

# Our Community, Our Future

A Social Integration Strategy for Blackburn with Darwen

Version 1, December 2018



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## Our Vision

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**Our vision for the borough is for a strong, cohesive and prosperous community, where everyone is treated fairly, where people's faith and cultures are understood and respected.**

**To be a place where diversity is valued and embraced because of how it enriches our community, where people connect and form meaningful relationships and friendships that span every characteristic of society.**



*We want people in Blackburn with Darwen to get along well with one another, to see the positives of the diverse mix within our local community, to connect with each other and to value everyone's contributions.*



## Background to the Integration Area Programme

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Blackburn with Darwen has been selected by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as one of five national Integration Areas to deliver an ambitious programme of work as part of its Integrated Communities Strategy.

The Integrated Communities Strategy sets out government's ambition to build strong, integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

More information about MHCLG's Integrated Communities Strategy and the Integration Areas Programme can be found in the [Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper](#).



## Foreword by the Government Minister for Faith, Lord Bourne

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The government published the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper in March this year. It set out our ambition to build strong integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

We want to see communities where what we have in common - and the strength we get from different faiths, beliefs and opinions - is celebrated, underpinned by a shared set of British values that champion respect and tolerance, freedom and equality of opportunity - bridging beliefs and backgrounds.

Britain is a great place to live. We want everyone to take advantage of the opportunities this country offers – especially women and girls who are too often denied these chances – while recognising and valuing their relationship with, and responsibility to, other groups and to our wider society.

We know that the challenges to integration vary throughout the country. The government's Integration Areas Programme focuses local and national resource on a common goal, to deliver integrated communities and to understand better and tackle the challenges specific to a place. Each area will take tailored actions to address the challenges specific to their place and capture the impacts of this work. This approach will help us to learn what works and how it could be applied in other places – ultimately helping us to improve integration in other areas.

We were delighted that Blackburn with Darwen agreed to participate in this programme. The local authority and its partners in the area have a clear understanding of the challenges they face and the strengths on which they can build, and have shown their desire to be bold and innovative to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

We welcome the publication of Blackburn with Darwen's Local Integration Strategy which is the result of the constructive consultation and engagement undertaken by the new Local Integration Partnership. We look forward to learning from the delivery of its ambitious long term vision for the communities of Blackburn with Darwen which sits at the heart of this strategy.



Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth  
Minister for Faith

## Message from the Chair and Vice Chair of the Blackburn with Darwen Local Integration Partnership

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Integration is the extent to which people from all backgrounds can get on together and have respect for one another.

Blackburn with Darwen has been nationally recognised for its work in this area over many years – through the pioneering Belonging campaign, the 100 Voices and the Neighbourhood Voices initiatives, to name just a few. Integration is important for any place which is diverse along lines of age, ethnicity, social background, gender, sexual orientation, religion and many other characteristics. We believe that encouraging social integration strengthens communities and workplaces, improves health outcomes, reduces social isolation and promotes better access to opportunities for jobseekers.

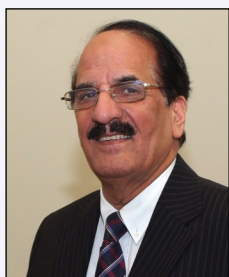
We recognise that there is physical segregation of some groups in Blackburn with Darwen purely based on where they live. To a greater extent this is historical. We cannot turn back the clock or socially engineer neighbourhoods. We can however facilitate, influence and develop opportunities to respect difference and to promote an environment in which our communities have access to the same opportunities, life chances and choice.

We want to see people from all backgrounds feel part of the borough by playing a greater part in civic life, and in accessing leisure, culture and sport opportunities. We want our residents to have shared values and aspirations - to want for others what they would want for themselves and their families.

The journey through early years to university, work and beyond is important. Schools and colleges are well placed to provide a way for people to interact with others from different communities to build lasting relationships. They play an important role in knowing what is going on in the communities they serve, as well as in improving skills, aspirations and access to opportunities, which are vital in promoting social integration.

Blackburn with Darwen has a strong partnership ethos that has served us well. Working with partners is an important part of our social integration programme, and vital to its success. Engagement and co-production with partners will be used to inform our approach and to deliver our strategy's outcomes collaboratively.

We also aim to empower our communities to work together for our future. We encourage everyone in Blackburn with Darwen to get involved and to recognise social integration as their business.



Councillor Mohammed Khan OBE  
Chair of the Local Integration Partnership

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M Khan'.



Chris Seddon  
Vice Chair of the Local Integration Partnership

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Christine J Seddon'.

## Our Executive Summary

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MHCLG’s Integration Areas Programme aims to help build integrated communities, to better understand and tackle the challenges specific to a place, building on local strengths and also on what’s been done well elsewhere. Blackburn with Darwen is one of five places selected to be the first national Integration Areas to take part in the programme.

The borough is made up of people from different backgrounds, and this brings variety and character to Blackburn with Darwen. We are proud to be multicultural, with over 70 languages spoken here. The area has seen considerable numbers of people coming to live and work here in the last 60 years, mostly from India and Pakistan, and more recently from Europe. The borough has not experienced the tensions that other areas of the country have experienced. However, we recognise that there are people of different ethnicities and religions living in segregated areas of the borough, and this can hinder building positive relationships within our community. This segregation (groups of people existing separately and not mixing) is reflected in some schools and sections of our local economy.



But the borough already has a strong track record of addressing social integration to bring people together. In fact, it is a theme woven through every aspect of the Council’s work. It is these types of initiatives that we aim to build on, working in partnership with others. Through our connections with schools, businesses, a wide range of service providers, and voluntary and community organisations, we will create a shared and comprehensive approach to tackling Blackburn with Darwen’s social integration challenges.

We have set up a Local Integration Partnership (LIP) that brings together representatives of these partners. The LIP will be responsible for planning and delivering our Social Integration Programme. The LIP is chaired by Councillor Mohammed Khan, Leader of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, and the Vice Chair is Chris Seddon, who is also Chair of YMCA Blackburn.



Membership of our LIP includes a broad range of local partners, including the Council, voluntary and community sector, representatives from the community, and a representative of MHCLG. Our partners in the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) and Sport England, who are running their own programmes that complement Blackburn with Darwen’s Social Integration strategy, are also members of the LIP.

Our strategy is strong because we have been able to draw on the knowledge and experience of LIP members, many of whom have a robust track record in supporting social integration across the borough.

As we look towards delivering the best outcomes for residents of Blackburn with Darwen, we will also explore options to work with local and national service providers who can bring their own special knowledge and best practice to strengthen our programme further.

## A Summary of our Priorities

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Our strategy for achieving Blackburn with Darwen's vision is based on the delivery of **four priorities** which were identified through close working and consultation with LIP members and a wide range of local stakeholders.

1. To increase economic prosperity for all the borough's communities as an essential prerequisite for social integration
2. To strengthen relationships between the borough's diverse communities
3. To build connections and strengthen relationships between young people who live in the borough's diverse communities
4. To connect the borough's disadvantaged communities to shared spaces – linking people and neighbourhoods to zones of employment, physical assets, community shared spaces and social action.

**More detail on these priorities, including what we hope to achieve through projects relating to each, is available on pages 21 to 26 and in Appendix 1.**





## Background on our Borough

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The borough of Blackburn with Darwen has **industry, inventiveness, skill and hard work** woven through its history, and these qualities are also shaping its future. Blackburn and Darwen were some of the first industrialised towns in the world. Now, with one of the **youngest populations in Europe**, Blackburn with Darwen is bursting with potential that will bring prosperity to the place and its people.

This is a place with creating and making in its DNA. James Hargreaves, who lived in the area, invented the Spinning Jenny, which was a major development in the industrialisation of weaving. It was an early example of the innovation and enterprise that has been a feature of the place ever since, leading some to describe Blackburn as the original **‘Northern Powerhouse’**.

From the mid 18th century to the early 20th century, Blackburn evolved from a small market town into **“the weaving capital of the world”**, and its population increased from 5,000 to over 130,000.

Darwen is a characterful market town to the south of Blackburn that was shaped by textiles, epitomised by **India Mill** which, when it was built in 1867, had the tallest chimney in England at 279 feet – and the most expensive too.

The structural challenges we see today have been in the making for many years and **reflect migration and change fuelled by the economy**. Change has also been influenced by national policies that may have been developed for a broader context, but have had a differential impact in this borough e.g. housing and education policy.

Blackburn with Darwen was formed as settlements along the River Blakewater and River Darwen in the lead up to the industrial age and grew significantly with the **rise of the cotton industry**. Over many years the borough saw people moving to the area from other countries, migration that was encouraged and needed to support the growth of industries in several waves. In the late 19th century, **labour was needed to support significant growth in infrastructure**. In Victorian Britain, the borough was growing rapidly and the construction of mills, railways and canals was so labour intensive that it required Irish and Scottish communities to come to the borough to work within those industries. Similarly, Edwardian Britain saw the **growth of housebuilding**. In this borough many of the pre-1919 terraced houses were built by Irish immigrants who were the mainstay of the construction industry. The loss of working age population through two World Wars meant that there was once again a **labour shortage in the 1960s**. It was during this decade and through to the late 1970s that the majority of the South Asian migration to the borough took place. Working in the mills, manufacturing and transport, they met a labour shortage but also started to settle, initially as single males and later bringing their families to join them.



## Background on our Borough

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Housing was a necessity and it was no coincidence that many of the houses the Asian migrants rented or bought were from working class Irish and Scottish communities. Arguably **segregation and settlement of communities has been a longstanding feature** but invisible previously due to language, race, cultural and religious traits being similar in Irish and Scottish communities. As these communities became more prosperous, they integrated and moved into more affluent areas. As a feature of social mobility these communities are seen as fully integrated.

By comparison the picture we see today highlights those traits that are different (i.e. language, race, religion and cultural differences). Blackburn with Darwen is **proud to be multicultural**, with **over 70 languages spoken** here. The South Asian population, predominantly Indian and Pakistani, settled in areas and then started to build their community support around them to meet their basic needs of food, religious worship and community. Over time, and as the population grew, there became **an increasing demand for housing** in those original settlements. This housing demand fuelled house prices and this in turn encouraged white families native to the area to sell and move into better quality housing within predominantly white neighbourhoods. The South Asian families did not feel safe moving into predominantly white areas, plus there were also barriers in being able to purchase or rent properties.

Today the borough's South Asian communities have **better social mobility and higher aspirations**. This has led to them choosing to move into executive suburban housing estates. As Asian families move into these established white communities, we have seen a trend of white families selling their homes and moving out. These characteristics need to be better understood. We are also building significant new aspirational housing; this will become a barometer for the borough to monitor progression.

The bigger underlying housing challenge remains **social mobility and deprivation**. Ex-council estates and low value, poor quality private sector housing still define settlement of white families native to the area and South Asian families. This cannot be resolved or socially engineered and would need to be a **long term strategy built on communities growing together**.

The same patterns can be observed in terms of education and employment. In terms of schools the challenge we face is one of parental choice, education policy, faith schools and independent schools. While catchment areas and feeder schools play a part, the bigger challenge is parental choice. The level of **segregation in schools** has accelerated over time and is in quite stark contrast today. The borough has seen a **significant improvement in school performance**. This does not however influence choice of school where the white indigenous community is in the minority. Parents seem to want to send their children to schools based on ethnic make-up. The borough also sees a parental desire to send children out of the borough rather than to a perfectly good school within their neighbourhood.



The 2017 Green Hills housing development has brought contemporary living spaces to families

## Background on our Borough

In the 1980s and 1990s, as the **South Asian community became more prosperous and socially mobile**, they had aspirations to send their children to the best schools. Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School was the preferred choice. By comparison today, the leading schools locally, and indeed nationally, are Muslim faith schools, namely Tauheedul Islam Girls' High School and Tauheedul Islam Boys' High School, both in Blackburn. There is not the same desire from the white community to aspire to sending their children to one of the highest performing schools in the borough. These are amongst the significant **structural and attitudinal challenges** that have to be understood to be able to respond with policies and programmes that will help create better balance.

In terms of the economy, during the 1960s and 1970s there was **mass manufacturing employment** and this made for **a better environment within which there was good social mixing**. The decline of major manufacturing has resulted in under-representation of the South Asian communities in mainstream employment. This is more visible in the private sector where the ownership has a greater influence on the ethnicity of employees. Through the Hive Business Group, this has started to change, but it still remains a feature and provides an opportunity to do more.

Meaningful social mixing is also an opportunity at every age. For children and young people particularly, **sport and education can provide a good foundation for lasting friendships**. As our communities grow into adulthood, we feel housing, leisure, sport, food, higher education, employment, and civic and community participation have to be the means through which we can promote a **shared sense of belonging** to the borough of Blackburn with Darwen.

On many levels the borough has been extremely robust in avoiding incidents of tension between different sections of the community that other areas of the country have experienced. However, we recognise that there is a level of **geographical segregation based on ethnicity and religion that can work against social integration**, and this is reflected in school populations and sections of the local economy.

Levels of community tensions have been affected, with some groups campaigning against migration and integration. The English Defence League (EDL) has held a significant presence in the borough for several years including and amongst some pockets of settled communities. The EDL have held large public demonstrations in the borough and despite the often better-attended counter-demonstrations, this has **raised concerns and fears among the BME communities**.

Despite this, the diversity that exists within Blackburn with Darwen has had a positive effect on the borough, with successful businesses and a diversity of food and fashion retailers being established here. For example, **Whalley Range is a vibrant quarter showcasing the best of the sub-continent**, with house prices rising on the hillside. This popular and historic part of Blackburn sees visitors from all over the UK, who come to sample this unique 'gateway to Asia'. There is a **thriving food and drink scene**, with many authentic restaurants, cafés and food shops, and fashion and fabric stores that are nationally renowned.



Nationally renowned fashion and fabric stores in Whalley Range attract visitors from across the UK

## Background on our Borough

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We want to take **every opportunity to celebrate all cultures** and, where possible, for those cultures to come together. We have an ambitious events programme, which includes activities in town centres and open spaces, as well as in different parts of our borough so people can move around the towns and experience the **thriving social economy**. Such events include everything from family fun days to sports and food festivals.

Events and entertainment are very much part of the local scene. Both towns have a **developing night time economy with busy pubs, restaurants and nightclubs**. The borough has placed focus on using events to animate the town centre with considerable success. For example, Countryside Comes to Town is particularly appropriate for a place with green and attractive surroundings, and the Heritage Open Days have developed into Heritage Festivals, with lots of events celebrating local history, including the multicultural aspects of that history.

**Town centre living** is an emerging area for the borough, and we recognise this as an **opportunity to develop a greater ethnic and cultural mix**, which is not as prevalent within the suburbs. Our town centres have seen **multi-million pound regeneration** in recent years which has provided a new bus station and transformed public areas with quality open space, seating, signage and sculptures. These spaces have been designed to encourage people to linger longer and is perfect for events where people can come together to use the town centre for activities other than shopping.

## Our Track Record on Integration

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council already has a long and strong track record in work that supports social integration, much of which has been self-funded. Examples of good practice include:

- **The Belonging Campaign** emphasised values of citizenship, pride in the borough and positive images of different heritage groups through an extensive campaign using ordinary – and some extraordinary – citizens' stories. The high profile campaign was accompanied by a charter signed by members of the Local Strategic Partnership and people from different backgrounds and areas.
- **The Meet Your Neighbours project** was built on the principle of fostering links between young people from different faith and cultural backgrounds. It provided an environment in which young people could debate views around culture, race and religion.
- **The 100 Voices initiative** provided opportunities for positive debate between residents around common issues of concern. These were followed by The Neighbourhood Voices events, encouraging residents from different backgrounds to attend events in their neighbourhoods and identify actions to help bring about local improvements.
- **The People and Communities Forum** supported volunteering, civic participation, equality, diversity and community cohesion.
- **The Good Relations Programme** invested in community skills development, leadership and capacity building, and conflict resolution.
- **Youth 4 Unity** was a residential course that brought together young people from different neighbourhoods across the borough.
- **Living Libraries** ran a series of events supporting the breaking down of barriers through sharing individuals' life stories, supported by Unison.
- **The Your Call Campaign** is an example of current delivery and is now in its seventh year. The campaign brings communities together and provides opportunities to make a real difference through volunteering and social action. Key achievements include the Good Neighbour Awards, Just Good Friends, Your Call community clean-ups and volunteering initiatives.



## Our Track Record on Integration

In addition, over the last seven years, the Council has been leading a multi-agency support programme for individuals and families at risk of needing help from crisis-level statutory services. **Transforming Lives** involves the employment of key workers (who work intensively with households) alongside Community Connectors who have a role in supporting volunteers, and local voluntary groups focussed on developing mutual support arrangements for local people in need.

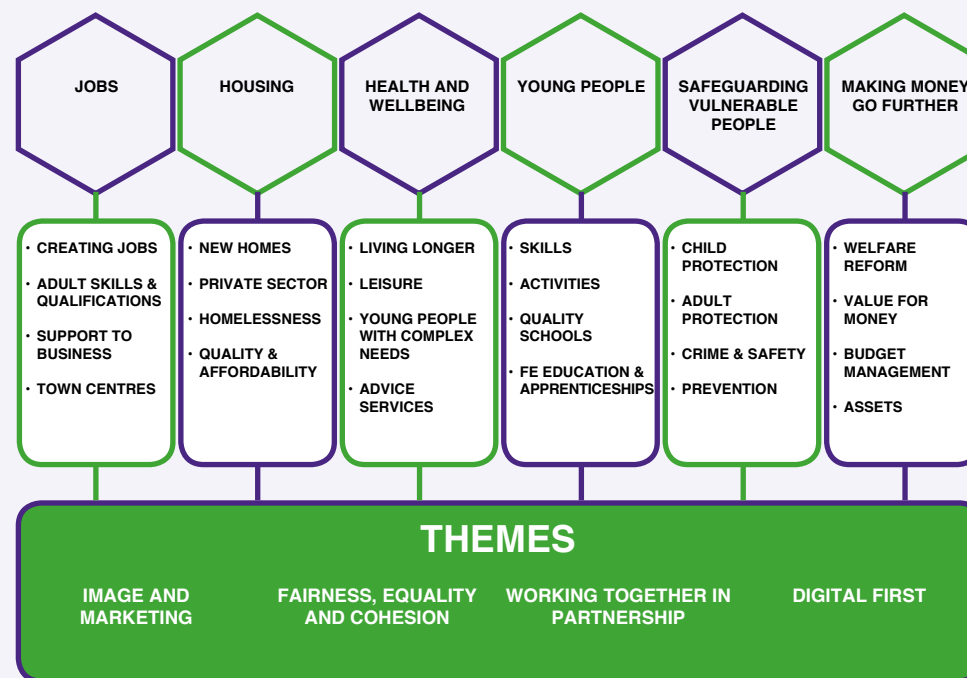
It is these types of initiatives, which we aim to build on, **working in partnership** with others. It is through connections with schools, businesses, a variety of service providers and a wide range of voluntary and community organisations with which we already work that we will create **a shared and comprehensive approach to tackling social integration issues**. This partnership approach is exemplified in the approach to the development of the Local Integration Partnership.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's Corporate Plan (2016-19) demonstrates **our commitment to strengthening cohesion** within the borough, a key cross-cutting theme for all activities being **'fairness, equality and cohesion'**. In this way, integration can be seen as a 'golden thread' running through all aspects of the Council's work.

In January 2018 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council published its **Social Integration Strategy 2018 to 2020** which focuses on exploring what can be done to promote cohesive and socially integrated communities. It continues to build on the work being carried out in making Blackburn with Darwen a forward thinking, vibrant and connected place, free from hatred and intolerance.

It has a strong link with the priorities identified through our work as part of the government's Integrated Communities programme.

### THE CORPORATE PLAN 2016 - 2019 PUTTING OUR PRIORITIES INTO EVERYTHING WE DO



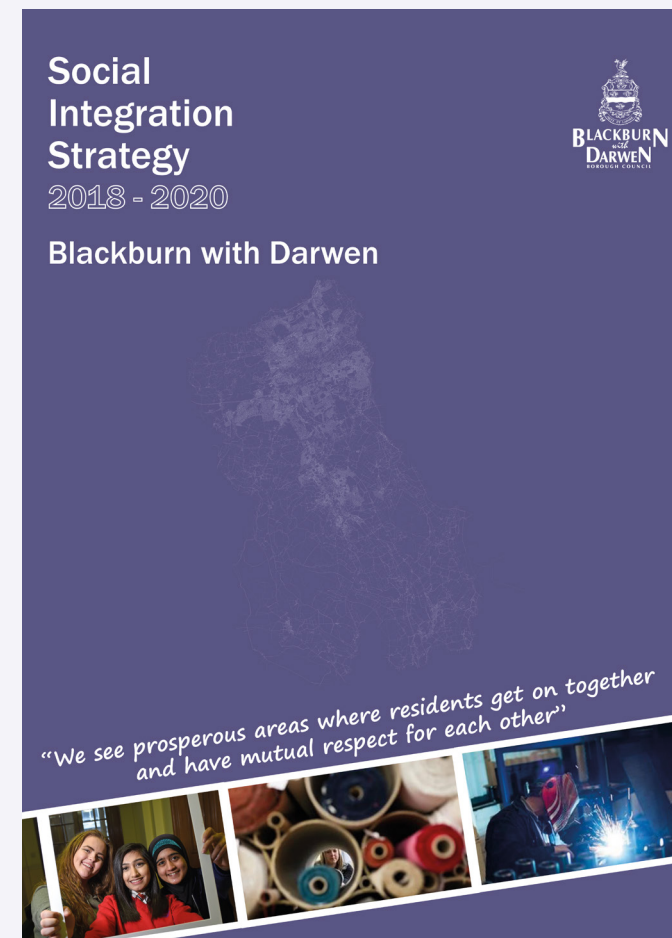
## Our Track Record on Integration

The strategy published in January 2018 identifies that **social integration is crucial in diverse places** like Blackburn with Darwen. This agenda cuts across all areas of work. Without addressing integration, there is a potential to create a range of issues, from minor neighbourhood-level community tensions to more serious public disorder and unrest. The Council plays a key leadership role, but social integration will only be achieved by **enabling others to participate and lead on projects**, including schools, places of work, businesses, faith groups, and voluntary and community organisations.

**The Social Integration Strategy 2018 to 2020** identifies collective actions under three key themes:

- By facilitating, enabling and encouraging linking opportunities, we want to see people in all communities get the best start in life and be supported to become well-rounded and successful adults.
- By facilitating, enabling and encouraging understanding and respect in communities, we want to see people from different backgrounds get together to make the borough a better place.
- By facilitating, enabling and encouraging the growth of our local economy and skills agenda, we want Blackburn with Darwen to be a great place to live, study, work and visit – a place where people have access to opportunities and the ability to realise aspirations and potential.

This already adopted Social Integration Strategy aligns with the activities we aim to deliver through our work as an MHCLG funded Integration Area.



## Our Local Integration Partnership (LIP)

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We have many companions on our journey to achieving our vision for a borough where diversity is valued and celebrated and where everyone is treated fairly. The importance of our partnerships with a wide range of local organisations across different sectors cannot be underestimated – they are integral to our programme’s success.

The Local Integration Partnership (LIP) is responsible for setting the strategic direction for our Social Integration Programme and overseeing its delivery. Membership of our LIP includes a broad range of local partners, including the local authority, voluntary, faith and community sector, the Youth MPs, community representatives, and a representative from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

We anticipate that the membership of the LIP will evolve and change over the lifetime of the programme, bringing on new partners as appropriate. The partners who currently represent the membership of the LIP include:

- » **Blackburn College**
- » **Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council (officers and councillors)**
- » **Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)**
- » **Blackburn with Darwen CCG**
- » **East Lancashire Hospital Trust**
- » **The Hive Network (business network)**
- » **Interfaith Forum**
- » **Job Centre Plus**
- » **Lancashire Constabulary**
- » **Lancashire Fire Service**
- » **Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)**
- » **Representation from the borough’s schools**
- » **Sport England**
- » **Together Housing**
- » **Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector**
- » **Youth Parliament.**

The Leader of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Councillor Mohammed Khan, was selected as the Chair of the LIP. Chris Seddon, a representative from the community with a broad range of experience in the voluntary sector, was selected as Vice Chair. Together they will provide leadership to the LIP that draws on the different dimensions of their local knowledge and vast experience.





## Our Partners the Department for Work & Pensions and Sport England

Amongst the variety of programmes that are currently being delivered and those that are planned to be delivered in the borough, there are two distinct but complementary initiatives which will be of mutual benefit to the overall objective of improving social integration in the borough:

- » **The Department for Work and Pensions** (DWP) programme focussed on hotspot areas to improve employability
- » And the Pennine Lancashire **Sport England** local delivery pilot programme focussed on increasing physical activity levels.

The DWP initiative, led by **Jobcentre Plus**, aims to **increase economic opportunities for ethnic minority jobseekers** and their partners. MHCLG have committed to provide funding for Jobcentre Plus to devise a programme that sees them work with local partners to identify those communities where people are furthest from the job market and to engage with those communities **to support more people into work**.

This joint working supports one of DWP's priorities that centres on the Race Disparity Audit, published in October 2017. The Audit revealed an unemployment gap between white people and those from ethnic minorities, and although the ethnic minority employment figures have increased by 16% since 2015, the DWP recognised that there is still more to do.

Jobcentre Plus Blackburn is working closely with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and MHCLG to identify and support people into work, building on successful initiatives such as the Patient Advisory Service within GP surgeries, and creative engagement sessions with jobseekers. Example activities include cultural awareness sessions, work tasters and in work support. The detail of the Jobcentre Plus programme is currently being explored locally.

On tackling physical inactivity, **Sport England's Local Delivery Pilot** programme provides an excellent opportunity to build on and accelerate our ambition to **increase levels of physical activity and improve mental wellbeing**. The programme has a strong commitment to develop effective insight, community engagement and communication. Funding will be invested through the pilot scheme over four years, to create innovative solutions that make it easier for people in these communities to access physical activity across Pennine Lancashire.

By working closely with partners from DWP and Sport England, our programme on integration will help **unlock the structural challenges around integration, physical inactivity and economic inactivity**.

Although we have referenced the Sport England and DWP programmes as key areas for joining up our thinking and approaches for mutual gain, this programme will not be restricted in terms of key partnerships. For example, there is a clear link between existing delivery such as school twinning, youth development programmes, volunteering, community safety such as hate crime, counter-extremism and counter-terrorism related activity, etc - all of which are represented through our partnership and sounding board consultation structures.

## Our Journey So Far

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The **Local Integration Partnership** was formed at the earliest opportunity. This has allowed us to produce our strategy and delivery plan in an interactive way with **significant consultation with our stakeholders**. This has been the foundation for this strategy and the agreement of our priority areas, as well as the activities that are identified in our delivery plan. The LIP has helped bring about **collective ownership and responsibility**, and has been the driving force in leading on **wider stakeholder engagement and co-design**. One of the strengths of our approach is that we have been able to draw upon the knowledge and expertise of the partnership members, many of whom bring different perspectives, positive challenge and have a strong track record in tackling social integration issues.

We believe our approach is resilient and will be able to respond to change. Our partnership has a culture that **embraces new learning** - from within the borough and beyond – allowing us to be objective as we analyse delivery of activities as part of the programme. This culture also encourages an awareness of emerging priorities and best practice over the lifetime of the funded programme. We look forward to working with the other four Integration Area partners and MHCLG as the programme develops. We are open to sharing experience and knowledge from our implementation plans in order to learn from one another.

The LIP is keen to approach this work in such a way that projects and activities set up as part of the programme will continue to have an impact long after it has ended - it recognises that the programme can act as **a catalyst for long term change**. We do not simply see this as funding of activities and a short term fix. Our envisaged outcomes will have a measurable impact on social integration through **behaviour and culture change**. This has focussed our minds on the need to build on strengths in all parts of the borough and to identify gaps and weaknesses using existing assets and infrastructure.

By giving partner organisations the opportunity to deliver projects and activities, the LIP recognised it can develop **strong and sustainable leadership on integration issues**. The LIP will explore, over the lifetime of the programme, different ways to do this but will be particularly focussed on developing stewardship of priority areas and activities that have the most impact. We have chosen to use a **central co-ordination and collaborative delivery model**. Delivery will require integrated working between different organisations. An example of this is the development of a multi-agency co-ordination hub to oversee the development of ESOL provision in the borough, and a need for young people to be involved in the detailed design and commissioning of the Youth Voices and Youth Ambassadors programmes.

All our programmes will be **co-produced with others and co-delivered**. We feel this will achieve stronger buy-in from the groups we are seeking to engage in this programme and will feel genuine at the point of delivery.



## Our Journey So Far

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To ensure a cross-section of stakeholders, including partners and residents, have opportunities to get involved in our social integration work, **networking arrangements** will be formalised, co-ordinated and facilitated throughout the course of the programme.

As part of the delivery programme we will build in the ability to gather information and data to form baselines at key stages throughout. We will encourage **ongoing evaluation** as well as reflection at key milestones. This process of repeated measurement and monitoring will allow us to have confidence in being able to **assess our programme's success**. We will gather feedback from engagement including case studies.

Alongside the main programme, we want all participants to form relationships that are independent of the projects and activities they get involved in. We will therefore build capacity to allow them to understand use of social media and other platforms to help them to communicate. We hope that this will grow beyond social media and allow different communities to **come together in a meaningful way** outside of the programme's activities. Our aspiration is to **energise social integration beyond the structured programme** and for it to become self-sustaining.



## Consultation on our Social Integration Strategy

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Alongside the continuous input from the Local Integration Partnership in shaping our approach, crucial to the preparation of this strategy has been consultation, including information and awareness sessions, workshops and online surveys, undertaken between April and August 2018. The audience for workshops was a wide range of stakeholders and included partners, community members and local leaders, many of whom are residents of the borough. The Leader of the Council has made this strategy a priority and has helped to facilitate significant elected member involvement throughout its development. The workshops were delivered in a group work format enabling intense simultaneous discussion incorporating wide ranging views.

Themes for these workshops were as follows:

**Social mixing** – for both adults and young people

**Local economy** – considering social integration in the context of the workplace, barriers to economic participation, role of the private sector

**Access pathways** – housing, shared spaces, transport, education and myth busting.

These themes are therefore reflected in our four priority areas.

## Our Four Priorities - Priority 1

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### To increase economic prosperity for all the borough's communities as an essential prerequisite for social integration

*We believe that the workplace represents an important opportunity for social integration, through connecting people from different ethnic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. We aspire to build capacity within our communities to ensure that they can participate in local society through employment, including engaging more women from disadvantaged areas, who are currently underrepresented in the local workforce, in training, volunteering and employment. We also believe that any barriers to achieving greater workplace integration can be overcome. For this reason, we consider this area to be the highest priority within our programme.*

#### We will better co-ordinate ESOL provision across the borough

We will establish an ESOL multi-agency hub to co-ordinate language provision in the borough. Together with our partners we aim to better meet local need by engaging with those currently not accessing ESOL provision and by understanding the barriers they face. We will co-ordinate and maximise existing activity while also exploring innovative ways to plug gaps in provision.

#### We will bridge the gap between our largest employers and their potential workforce

We will work closely with the borough's large employers to develop social integration leadership capabilities among their staff. Through offering apprenticeships and volunteer placements to people from all sections of the community, we aim for these businesses to increase the diversity of their workforce and bring people from different backgrounds together in the workplace.

#### By 2021, we will see:

- » An increase in learners accessing ESOL provision in the borough
- » More engaged individuals who are participating within wider society including access to services and employment
- » More employers who recognise the value of and have a commitment to increasing levels of workplace diversity
- » More positive relationships built upon friendship and trust between people from different ethnic, religious and cultural groups
- » More individuals feeling like they are welcome and belong in Blackburn with Darwen.

## Our Four Priorities - Priority 2

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### **To strengthen relationships between the borough's diverse communities (focussed predominantly on adults)**

*We recognise that crucial to our aim of increasing integration levels locally are ways to increase levels of social mixing – that is, bringing people from different backgrounds together in their leisure time, through events, leisure opportunities and physical activity programmes. These types of activities will help to break down barriers, educate people and address myths. Through this priority area we will connect people and communities who live in separate parts of the borough, providing them with the opportunity to identify common ground, shared values and aspirations. We will also give people the chance to express concerns and areas of challenge in safe spaces.*

#### **We will encourage debate between people from diverse backgrounds**

Through our Community Voices initiative, we will provide a safe space for people from different cultural backgrounds to come together and share their views. By participating in debate, we hope to break down any barriers that may prevent them from asking challenging questions and aim to help our communities to better understand one another.

#### **We will empower a generation of Community Ambassadors**

We will work closely with community representatives who are keen to take on leadership roles relating to integration issues locally. We will support these Community Ambassadors to build bridges between different groups, and to form networks with other leaders in this area to share their experiences.

#### **We will involve local people with our programme through a team of Social Integration Community Connectors**

Staff will be recruited to support individuals and organisations from the voluntary and community sector to connect with multiple aspects of our Social Integration Programme. Through this element of our work, we will foster a commitment to sustain the work beyond the programme.

#### **We will offer funding opportunities to local organisations whose work supports our Social Integration Programme**

Local organisations will have the opportunity to bid for seed funding for small-scale projects with social integration at their heart. Through this funding we would wish to see more local people participating in activities that have a positive effect on their attitudes to others.

## Our Four Priorities - Priority 2

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### By 2021, we will see:

- » Increased, strong local leadership (of individuals and organisations) focussed on increasing levels of social integration, civic participation and physical activity
- » More positive relationships built upon friendship and trust between people from different ethnic, religious and cultural groups
- » More people holding the opinion that those from ethnic, religious and cultural groups belong to, and make a positive contribution to, the community
- » More individuals feeling like they are welcome and belong in Blackburn with Darwen
- » An increased proportion of community spaces which are 'shared spaces' and not associated with use by a specific group
- » A reduction in levels of residential polarisation based upon ethnicity, religion or culture.

## Our Four Priorities - Priority 3

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### To build connections and strengthen relationships between young people who live in the borough's diverse communities

*Blackburn with Darwen is one of the youngest places in Europe, with one in four people in our local population under the age of 15. We see this as a key strength as we aim to create a programme of activities that will enable young people from all backgrounds to learn and grow together. Our ambition is for activities funded under this priority to be the foundation for structures and approaches which go beyond the lifetime of the programme and result in long term embedded organisational change within schools, within other civic institutions and in the mindsets of our young people.*

#### We will encourage debate between young people from diverse backgrounds

A Youth Voices project will give young people from different backgrounds the chance to come together to share their views and engage in debate. We will provide young people with an opportunity to pose questions in a safe space to help deepen their understanding of people from backgrounds different to their own.

#### We will empower young people to become Youth Ambassadors

Young people with a willingness to take on leadership roles relating to integration issues in their local communities will be offered support and training. We will work closely with them as they build bridges between different groups and communities, and form networks with other leaders in this area to share their experience.

#### We will bring schools and pupils from different parts of the borough together

We will expand our already successful Linking Schools project, to help more schools make connections with those in other parts of the borough. This work helps pupils and school staff to build relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds to their own, while working together on a variety of meaningful activities and visits.

#### By 2021, we will see:

- » Increased strong local leadership among young people and schools focussed on increasing levels of social integration and civic participation
- » More positive relationships between children and young people built upon friendship and trust between people from different ethnic, religious and cultural groups
- » More children and young people holding the opinion that those from ethnic, religious and cultural groups belong to, and make a positive contribution to, the community
- » More children and young people feeling like they are welcome and belong in Blackburn with Darwen
- » A reduction in levels of school population polarisation based upon ethnicity, religion or culture.



## Our Four Priorities - Priority 4

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### **To connect the borough's disadvantaged communities to shared spaces – linking people and neighbourhoods to zones of employment, physical assets, community shared spaces and social action**

*Through careful consideration of the barriers to social integration, we identified a lack of connectivity between some areas as a priority, because of a lack of available and affordable transport. Issues of geographic segregation, prevalent within certain parts of the borough on an ethnic, cultural and religious basis, also contribute to transport being a priority area in this strategy. By focussing on transport we will seize what we believe is an innovative opportunity to connect those who otherwise would never meet or interact.*

#### **A Community Routes programme will help people from disadvantaged areas to become connected**

We will work with a wide range of partners to explore the development of transport networks across the borough, to improve access to key economic areas and shared community spaces. Through this work, we hope to encourage people to make connections with others from different parts of the borough, in the workplace or in social situations, with a view to becoming more socially integrated.

#### **By 2021, we will see:**

- » Individuals more engaged and participating within wider society including through access to services and employment
- » More positive relationships built on friendship and trust between people from different ethnic, religious and cultural groups
- » A permanent and perpetual increase in levels of workplace diversity
- » An increased proportion of community spaces which are 'shared community spaces' and not associated with use by a specific group.

## Our Four Priorities

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The delivery of these four priorities and associated activities will be underpinned by the following **cross-cutting themes**, which represent our **methods of delivery** and our overall approach:

**An asset based approach** – working with people to build on the strengths and assets that they already have

**A learning approach** – not being afraid to try new ideas and learn from them

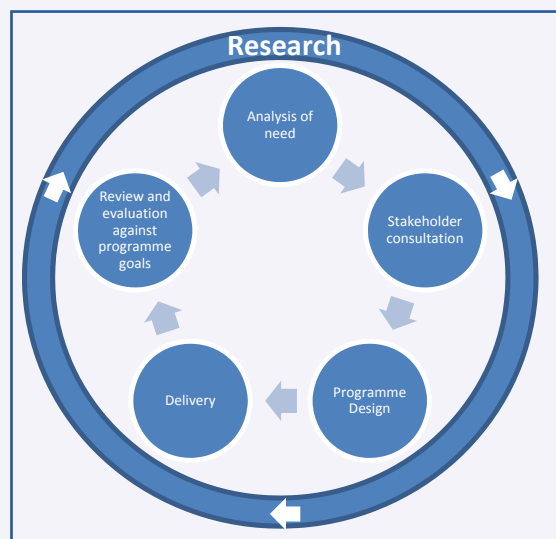
**A sustainable approach** – mindful from the start that once the programme ends there is a sustainable legacy for the future

**A partnership approach** – working alongside our delivery partners and the people of the borough.

We value the strengths of local partners and voluntary and community sector organisations that already play such a valuable role in delivering social integration activity across the borough. We will work with them on making further progress against our four priorities. In this way, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council will be predominantly an enabler, rather than the direct provider of activities.

## Learning and Evaluation

Learning will be a live process, ongoing throughout the programme and not through end of year evaluations. This will ensure a process of continuous improvement overseen by the Local Integration Partnership. The diagram below aims to demonstrate this continuous improvement cycle, a key area being research, alongside the involvement and engagement of partners and the wider community.



We will ensure that strong evaluation processes are embedded in the programme from the start, particularly with a focus on strengthening our approach to measuring the outcomes and areas of impact, which provide the strongest indications of meeting our intended goals. We view them as a crucial source of support in ensuring that we meet our aspirations for an evidence-based approach to our work.

This area of activity has been strongly influenced by the Government's Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper (Building Integrated Communities Priorities), which identifies the following priorities:

- » To learn what works in building integrated communities and to share that learning
- » To undertake a programme of evaluation research in Integration Areas to generate evidence of what works in different places.

As a borough we wish to embed the learning of English language, literacy and the ability to use both in a digital environment. Each of these is critically important to the long term outcomes and impact of this programme.

## Appendix 1: Our Priorities In Detail

Our strategy for achieving our vision is based upon the delivery of four priority areas. These are the key aims and have been organised in four segments that form our work streams.

The following table, based on our four key priorities, provides a high level summary of our activities leading to specific outcomes (including higher level outcomes which are indications of broader impact).

Priority	Activity	Outcomes (short term)	Higher level outcomes (long term)
1. To increase economic prosperity for all the borough's communities as an essential prerequisite for social integration	ESOL Multi-agency Co-ordination Hub	<p>Increase in the number of learners who have registered to join a course to improve their English</p> <p>Increase in the number of people who have engaged in volunteering, employment support, ICT or numeracy to supplement and progress in their English language learning</p> <p>Reduction in households where some but not all aged 16+ have English as their main language</p> <p>Reduction in households where only children speak English as their main language</p> <p>Reduction in households where nobody has English as their main language</p>	<p>Individuals more engaged and participating within wider society including access to services and employment</p> <p>Employers who recognise the value and have a commitment to increasing levels of workplace diversity</p> <p>A permanent and perpetual increase in levels of workplace diversity</p> <p>Positive relationships built upon friendship and trust between people from different ethnic, religious and cultural groups</p>
	Bridging the gap: Workforce Social Integration leadership, apprenticeships and volunteer placements	<p>Employers identifying that they can accommodate specific cultural and religious needs associated with a diverse workforce</p> <p>Individuals obtaining permanent employment with employers which have previously predominantly employed people of a different ethnic group</p> <p>Employers with a more diverse and integrated workforce</p>	<p>Individuals feeling like they are welcome and belong</p>

## Appendix 1: Our Priorities in Detail

Priority	Activity	Outcomes (short term)	Higher level outcomes (long term)
2. To strengthen relationships between the borough's diverse communities (focussed predominantly upon adults)	Community Voices (a safe space to share views and debate)	<p>Individuals that identify a positive change in outlook or attitude based upon a greater understanding of the experience, culture and religion of others</p> <p>Individuals expressing a firm interest in participating in Your Call and other volunteering activity</p>	<p>Strong local leadership (of individuals and organisations) focussed upon increasing levels of social integration and civic participation</p> <p>Positive relationships built upon friendship and trust between people from different ethnic, religious and cultural groups</p>
	Community Ambassadors (individuals empowered to take a leadership role on integration issues locally)	<p>Individuals identifying an increased confidence and willingness to undertake a leadership role within communities focussed upon social integration activities from ideas that have been generated organically. For these ideas to be tried and developed with a view to becoming self-sustaining.</p> <p>Individuals delivering community or individual capacity building activities, which contribute towards social integration</p> <p>Community-based activities (delivered by Community Ambassadors), which support social integration achieved through greater confidence and feeling of being empowered to be able to initiate social integration</p> <p>Community Ambassadors forming a network to support each other in building bridges and linking opportunities to promote social integration between their respective neighbourhoods</p>	<p>That people hold the opinion that those from ethnic, religious and cultural groups belong to, and make a positive contribution to, the community</p> <p>Individuals feeling like they are welcome and belong</p> <p>An increased proportion of community spaces which are 'shared spaces' and not associated with use by a specific group</p>
	Seed Funding (small scale activity commissioning for VCS and other civic society organisations to support social integration)	<p>Community organisations/civic institutions with a strengthened ability and commitment to delivering social integration activities</p> <p>Individuals that identify a positive change in outlook or attitude based upon a greater understanding of the experience, culture and religion of others (e.g. that they hold a view that people from other groups belong to, and make a positive contribution to, the local community)</p>	<p>A reduction in levels of residential polarisation based upon ethnicity, religion or culture</p>

## Appendix 1: Our Priorities in Detail

Priority	Activity	Outcomes (short term)	Higher level outcomes (long term)
	Social Integration Community Connectors (staff employed to support individuals and VCS organisations to engage in multiple aspects of the programme)	<p>Community organisations and civic institutions strengthened, with a commitment to undertaking social integration activities</p> <p>External funding levered into the borough</p> <p>Assets and resources maximised to prioritise social integration</p> <p>Individuals participating in activities which support social integration</p>	
3. To build connections and strengthen relationships between young people who live in the borough's diverse communities	Youth Voices (a safe space for young people to share views and debate)	<p>Young people that identify a positive change in attitude and perception based upon a greater understanding of the experience, culture and religion of others (e.g. that they hold a view that people from other groups belong to, and make a positive contribution to, the local community)</p> <p>Young people expressing a commitment to participating in future volunteering activity and civic participation (including activity which contributes towards community integration)</p>	<p>Strong local leadership (of individual young people and schools) focussed upon increasing levels of social integration and civic participation</p> <p>Positive relationships between children and young people built upon friendship and trust between people from different ethnic, religious and cultural groups</p> <p>Children and young people hold the opinion that those from ethnic, religious and cultural groups belong to, and make a positive contribution to, the community</p> <p>Children and young people feeling like they are welcome and belong</p> <p>A reduction in levels of school population polarisation based upon ethnicity, religion or culture</p>

## Appendix 1: Our Priorities in Detail

Priority	Activity	Outcomes (short term)	Higher level outcomes (long term)
	<p>Youth Ambassadors (young people empowered to take a leadership role on integration issues locally)</p>	<p>Young people actively engaged in volunteering activities linked to community integration</p> <p>Young people with improved perceptions of those from other races, cultures and religions (e.g. that they hold a view that people from other groups belong to, and make a positive contribution to, the local community)</p> <p>Young people more willing to engage with those from other races, cultures and religions</p> <p>Young people who are not programme participants being positively supported or influenced by Youth Ambassadors including on issues connected to social integration</p> <p>Youth ambassadors forming a network to support each other in building bridges and linking opportunities to promote social integration between their respective neighbourhoods</p>	
	<p>Linking Schools (connecting schools with school populations, which are ethnically and religiously distinct)</p>	<p>The leadership of schools have a greater commitment to and focus upon social integration</p> <p>Children have a broader understanding of those from other races, religions and cultures</p> <p>Children are more confident in engaging with those from a different race, religion and culture</p> <p>Children are more aware of the importance of the virtues of respect and tolerance</p> <p>Children hold more positive views of those from a different race, religion and culture (e.g. that they hold a view that people from other groups belong to, and make a positive contribution to, the local community)</p>	

## Appendix 1: Our Priorities in Detail

Priority	Activity	Outcomes (short term)	Higher level outcomes (long term)
<p>4. To connect the borough's disadvantaged communities to shared spaces – linking people and neighbourhoods to zones of employment, physical assets, community shared spaces and social action</p>	<p>Community Routes (Developing transport mechanisms which improve access to key economic areas and shared community spaces)</p>	<p>Individuals who have made connections to others from a different ethnic or cultural background to their own</p> <p>Individuals accessing employment sites which connect them to those from a different ethnic or cultural background to their own</p> <p>Individuals accessing community spaces which connect them to those from a different ethnicity, religion or culture to their own</p> <p>Individuals being able to connect to different geographic and spatial areas of the borough to enhance their experiences and ability to be more socially integrated</p> <p>To provide opportunities to address social isolation</p>	<p>Individuals more engaged and participating within wider society including access to services and employment</p> <p>Positive relationships built upon friendship and trust between people from different ethnic, religious and cultural groups</p> <p>A permanent and perpetual increase in levels of workplace diversity</p> <p>An increased proportion of community spaces which are 'shared community spaces' and not associated with use by a specific group</p>