- Lancashire Education Strategy 2022-25
- Our Public Health Strategy 2024-30
- Lancashire Multi-Agency Neglect Strategy 2022-24
- Lancashire SEND Plan 2021-25
- Market Position Statement 2022
- Adult Social Care Market Sustainability Plan





Supporting families through Lancashire's Family Hubs

Our Lancashire Family Hubs are designed to offer children, young people and families the information, advice and support they need to thrive. These hubs provide a welcoming space and bring together services from our council, NHS, schools, police and various charitable and community organisations to ensure that families can find the help they need in one convenient location.

Our 'Bump Birth and Beyond' programme provides both online and in-person courses, as well as groups and activities for expectant parents and families with young children. Support includes prenatal care, childbirth preparation and postnatal support, empowering parents with the knowledge and confidence they need during the early stages of parenthood.

Alice from Penwortham attended a Baby and You group, which provides an eight-week course for parents of newborns to 18-month-old toddlers. She said: "It's a chance to see other parents and children, and gain friendships within the community. It gives you that chance to see that you're not on your own and other parents are experiencing some of the same issues."

"It's helped with things like sleeping, feeding issues and it gives you that network to meet other parents in your area."

In addition to general support, the hubs offer specialised assistance for families facing specific challenges. This includes support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), mental health services and guidance on practical issues such as housing, employment and financial management.

To find out more, visit lancashire.gov.uk/familyhubs

Our Family Hub, Ribbleson, Preston



Better safeguarding built on families' strengths

We are dedicated to transforming the way we support families and empower them to make positive changes. Our innovative Family Safeguarding Model is an approach designed to work with the entire family, to address the root causes of issues and build on their strengths so that children can remain safely at home whenever possible.

Using a 'Strengths-Based' approach, we work with families to identify their strengths and work through challenges. This method motivates and empowers parents and helps to provide a supportive environment for their children.

Different teams, including social workers, domestic abuse practitioners, recovery workers, mental health practitioners, and psychologists, work closely together to provide comprehensive support tailored to each family's unique needs. By spending more time with families, we gain a deeper understanding of their needs and how best to help them to thrive.

Shelley, a social worker involved in the initiative, said: "The Family Safeguarding Model is about working with the whole family to address the root causes of issues. It's about building on strengths and providing the right support at the right time."

Since implementing the Family Safeguarding Model, we have seen significant improvements in family stability and child safety. By focusing

on early intervention and holistic support, we aim to reduce the number of children who need to come into our care and promote healthier family dynamics.

We're passionate about keeping families together and ensuring that every child in Lancashire has the opportunity to thrive in a safe and nurturing environment.

Find out about safeguarding in Lancashire, visit lancashire.gov.uk/safeguarding





Economic ambition





We are committed to driving economic growth and prosperity for all. Lancashire is building on its rich history of innovation and world-class industries with a thriving £39.6 billion economy and a business ecosystem comprising over 55,000 companies. Our region is a vital contributor to the UK PLCs industrial strength.

We are the second largest economy in the North West and parts of our economy rival other leading areas in terms of productivity, innovation and job quality. Key sectors such as aerospace, advanced manufacturing and energy, alongside emerging industries like cybersecurity and low-carbon technology, ensure Lancashire is competitive on a global scale. New projects – like being the home of the National Cyber Force in Samlesbury – demonstrate our readiness for the future.

However, many sectors are gradually losing jobs, and some parts of Lancashire have taken longer to recover from recent economic shocks, such as the pandemic, compared to

neighbouring economies. Significant gaps in skill levels and prosperity affect people's chances of a better life. Economic inactivity has increased, with significant numbers of people dropping out of the labour market due to ill-health. Connectivity between the east and west of the county – and with neighbouring 'city regions' – needs to improve too.

These challenges can be best met by improving the range and depth of skills in our county, connecting new and existing businesses to investment and growth opportunities, supporting high-potential companies with the tools they need to prosper and modernising our transport network and digital infrastructure.

How we will make a difference

Residents have the right skills to secure rewarding work

We want to equip people with the right skills to secure jobs in growing businesses. There will be opportunities to upskill and connect with Lancashire employers so we're ready for current and future demands. Key actions we will take include:

- Building excellent careers programmes, in collaboration with businesses, through the Lancashire Careers Hub, ensuring young people can engage with employers from academic Years 7 to 13.
- Recruiting volunteer business leaders as Enterprise Advisers, who work with schools and colleges to develop these programmes.
- Developing technical education, including apprenticeships, T Levels and the Institute of Technology offer to meet the skills needs of local business and drive-up attainment.
- Expanding the more than 10,000 Lancashire people benefiting from apprenticeships and work-based learning to improve productivity and business performance.
- Promoting our tailored offers to businesses and jobseekers, like Skills Bootcamps – intensive and flexible courses lasting up to 16 weeks that build up sector-specific skills and offer fast-tracked interviews with local employers or opportunities to gain new skills in the workplace.
- Encouraging businesses to sign up to our Lancashire Skills Pledge, where knowledgeable professionals contact companies to discuss how skills and employment programmes can benefit their business.

- Helping young people who are not in education, employment or training and unemployed adults through our 'Escalate' tool, which helps people find support to get them back into work and connect them to our Skills Bootcamps and other pre-employment programmes.
- Collaborating with the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board to boost the health of Lancashire's workforce and reduce economic inactivity.
- Offering training and support through our Digital Skills Partnership.

Existing and new businesses invest in Lancashire

We want to harness Lancashire's strengths to support our commercial and industrial sectors to innovate and grow. Key actions we will take include:

- Promoting and refreshing our investment prospectus and inviting forward-thinking developers and employers to join us in Lancashire.
- Using available land to deliver new development schemes – such as employment, residential, industrial, or mixed-use projects.
- Connecting investors and occupiers to prime shovel-ready schemes equipped with amenities to facilitate rapid and scalable development.
- Helping ambitious Lancashire businesses to start, grow and scale, realising their growth potential, creating jobs and boosting the economy.
- Creating a supportive business community of entrepreneurs through strong Chambers of Commerce, our four universities and

diverse business networks, primed for collaboration, innovation and growth.

- Cultivating a better business relationship with Lancashire's small- and medium-sized business community, offering them the same support as we do for larger companies.
- Building on the success of Lancashire's Business Growth Hub to empower Lancashire enterprises through specialist advice.
- Widening access to business funding, from the £19 million Lancashire Growing Places Fund to flexible loans from the Lancashire Rosebud Fund and Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund.

Places are better connected with well-maintained roads and good transport links

We recognise the crucial role of highways and transport as enablers of economic growth, improving the environment, social activity and people's health and prosperity. And by influencing transport bodies and companies in the public and private sectors we can shape and deliver a transport network fit for the 21st century. Key actions we will take include:

- Continuing to maintain and improve 4,300 miles of roads to a high standard.
- Creating better connected infrastructure between our key economic areas, including homes and public transport interchanges, major employment and innovation sites and education, retail and leisure destinations.
- Improving links between the east and west of the county and with neighbouring 'city regions'.





- Reducing the carbon footprint of our highways maintenance activities, for example by using new, greener products to repair our roads which are quicker to apply and less disruptive for road users.
- Making bus journeys quicker and more reliable through our Bus Service Improvement Plan and working with Lancashire bus operators to make our network more dependable and efficient.
- Delivering a £55 million package of public transport, walking and cycling projects in east Lancashire that will significantly improve travel opportunities.
- Ensuring suitable provision for cycling and walking and embedding active travel into strategic transport plans.
- Transforming our existing Public Rights of Way into a network of short walking routes.
- Enhancing our digital connectivity across the county, improving access to businesses and residents to reliable and fast connections.
- Supporting investment in new infrastructure where it can unlock development and bring in private sector investment.

We collaborate with partners to accelerate economic growth

We are delivering ambitious plans to invest in our communities and unlock the growth potential of the county. Key actions we will take include:

- Delivering our ambitious Devolution Deal which will transfer funding and powers from central government to Lancashire, supporting us to further develop our regional economy.
- Developing Lancashire's investment pipeline valued at £22 billion, comprising major economic development projects, transport and digital infrastructure, local town and city regeneration plans and four Enterprise Zones.
- Supporting delivery of projects where the county council plays a lead role, including:
 - Lancashire Central, a multi-million-pound mixed use employment site at Cuerden.
 - Preston Station Gateway, delivering Grade A office, commercial and residential space in the city centre.
 - Eden Project Morecambe and unlocking the development potential of the town centre.
 - Samlesbury Enterprise Zone and a potential Innovation Hub.
 - Warton Enterprise Zone.
 - A pioneering new first-class cricket facility at Farington.
 - Cottam Parkway railway station in north west Preston.
 - Highways improvements to the A582.
 - Unlocking town centre development through the delivery of the county council's East Lancashire Levelling Up Fund.

- Continuing to deliver on the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal.
- Working with utility providers and stakeholders to ensure the availability of vital infrastructure to support growth.
- Supporting and enabling future health facility provision, where we can, including the New Hospitals Programme, especially with any new infrastructure requirements or improvements.
- Standing up for Lancashire and ensuring the government understands how Lancashire can play its part in improving the UK's health and economy.



Signing of the Devolution Deal, Shire Hall, Lancaster Castle, November 2023

What success will look like

- Lancashire's economy grows significantly over the next five years.
- Shrinking the income gap between Lancashire households and the UK average.
- More of the Lancashire workforce is engaged in high-quality, well-paying jobs.
- Increasing the share of our working-age population in employment.
- More people cycling and walking at least once a week.
- Lancashire's businesses are more productive, supported by increased inward investment and innovation.
- Continuing to make Lancashire an attractive location for successful businesses to start, grow and stay.
- Encouraging more graduates from our universities and colleges to live and work in Lancashire.
- Improving access to faster broadband across all Lancashire premises.
- Expanding transport links to key employment, housing and education sites.

Working together

We will only build a better Lancashire by working together. The following sets out how the county council will play its part, but also how residents can play a role:

Our best

- Taking full advantage of our Devolution Deal and new control over Lancashire's adult skills fund to improve the skills and employability of Lancashire's people.
- Working collaboratively with employers, central government, colleges and employment providers to support more people into good jobs, responding to market demand.
- Promoting inward investment into Lancashire and helping businesses to grow through our range of support offers.
- Using the latest innovation and technology to build a 21st century transport and infrastructure network.
- Working closely with our local, regional and national partners to unlock Lancashire's economic growth potential.

Your best

- Building your economic potential – and your family's – through our range of projects to improve skills and employability.
- As a business, signing up to the Lancashire Skills Pledge and engage in skills and employment programmes – whether that be inspiring young people through careers provision, employing apprentices, or upskilling your workforce.
- Considering using sustainable transport options where they are available to you.
- Helping us to manage and maintain our road network by reporting faults online.

Related plans

- Lancashire 2050 – a strategic framework for Lancashire
- Lancashire Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans
- Lancashire Economic Strategy 2023-25
- Lancashire Environment and Climate Strategy 2023-25
- Lancashire Highways and Transport Strategy 2023-25
- Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework 2024-29
- Our Public Health Strategy 2024-30
- Find out more about Devolution in Lancashire at lancshiredevolution.co.uk
- Find the latest information on our economic development plans at investinlancashire.com



Our new cricket facility at Farington



Building a brighter future: Lancashire Central's vision for growth

Lancashire Central is a multi-million-pound development designed to bring new opportunities and prosperity to our county. Covering 140 acres, this exciting project will become a lively hub where businesses, residents and workers can come together. Strategically located in Cuerden, at the intersection of the M65, M6 and M61, it's perfectly placed to attract growth and innovation, offering easy access to national transport routes.

This isn't just another business park—it's a huge part of our plan to boost the local economy and create thousands of jobs. With space to bring up to 5,600 full-time jobs, it's going to offer fantastic new opportunities for people all across the county. Whether it's high-tech offices, industrial spaces, or places for research and development, this development is built to help local businesses grow and attract new ones to the area.

Lancashire Central is going to be about more than just work—it is designed to be a place where people can enjoy life to the fullest. There'll be new shops, cafes, restaurants and leisure spots like gyms and health centres—everything you need for your daily life right on your doorstep. Plus, families will be able to settle into new homes in a beautifully landscaped setting, complete with green spaces, ponds and tree-lined walkways that are perfect for relaxation and wellness.

The project will also improve local infrastructure, making it easier to get around. New roads, walking paths and cycle routes will connect the area, making it more accessible and convenient for all. Public transport links will be improved too, giving people more travel options and creating a better-connected community.

Whether you're a business looking for a new home, a local resident eager for new job opportunities, or someone seeking a vibrant place to live, Lancashire Central is designed to make life better for all.



Giving Lancashire businesses a single door to financial support, growth and skills

In Lancashire, we've made it easy for businesses to access everything they need—whether it's funding, growth advice, or skills development—all through one simple entry point.

Since 2013, Lancashire's Business Growth Hub has supported over 14,000 businesses, created 3,500 jobs and added £100 million to the local economy. Our Investment Academy equips businesses to secure equity investment, offering expert guidance. As Mark Gibbons from the Hub notes, "Our Academy provides the knowledge businesses need to succeed." DA Techs Ltd is just one company that's benefited from this support.

We also focus on developing future talent. The Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub works with 162 schools and 150 business volunteers to introduce students to careers in digital, green and cyber sectors. Programmes like the Young Apprenticeship Grant have awarded 140 grants to businesses to recruit young talent, while a pilot bursary scheme with the National Cyber Force prepares students for digital careers in defence.

Our Lancashire Skills Bootcamps helped nearly 900 people gain vital skills in 2023-24 and other dedicated programmes have improved numeracy skills for more than 9,000 residents. Success stories like Alexandra Birney from Nightsafe, who advanced into a leadership role

through our training, show the real impact of these programmes. As Nicola Roscoe, Operations Manager at Nightsafe, noted: "The Skills Bootcamp has allowed Alexandra to challenge herself and excel in her role."

You can find out more about our offer to businesses in Lancashire and to companies who are looking to have a base in our county at lancashire.gov.uk/business



A photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a colorful sari, hugging a young child from behind. The child is wearing a light blue shirt and brown shorts. They are in a kitchen, with a white wall and a stove visible in the background. The woman is smiling and looking down at the child. The text "Stronger communities" is overlaid in large white letters. Below the text is a decorative line with four right-pointing chevrons. The page number "30" is in the bottom left corner.

Stronger communities





We're proud of our county's villages, towns and cities and their rich cultural history. Our inspiring schools and universities, blossoming arts, sports and cultural scenes and our outstanding natural beauty make Lancashire a great place to create a home, raise a family and live your best life.

We are committed to celebrating and supporting our diverse communities and to building a strong sense of place we can all be proud of.

To make more of our potential, however, we want to get closer to the people we serve and listen to what communities say is important to them. The challenges we and the nation face mean we can't always do things in the same way we have done, and the county council won't be able to tackle every challenge on its own. Working with our communities to become safer and healthier, and protecting our environment, means we all need to do our bit and work together.



How we will make a difference

Our neighbourhoods are safe and resilient

Crime in Lancashire has been decreasing and is now at a lower rate than the national average. Nevertheless, it remains a major public concern and as a council there are several ways we can support local communities and improve how safe people feel. Key actions we will take alongside our partners include:

- Collaborating with police, community organisations and residents to tackle crime and build community cohesion.
- Addressing anti-social behaviour through prevention and offering more activities, learning opportunities and things to do for young people.
- Deploying specially-trained Public Transport Safety Officers at bus stations and on buses, working closely with partners in the transport sector and Lancashire Police.
- Supporting residents affected by violence, discrimination, exploitation and domestic abuse.
- Improving street lighting, maintaining public spaces and designing safer roads to reduce opportunities for crime and accidents.
- Promoting road safety and reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads.
- Working with other agencies so we are prepared for and resilient to threats to our lives and livelihoods, such as health emergencies, terrorism and major environmental incidents.
- Using our Trading Standards service to protect consumers from fraud, scams and illegal sales.
- Working with partners to support residents who are financially insecure.



Our Public Transport Safety Officers

We encourage local people to play their part in improving their communities

We are an open organisation that seeks to work with residents and involve them in what matters. Key actions we will take include:

- Strengthening the ways we engage with residents so they can influence decisions about how we deliver our services.
- Listening to people with direct experience of using council services so we can learn and improve.
- Making the most of our buildings, such as libraries, to bring communities together and deliver joined-up local services under one roof.

- Building a strong and long-lasting relationship with Lancashire's VCFSE sector.
- Continuing to support the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership, which provides one gateway into public service volunteering and opportunities for people to make a real difference in their communities.
- Focusing on the strengths and resources that a community already has, such as local skills, talents and resources, to create positive change.
- Investing directly in our communities with new crowdfunding offers to propel grassroots action.
- Working with our staff so they feel equipped to work alongside residents, listen to their views and find ways to build the resilience of the people we serve.
- Looking at what people want to do more for themselves and others, so we prevent, delay, or reduce reliance on council services.



Our Helmshore Mills Textile Museum

Residents and visitors enjoy our rich culture and heritage

Lancashire's rich culture and heritage provide a sense of place and make our county a great place to live, work and visit. We are proud to be the birthplace of the industrial revolution, home to iconic sporting institutions and a place of dynamic urban areas alongside beautiful countryside and coast. We want to continue to see our cultural and heritage sector thrive and the key actions we will take include:

- Providing high-quality libraries rooted in our communities and using these facilities to bring services and people together, including free internet access in all 64 libraries.
- Delivering our School Library and Heritage Learning Services which support award-winning curriculum-based Primary, Secondary, Further Education and Higher Education provision.
- Marketing our tourist attractions to encourage more people to visit Lancashire.
- Supporting Lancashire's wider tourism economy featuring 4,000 businesses and worth almost £5 billion a year.
- Curating our county's museums displaying collections and exhibitions illustrating Lancashire life including Clitheroe Castle Museum, Gawthorpe Hall, Helmshore Mills Textile Museum, Judges Lodgings, Lancaster Castle, Queen Street Mill Museum and Ribchester Roman Bath House.
- Managing our archive collection of millions of documents, photographs and maps dating from the 12th century to the present day.
- Engaging with arts, culture and sports groups across the county, supporting them with investment and assistance.
- Broadening access to cultural experiences, ensuring they promote the wellbeing of residents, support our volunteers and use digital approaches to engage new audiences.



Our Reuse 360 shop, Burnley



Greener fleet vehicles for our county

Our environment is protected for future generations

We want a cleaner and healthier county. We will support natural habitats that will help wildlife thrive and protect us from flooding and the impacts of climate change. This will support economic growth, health and prosperity. Key actions we will take include:

- Continuing to reduce carbon emissions across our organisation through smarter use of travel, technology, energy and buildings.
- Supporting households to transition to a lower carbon future.
- Helping businesses to seize the opportunities of a low carbon future. Lancashire is forecast to have more than 60,000 jobs by 2050 across low carbon infrastructure, retrofitting, car electrification, nuclear and onshore wind industries.
- Promoting walking, cycling and public transport as an alternative to the private car.
- Supporting the transition to ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) and electric vehicles (EVs).
- Remaining focused on reducing waste and considering a fresh approach to disposal arrangements from 2025, including generating energy from waste.
- Continuing to take action to improve air and water quality.
- Enhancing our natural environment by increasing biodiversity, improving access to natural spaces and helping to tackle climate change through tree planting and restoration of peatlands.
- Working to ensure our infrastructure, assets and services are resilient to the impacts of climate change, including managing flood risk and water resources.
- Rehoming donated furniture and household items from our recycling centres with families and people who really need them, through our free Reuse 360 Hub.



What success will look like

- Maintaining high levels of pride in communities.
- Strong levels of community cohesion.
- Low crime and anti-social behaviour.
- A thriving VCFSE sector.
- Increased footfall to our cultural and heritage attractions.
- Reduced carbon emissions from our estate and operations.
- Less waste and higher rates of reuse and recycling.
- Greater resilience to events such as flooding.
- Fewer people killed or seriously injured on our roads.

Working together

We will only build a better Lancashire by working together. The following sets out how the county council will play its part, but also how residents can play a role:

Our best

- Encouraging local people to play their part in improving their communities.
- Tackling anti-social behaviour.
- Taking joint action to keep our communities and roads safe.
- Investing in our culture and heritage for the benefit of residents and visitors.
- Protecting and enhancing our natural environment.
- Promoting our tourist offer and Lancashire's great quality of life.

Your best

- Considering volunteering in your community.
- Having your say on decisions and plans that affect your community when we engage and consult on our policies, projects and services.
- Taking road safety seriously and considering others when travelling.
- Finding more ways to reduce and recycle your waste, such as visiting our reuse shops.
- Considering more sustainable travel options.
- Exploring using energy efficiency schemes.
- Using our open green spaces.
- Thinking about shopping locally where possible.

Related plans

- Community Safety Agreement 2022-25
- Environment and Climate Strategy 2023-25
- Highways and Transport Strategy 2023-25
- Lancashire Libraries Strategy 2022-25
- Lancashire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2021-27
- Lancashire Museums Strategy 2022-25
- Lancashire Road Safety Strategy 2025-27
- Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2015-25
- Strategy for Libraries, Museums, Culture and Archives 2019-24





Delivering care for our carers

One of the most important things we can do as a local authority is to support people across Lancashire when they really need us, and our carers service does just that.

Thousands of people across Lancashire act as carers to friends and family. They provide care, for a few hours a day or round the clock, to a friend or relative who could not manage without their support. The care they give may be due to age, illness, disability, mental health problems or substance misuse. Carers' lives are often complex as they have other commitments as well as their caring role, such as work or school. Their caring role often impacts on their financial or educational opportunities, as well as their own health and wellbeing.

Commissioned by the county council, the carers service helps people to overcome these kinds of challenges by providing information, advice and guidance to carers, as well as supportive social activities such as coffee and chat events.

The service can help with planning for emergencies and also offers a help and chat line which is run by other carers who volunteer their time.

Les needed help to support his wife Linda when she fell seriously ill following a stroke. Les became Linda's full-time carer overnight and had to give up work.

After registering and completing a carers' assessment, the couple were offered a tailored package of vital support including advice on emergency planning in case Les was unable to care for Linda.

The service can offer regular check-ins, respite care and access to a network of fellow carers. The service provides practical help, such as arranging medical appointments and offering emotional support through counselling sessions. This helped Les and Linda to have a renewed sense of strength and resilience.

Les now volunteers for the service and being part of this community has allowed them both to share their experiences and learn from others facing similar challenges. The friendships they formed and the encouragement they received helped them to feel less isolated.

We provide a range of support to people who are carers in Lancashire. This includes a dedicated service for Lancashire's young carers and parents of children and young people with additional needs.

To find out more visit lancashire.gov.uk/carers



Crowdfunding for our county's future

Crowdfund Lancashire is an initiative that enables us to support grassroots culture and sports projects through community crowdfunding. Launched in November 2022, this scheme has successfully funded over 135 projects, significantly enhancing the local cultural and sports landscape.

Crowdfund Lancashire offers substantial funding opportunities, with grants of up to £15,000 available for community projects. Parish and town councils can receive up to £5,000, while residents and businesses can secure up to £1,500. The initiative is part of our £500,000 Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund, which pledges support to projects that reach 50 per cent of their funding target.

The scheme operates in partnership with Spacehive, the UK's leading civic crowdfunding platform. This collaboration empowers residents to create, fund and deliver project ideas that improve their local areas. The community's involvement is crucial, people can pledge a contribution from as low as £2, allowing everyone to get involved in projects that matter to them. Crowdfund Lancashire to date has had 94 per cent of projects reach their crowdfunding targets.

The first project to reach its funding goal was Pendle Stitches, a sewing initiative that achieved its target within three months. Another notable success is the Blue Flamingo Community Hub in Ashton-on-Ribble, which raised over £14,000 to support people with dementia and their carers through creative projects. Erin Singleton, the project's founder, said: "I was pleasantly surprised by the support I received from Crowdfund Lancashire in setting up the fundraising campaign for our group."

Blue Flamingo Community Hub, Ashton-on-Ribble

To date, Crowdfund Lancashire has garnered support from 7,687 backers, funding 168 projects with a total of £2,474,413 pledged. The scheme prioritises projects that improve access to culture and sport, contribute to our organisation's priorities and enable free or low-cost activities for public benefit.

Crowdfund Lancashire is a testament to the power of community collaboration, transforming ideas into reality.

Find out more at

lancashire.gov.uk/council/grants/crowdfund-lancashire



A close-up, side-profile shot of a man with short brown hair and a hearing aid in his left ear. He is wearing a blue and white striped t-shirt and looking down at a tablet computer he is holding with both hands. His facial expression is one of intense frustration or anger, with his mouth open as if shouting or crying. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting. A large white triangle is in the top right corner.

Thinking differently





Building a better Lancashire means taking every opportunity, every day, to improve how we do things. We will build on our strong record of financial management and embrace the chance to do more through new technology, a dynamic, united workforce, and helping people in the right way, at the right time.

Practically, this involves using data to target our resources, focusing on early intervention and prevention. It means building even better relationships with the people we serve and the communities where they live. Embracing change is about delivering the best for our residents: services that deliver the right help at the right time will be the most effective and cost efficient.

Meeting the challenges we have identified throughout this Plan will often require a response across different parts of the public, private, and voluntary sectors. We want to explore more joined-up services with these

partners, delivering against common goals, pooling budgets, and safely sharing information and data.



Our school library Book Bus

How we will make a difference

We deliver high-quality public services in an efficient way

The county council employs more than 13,000 people and spends over £1 billion a year in delivering vital services to our communities. We take this responsibility very seriously and will remain strong stewards of the public purse, taking a planned approach to delivering the best outcomes we can within our available resources. This involves:

- Strong financial management.
- Focusing our budget on our organisational priorities.
- Benchmarking our costs and performance against similar councils to identify areas for improvement.
- Reviewing our properties to ensure they support good services or serve as viable investments.
- Reviewing our spending with suppliers to ensure we get the best value for money.
- Acting on feedback from residents and staff to improve services.
- Remaining focused on delivering the best possible experience for residents when they contact us, so they find us accessible, responsive and trustworthy.
- Designing and commissioning services that maximise health and wellbeing benefits and reduce inequalities.
- Sharing our Wi-Fi connectivity with other Lancashire organisations so we can work more effectively across multiple sites.

We provide the right help at the right time

Based on our plans in 'Better lives for all' we will work with people and families early on to address the root causes of their needs, rather than just dealing with the symptoms. We want to build on the strengths of each person, working with families and the wider community so that people live more independent lives. When our help is needed, we want to make sure it is of the highest quality.

As an organisation, we can do a lot to realise this ambition. Key actions we will take include:

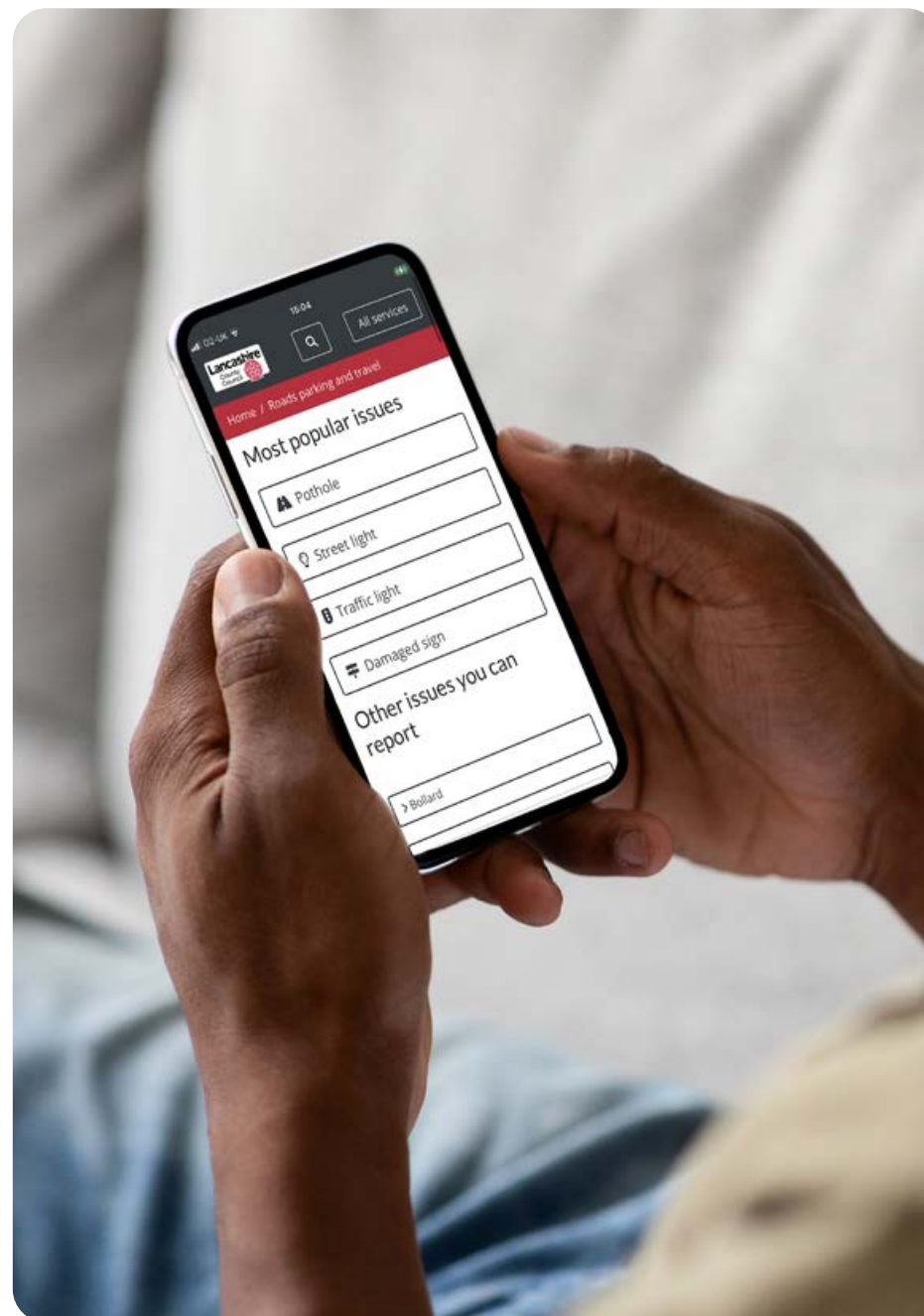
- Identifying need earlier through good data and good relationships with partners and communities.
- Investing in earlier intervention which has a strong evidence base and reflects leading practice.
- Providing excellent information and guidance so residents are aware of support in their community.
- Ensuring we build the confidence and capability of people to be more independent, requiring less support from us further down the line.
- Working collectively with partners so people don't experience fragmented responses and opportunities to help people at an early stage are not missed.
- Building on the strengths and aspirations of Lancashire's entrepreneurs who want to start, expand or scale up their business, providing the support they need to prosper.
- Organising our services around appropriate geographies, breaking down traditional services boundaries.

We embrace digital innovation to become more accessible and effective

We have an ambitious plan for digital innovation which touches on all aspects of the county council.

Key actions we will take include:

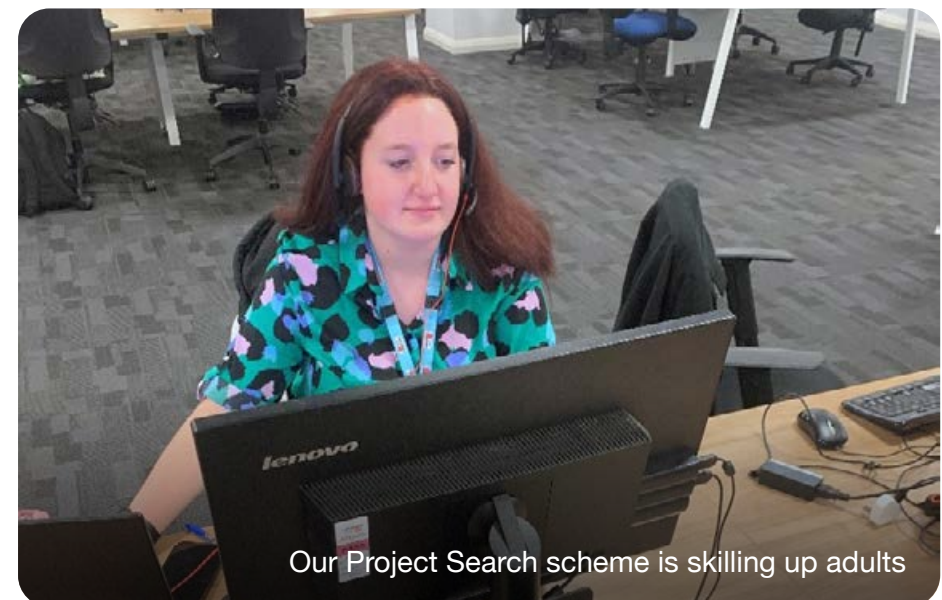
- Improving everyday life for residents by making services more accessible and user-friendly.
- Modernising the county council's website, making it easier to navigate and offering more opportunities to interact with us online on things like bus passes, blue badges and reporting highway faults.
- Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) where appropriate to help us become more effective and efficient, such as helping us automatically identify road defects.
- Deploying digital solutions to improve social care, including increasing self-service online assessments, using AI solutions to support social workers and deploying technology-enabled care to help residents remain independent.
- Adopting new technologies to improve traffic and travel, such as intelligent transport systems and bus smartcards.
- Tackling digital exclusion, ensuring that everyone in Lancashire can benefit from digital services and technology, including help for people to get online.
- Unlocking the data we hold across the organisation, creating new insights to improve services and plan for the future.



We develop the best council workforce, attracting and retaining talented people

We know that even with the best policies, systems and processes, we are unlikely to succeed without harnessing the energy and resources of our workforce. We want to equip our colleagues for the future with the right skills, tools and capacity to be their best. Key actions we will take include:

- Empowering our workforce to think innovatively, work across service boundaries and be pragmatic in delivering the best outcomes.
- Inspiring a culture of high performance and accountability.
- Creating new career pathways and opportunities so our colleagues can develop, feel they belong here and make positive contributions.
- Attracting the best talent to help lead our service delivery. This involves thinking about how we use our strong brand, values and employment offer to attract the best people.
- Operating as one organisation, working together to solve problems and achieve our ambitions.
- Enhancing the skills of our leaders at all levels of the organisation.
- Underpinning the development of our workforce with equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Maintaining staff wellbeing in challenging times with good management support and rapid access to specialist services if needed.





What success will look like

- Residents can address their own challenges, with help if needed.
- Our services are accessible and user-friendly for residents.
- We remain within our budget.
- Our costs and performance compare well with similar councils.
- We improve outcomes for residents and reduce costs through early intervention and prevention.
- Strong levels of employee engagement and staff wellbeing.

Working together

We will only build a better Lancashire by working together. The following sets out how the county council will play its part, but also how residents can play a role:

Our best

- Remaining strong stewards of public money and constantly driving efficiencies.
- Supporting with the right services at the right time, focusing on prevention and early intervention and what people want to achieve for themselves.
- Using technology to unlock efficiencies, helping us become more accessible, insight-led and productive.
- Supporting our workforce to be their best and leading a Lancashire skills revolution to unleash talent across the county.

Your best

- Getting online if you can and accessing our services digitally.
- Sharing your feedback with us, whether it's praise or suggestions for improvement, while always treating our staff with kindness and respect.
- Considering a career in the council or with one of our partners, developing your career and making a difference.

Related plans

- Lancashire County Council's People Strategy 2023-28
- Lancashire County Council Productivity Plan 2024
- Lancashire Digital Strategy 2025-29
- Leading Lancashire Framework 2024
- Lancashire Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-27





Empowering independent living in Lancashire

‘Living Better Lives in Lancashire’ is our vision for adult social care. It’s an approach that focuses on what people can do, rather than what they can’t and supports them to live independently in a place they call their home. This is a tailored and measured approach where we ensure wherever possible that the people we support are involved in each decision about their care.

First, we encourage people to use community resources to stay well. If further support is needed, we provide short-term care to help people regain their life skills and maintain their independence.

When appropriate, we offer the best long-term care solutions for those who need more formal support.

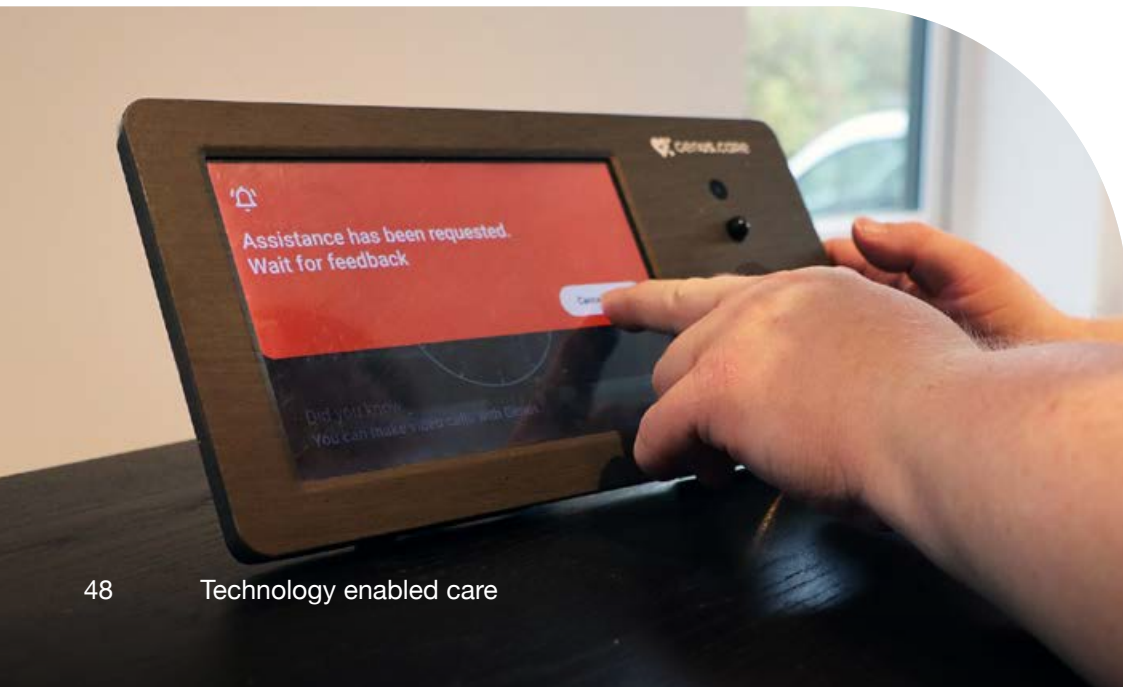
Alongside more traditional services such as care homes, these long-term solutions now also include high-tech supported living schemes. One example of these is the new high-tech supported living accommodation at Mornington Road in Preston.

These modern apartments are designed to help adults with learning difficulties and disabilities to live as independently as possible. Each flat is equipped with cutting-edge technology to make daily living easier and more secure. Multi-sensors monitor motion, presence and sound levels and alert staff if a resident needs assistance. The high-tech features also include touch screens and can remotely control doors, windows, blinds, lighting, heating and temperature, giving residents more independence and comfort.

Each resident has their own front door, access to a garden and a communal lounge. Tailored support packages ensure that each person’s needs are met, promoting a sense of belonging and community.

We have also opened similar facilities in Lancaster, South Ribble and Chorley.

To learn more about our high-tech supported living flats, visit lancashire.gov.uk/socialcare



Innovative and resilient road maintenance

As the highway authority for the county, we are responsible for more than 4,300 miles of roads. They're vital to the daily life of every resident, worker and business in the county. But keeping them in good condition is a real challenge - wear and tear from heavy vehicles, around 39,000 sets of work by utility companies every year and an increasingly wet climate all has a major impact.

As well as keeping our roads safe and well maintained, we are also committed to reducing our carbon footprint, as part of our ongoing priorities, which include becoming a greener county. To make improvements we have been testing some innovative methods to manage the growing number of pothole repairs across the county.

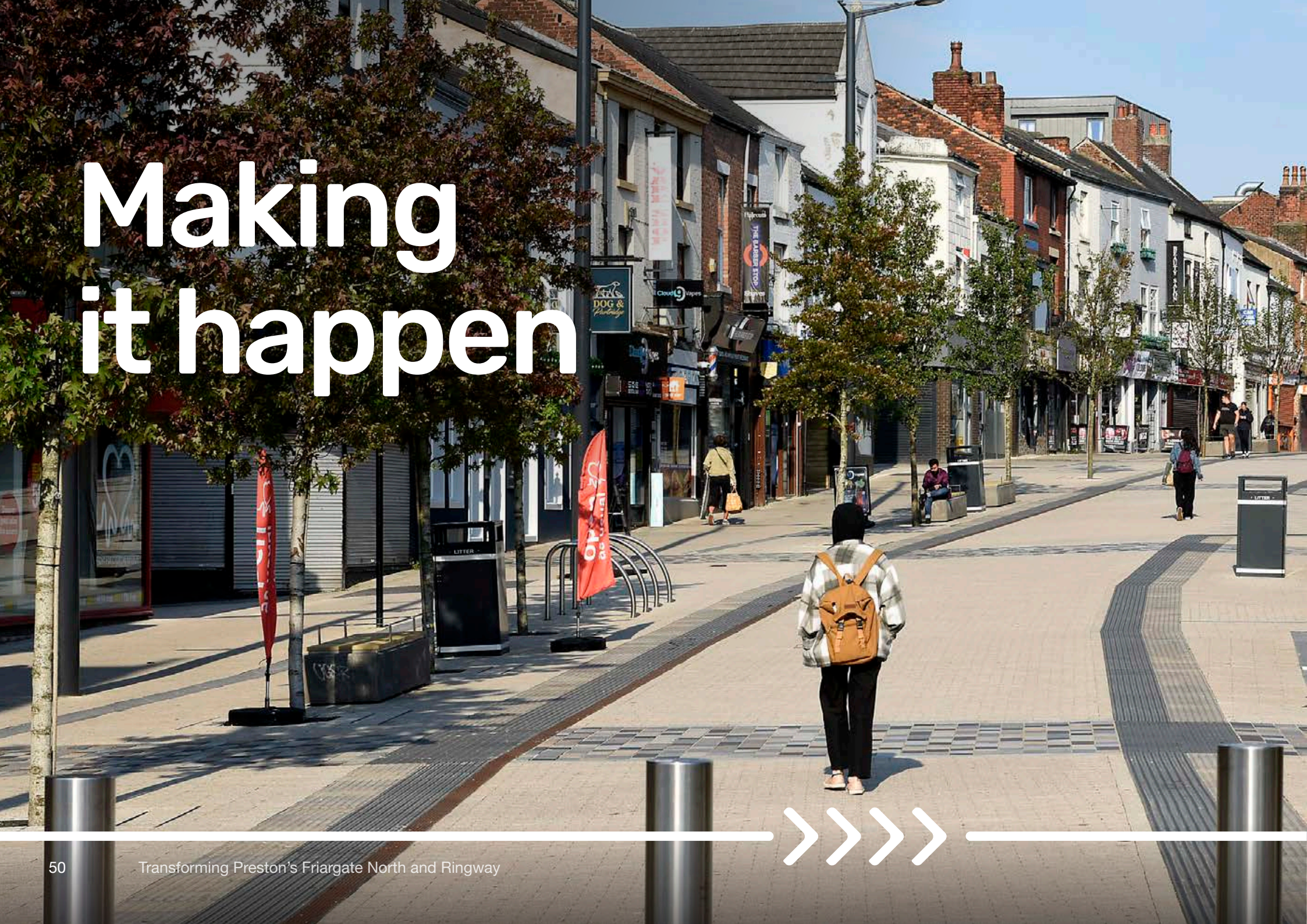
One of our key new methods involves using recycled tyres, with the warm rubber-based material used as part of the process to waterproof the area surrounding the filled-in hole, removing the risk of water seeping beneath the surface and causing it to open again – ensuring a longer-lasting fix.

Another new method combines recycled road surface materials with a new surface together with a partly plant-based 'glue' that uses a biogenic component. This removes carbon from the atmosphere and stores the carbon as it grows, before being refined and blended into bitumen.

By thinking differently and focusing on continually improving the way we work, we were able to complete over 83,500 pothole repairs over the first seven months of 2024 - a 56 per cent increase on the same period last year.

Find out more about how we maintain your roads at lancashire.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-travel





Making it happen



We are determined that the ambitions and priorities within this plan translate into action and have a real impact. The following describes what we are putting in place to ensure we are accountable and make our plan a reality.

Engaging on our ambition

We will continue to engage on our vision and priorities with our residents, businesses, colleagues and partners. This ongoing engagement will provide clarity on what we want to achieve, how we are doing and how people can get involved to make further progress.

Ensuring everything we do aligns to this plan

Future decisions, strategies and operational plans will now align to the framework set out in this plan. This will ensure we have coherence and are pulling in the same direction. One key learning point from the last few years is that we can't plan for everything, but we will remain focused on the vision, ethos and goals of this plan. We will also systematically review our progress against the actions in these plans, linking our strategic ambitions all the way through to individual employee objectives.

Working in partnership

Much of what we do is delivered alongside other organisations in the public, private and voluntary sector. We will strengthen this collaboration and align our priorities and plans with our partners wherever possible, so that we're working together towards our common goals.

Robust performance management

We will set key performance indicators and targets that link to our priorities, which will help us track progress over the next five years. These will be considered by our Cabinet on a quarterly basis in a transparent and accountable way. We will publish this information in an accessible format.

Where we are falling short of our ambitions, we will set out actions to bring things back on track. We will also work with services at an operational level to ensure they are measuring and managing performance in line with our strategic goals. As well as measuring our progress against our targets, we will also consider how we compare to other councils and organisations and strive to deliver the best performance at an affordable cost.

Tracking the impact of this plan across the county

As well as tracking the performance of the organisation, we will continue to understand the wellbeing of our communities through regular engagement, understanding their experience and by considering a range of data. This data includes different social, economic and environmental outcomes that we want to track. We will publish this information in an accessible and interactive way.



The background is a photograph of a beach at sunset. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with soft clouds. The ocean is calm, reflecting the light from the sky. A white graphic frame is overlaid on the image, consisting of a horizontal line at the top, a vertical line on the left, and a horizontal line at the bottom, all with rounded corners. In the top right corner, there are four white chevron arrows pointing to the right.

Context

How the plan was developed

The plan was developed by:

- Understanding the views of around 1,000 Lancashire residents on our proposed priorities.
- Asking our partners and colleagues for their views on our priorities.
- Engaging with our elected county councillors on their aspirations for Lancashire.
- Considering a wide range of previous feedback on related plans from the public and partners.
- Analysing data that helps us understand the needs of our communities.
- Considering leading practice from other organisations.

This is the most important strategic plan within the county council and informs other key plans such as the Medium term Financial Strategy, the People Strategy, our Growth Plan, our Children and Young People's Plan and our vision for adult social care, *Living Better Lives in Lancashire*.



You said... We listened

Our proposed ambitions and priorities received broad support from all the audiences we engaged with before we developed this Plan.

Listening to our residents

Lancashire County Council commissioned a YouGov poll which ran in September and October 2024, engaging 1,024 Lancashire residents. The survey was designed to represent the county's diverse population, gathering a wide range of views.

The results highlighted 'Better lives for all' as the top ambition for 44 per cent of respondents. Key priorities included giving each child the best start in life and supporting everyone to lead a healthy life. This plan directly addresses these priorities through initiatives like our Family Hubs, which join up vital services in accessible community locations. It also highlights our commitment to high-quality public health and social care services, addressing a broad range of health and care needs across Lancashire.

The survey also revealed strong support for improving transport infrastructure, with 89 per cent of respondents rating it as important. The plan addresses this priority through a series of actions detailed under the 'places are better connected' priority. Similarly, 'making communities safer' was critical, with 90 per cent of respondents expressing its importance. Although crime in Lancashire is falling, our plan reflects these priorities through a continued focus on preventing anti-social behaviour and providing young people with positive outlets such as activities, learning opportunities and community engagement.

Listening to our partners

We also conducted a survey of external partner organisations and stakeholders, including significant local employers, public sector organisations, district councils and local members of parliament. Overall, each of the four ambitions and their aspects were considered important by partners, with the majority viewing all areas as very or somewhat important to their organisation. 'Better lives for all' was seen as the most critical, with 78 per cent emphasising the importance of giving each child the best start in life. Additionally, 70 per cent highlighted the need for improved transport infrastructure and job skills support. 'Making communities safer' was also a top concern. Under 'Thinking differently', 75 per cent valued providing services to meet people's needs.

Beyond these recent surveys, we reviewed findings from various consultations conducted by the council over recent years. This research revealed common themes, including concerns about child safety, education, skills development and the need to support vulnerable families in areas like anti-social behaviour, road safety and domestic abuse. Residents consistently advocated for enhanced transport infrastructure and lifelong learning opportunities. The findings also underscored the importance of partnerships in delivering effective public services and highlighted the role of digital tools in improving service access. Our plan integrates these insights through targeted actions to make our services efficient, responsive and attuned to our residents' needs.

Listening to our councillors

We also offered briefings to elected members on the emerging plan, including a briefing for councillors from all parties represented at the county council. Key points were raised around the importance of partnership and community engagement, the role of councillors in policy development and the role of the county council in bringing Lancashire stakeholders together to make things happen.

As further strategies and plans are developed from this document we will continue to engage further with our residents and partners.

Listening to our colleagues

We also surveyed our employees and feedback revealed a similar preference for 'Better lives for all.' The goals of helping children flourish, promoting health for all and supporting residents to live independently and meaningfully were particularly valued. 'Stronger communities' and 'Thinking differently' emerged as additional key themes, with an emphasis on creating safe, sustainable communities, protecting the environment and building a skilled and committed workforce. Our plan addresses these insights by fostering new career pathways and opportunities, helping our employees feel a sense of belonging and contribution.

Building on our strengths, tackling our challenges

The plan reflects where we are as a county and gives a view of what our future is likely to hold. We have many strengths to build on but are also aware of our challenges.

Building on our strengths

We're known for our strong and supportive communities and how we treat each other. Lancashire is home to approximately 10,800 voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) groups.

This community spirit will help us seize opportunities to deliver truly local, connected services to work more closely with the people we serve and to address our challenges.

We also have a record of public service innovation and want to focus on getting people the right help at the right time so we can be both effective and efficient. That means investing in things like community health programmes, new models of children's and adult's social care and innovative ways of managing highways. Embracing digital innovation, including the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI), will also help us to enhance the accessibility and efficiency of our services.

With the second largest economy in the North West of England, our county's economic strength is further supported by new initiatives like Lancashire Central and the National Cyber

Force in Samlesbury. Both are expected to generate thousands of new jobs and attract significant inward investment. Lancashire's manufacturing sector contributes significantly more than the national average in terms of Gross Value Added and is a real source of economic strength. Improved transport and digital infrastructure will also make Lancashire more attractive to both residents and businesses.

The county's 2024 Devolution Deal and the establishment of a Combined County Authority (with Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen councils) bring transformative potential, offering greater local control over funding and decision-making to better meet residents' needs.

All of this can happen in a county known for its **stunning landscapes, affordability and overall quality of life**. By nurturing our culture of innovation, leveraging the latest technology and empowering local leadership and communities, Lancashire can greet the future with creativity and resilience.





Tackling our challenges

Health inequalities remain a pressing issue, with **significant disparities in life expectancy** and ill-health across neighbourhoods.

Lancashire's ageing population – with nearly 25 per cent of residents projected to be aged over 65 by 2030 – is a great success story but also comes with the growing complexity of people's needs that are being met by carers and local services. Meanwhile, the decreasing number of working-age people adds further strain on our resources.

The proportion of **Lancashire's school children who have special educational needs has been steadily increasing** over recent years, and now stands at 15.5 per cent. Furthermore, in 2024, 1,507 (5.3 per cent) of our 16 and 17-year-olds were **not in education, employment or training**.

The region's economic recovery has lagged behind the national average, compounded by a range of factors, including **persistent skill gaps** in our digital, technology and advanced manufacturing sectors, and a **lack of private investment** in innovation. In June 2024, 158,000 working-age residents (21.8 per cent of the working-age population) were economically inactive.

Access to opportunities and support can vary between and within Lancashire's districts, leading to some income disparities and imbalances in education and employment.

Poor transport connectivity between the east and west of the county – and to neighbouring regions – limits access to job opportunities and challenges our ability to compete economically. For instance, more than half of Lancashire's population lives in the central east-west corridor, yet poor connectivity means there are four distinct north-south economic areas, hindering regional integration and economic growth.

While crime is declining, there are still **concerns around anti-social behaviour**. We need to work collaboratively to help those affected by exploitation and domestic abuse so they can access the right support when they need it.

We need to step up our efforts to **protect our environment** by reducing carbon emissions, improving air and water quality and enhancing natural habitats to support biodiversity and manage flood risks. Lancashire's carbon dioxide emissions totalled 6.5 million tonnes in 2022. This is equivalent to 5.2 tonnes per person and higher than the UK average of 4.5 tonnes.

Finally, inflation and **rising demand for services** continue to stretch public sector budgets, which means that delivering efficient, responsive services delivery will be vital to our success.

Glossary

Advanced manufacturing sectors: Industries using innovative technologies and processes

Artificial intelligence: The simulation of human intelligence in machines, programmed to think, learn, and solve problems

Biogenic: Something that is produced or brought about by living organisms

Bitumen: A substance we commonly used to surface our roads

Care Quality Commission: The Independent regulator of health and social care services in England

Children Missing Education: School aged children who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise

Combined County Authority: A legal body that enables councils to work together and take important collective decisions across council boundaries

Corporate parents: Organisations with special responsibilities to care for children and young people when needed to keep them safe and well

Daytime support: Services that provide social activities and care during the day for people who need assistance

Devolution Deal: An agreement between central government and local authorities to transfer specific powers and funding to local areas

Digital infrastructure: Physical hardware and software technologies that support digital services and operations

Digital Skills Partnership: An initiative that bring public, private, and third-sector organisations together to improve digital skills for people and businesses

East Lancashire Levelling Up Fund: A government fund aimed at improving everyday life for East Lancashire's residents by enhancing local travel options, providing easier access to jobs and services, and supporting local economies

Elective Home Education: When parents choose to educate their children at home rather than enrolling them in a traditional school setting

Enterprise Zones: Designated areas driving local economic growth by unlocking key development sites, consolidating infrastructure, attracting businesses, and creating jobs

Escalate Tool: An online tool which helps people find support to get them back into work

Extra Care: Housing that combines accommodation with care and support services

Family Hubs: Local centres providing integrated services and support for families with children and young people

Grade A office: Top-tier office space in prime business locations, featuring high-quality design, modern amenities, and advanced infrastructure

Gross Value Added: An economic productivity term describing the contribution to an economy by a producer, sector, or region

Inclusion hubs: Safe and welcoming spaces that provide support and activities for people with disabilities or those facing social exclusion

Institute of Technology: A higher education provider specialising in engineering, technology, applied science, and natural sciences

Intelligent Transport System: An application that uses advanced technologies to improve transportation efficiency, safety, and sustainability

Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB): An organisation responsible for planning and overseeing NHS services in Lancashire and South Cumbria

Lancashire's investment pipeline: Major developments and infrastructure projects planned across the county

Low-carbon technology: Technologies that help to reduce or remove levels of carbon/CO2 emissions

National Cyber Force: A partnership between defence and intelligence agencies, conducting cyber operations to protect the UK from threats

New Hospitals Programme: A UK initiative to build 40 new hospitals by 2030

Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund: An initiative that provides finance to small and medium-sized enterprises in the North of England

Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal: An initiative to boost local economic growth by improving transport infrastructure, building homes, and creating jobs in the region

Public Rights of Way: Legally designated paths that allow the public to walk, ride, cycle, or drive over private land

Reuse 360 Hub: A project that takes donated reusable furniture and household items and gives them to families and local people who need them

Reuse shops: Shops selling quality pre-loved household items at prices people can afford

SEND: A term to describe people who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Social Value: The positive impact an organisation has on people, communities, and the environment beyond just financial benefits

Supported Living: A housing option where, people who need it, have access to support or care services that help them to live as independently as possible

Talkzone services: A talking service that offers anonymous support for children and young people across Lancashire

Trading Standards service: A function of local authorities to enforce consumer protection legislation

Technology Enabled Care: Technology and supporting services that help people to stay independent or get help in an emergency

T Levels: A 2-year course that combines classroom learning with an industry placement

Think Family approach: A collaborative way of working where practitioners from various services work together to support the whole family, rather than solely focusing on the child or young person

UK PLC: An informal term given for the collective performance of the United Kingdom's economy as a whole

VCFSE: Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise sector. Social Enterprises are businesses that work to tackle social problems, improve communities, people's life chances, or the environment



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We appreciate your commitment to working together towards building a better Lancashire.

You can find all our current strategic documents at
lancashire.gov.uk/council/strategies-policies-plans

Accessible versions of this plan, including translations, Braille versions, and other formats, are available upon request. Please contact councilplan@lancashire.gov.uk to make your request.



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