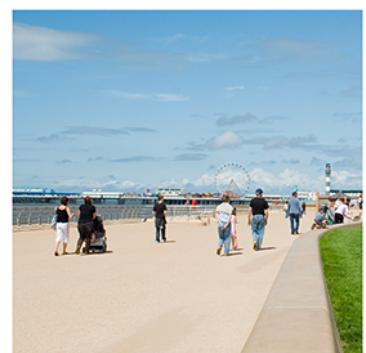


Annual Governance Statement

2017/2018

Blackpool Council



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Acknowledgement of Responsibility

Blackpool Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards. It needs to ensure that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015) require the Council to conduct a review, at least once a year, on the effectiveness of its system of internal control and include an Annual Governance Statement reporting on the review with the Statement of Accounts.

The Principles of Good Governance

The CIPFA Delivering Good Governance publication (2016) defines the various principles of good governance in the public sector and how they relate to each other and are defined as:

- Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law.
- Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
- Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.
- Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- Developing the Council's capacity, including its leadership and the individuals within it.
- Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit, to deliver effective accountability.

The governance framework at Blackpool Council comprises the systems and processes, culture and values which the Council has adopted in order to deliver on the above principles. The system of internal control is a significant part of the framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The governance framework incorporated into this report has been in place at Blackpool Council for the year ended 31st March 2018 and up to the date of the approval for the statement of accounts for that year.

The Governance Framework

The key elements of the structures and processes that comprise Blackpool Council's governance arrangements are summarised below.

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Code of Conduct and Behaviours

Codes of Conduct are in place that defines standards of behaviours for elected members and officers. Adherence to these is a key part of good governance. These are further supported by the Council's Whistleblowing Policy, Registers of Interests and Gifts and Hospitality Policies. Processes are in place to deal with non-compliance through the Council's Disciplinary Policy for Officers and the Monitoring Officer and/or Standards Committee for Elected Members.

The Council has developed a set of values which all elected members and officers should adhere to when carrying out their duties and these include being accountable, compassionate, delivering quality services, being trustworthy and fair. These help define the culture which the organisation wishes to emanate across all services which it delivers.

Following a Leadership Summit in the year and considerable consultation a Leadership Charter was developed for officers. The Leadership Charter aims to bring to life the vision for the Council's workforce as outlined in the Workforce Strategy 2016-2020 and it has been embedded with the Individual Appraisal Process (IPA).

The Council strives to deliver equal opportunities to all and equality impact assessments form a part of the decision making process. The Equalities and Diversity Manager has developed a directorate self-assessment tool to monitor compliance and implemented Equality and Diversity Awareness Training for managers across the Council. The self-assessment process has been piloted by the Resources Directorate and is now being rolled out across all other Council directorates.

Commitment to Openness, Communication and Consultation

The Council complies with the requirements of the Transparency Agenda and provides a range of information in the public domain through its website. The Council adopts a priority campaign planning approach using a variety of different marketing communications channels. Key messages are also communicated to residents in the Your Blackpool publication which is delivered to all Blackpool households on a quarterly basis. Following the findings of the December 2017 Communications peer review, the Council will work further with its elected members to enhance their use of social media and has started to move towards greater use of social media as part of a strategic approach to communications. This approach is subject to monitoring and evaluation to test its effectiveness. The public are able to attend and speak at Committee meetings and Full Council is broadcast on the Council's website.

The Council has in place a system to respond to Freedom of Information requests and compliance with the timelines is managed by the Information Governance Team.

Consultation with the public takes place by the lead service area, which can access the Council's on-house cost recovery research team Infusion Research for wider ranging or more complex consultation exercises.

Structures are in place to ensure consultation with other public and voluntary sector agencies through the Fairness Commission and also local businesses through the Blackpool Business Leadership Group.

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Developing, Communicating and Translating the Vision

The Council Plan 2015-2020 sets out the vision for Blackpool to be '*The UK's number one family resort with a thriving economy that supports a happy and healthy community who are proud of this unique town*'. This is supported by the two priorities for the Council which are:

- The Economy: Maximising Growth and Opportunity across Blackpool.
- Communities: Creating Stronger Communities and Increasing Resilience.

The length of the Council Plan was reduced in 2016/17 and the style in which the plan is written reviewed, to ensure that the document is accessible and understandable to employees and residents and the plan contents were agreed following a consultation exercise.

A staff conference was held in 2016, hosted by the Chief Executive, which provided an update on the plan and the Council's priorities to employees. A further conference was held in 2017 which focussed upon how the Council works with its wholly owned Companies to help deliver on its priorities. Both conferences helped embed the vision and direction the Council and its partners are pursuing with the workforce.

Beneath each priority the plan details the key challenges faced by Blackpool and the key projects and schemes which will be implemented to address these issues. The Council Plan seeks to address the big issues and policy drivers facing local government. A review of the Council Plan was undertaken half-way through the delivery period and identified the potential to adopt a third priority around 'Organisational Resilience'. This will be consulted on in 2018 with the view to adopting a refreshed plan by the end of the year.

The Corporate Delivery Unit was introduced in 2016 the role of which is to provide challenge and ensure that key outcomes identified in the Council Plan are achieved. The two Priority Boards established in 2016 have reviewed activity on key plans to deliver the priorities. The Transformation Board has developed an approach to monitoring and checking planned savings, and has administered the Transformation Fund, awarding funding to projects which can deliver transformational change or medium term cost savings.

The Council priorities feed into directorate business plans and are a key tool for managers to use when developing business plans. The business plans then feed into Individual Performance Appraisals (IPA). A new business planning framework was developed for 2017.

Performance Management

A Policy Framework is in place which sets out the corporate strategies and plans which are in place and the Corporate Delivery Unit has a role in the production, monitoring and management of these key documents.

The Council has reviewed and refined its performance management system and strategic performance will be reported to Corporate Leadership Team and the relevant Scrutiny Committees with local performance indicators being managed through the Business Planning Process. This review has included an overhaul of the key performance indicators to be measured in 2017/18. A specific board has been established to focus on the particular challenges of improving performance in Children's Services.

In order to improve performance the Council participates in peer reviews and benchmarking exercises to learn from others and to ensure that services delivered are value for money. In 2017 peer reviews focussed on Communications and Children's Services. CIPFA was also commissioned to undertake a review of the Council's

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financial resilience with a focus on the savings proposals for 2017/18 onwards. It is intended that the LGA will be asked to undertake a peer review of Corporate Governance / Health in the future.

The Individual Performance Appraisal process which is in place is part of the Council's wider approach to performance management. The IPA process is an important tool designed to provide an opportunity to establish and understand expectations and to evaluate performance in order to help employees develop to their full potential. The IPA process is not a replacement for day to day people management so in addition employees are supported by their line managers and should be mentored, coached and directed according to their individual needs. This may come through regular one to one meetings, formal supervision meetings, team meetings and informal feedback. The Leadership Charter will support the Council's priorities and values and has been included in the Managers IPA template replacing the existing Management Objectives. A Leadership survey has also been undertaken to benchmark our performance against the new Charter.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities and functions are in place for each Council Committee including Licensing, Planning, Standards, Scrutiny Committees and the Audit Committee. These are reviewed annually with any changes made at the Council's Annual Meeting to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose. The Executive has agreed a set of criteria relating to the levels of decision making which provide clarity relating to levels of decision making which provide clarity and consistency for decision makers.

All Council Officers, including the Corporate Leadership Team, have a job description which sets out their roles and responsibilities. Annually, through the Individual Performance Appraisal process individual objectives are set for each officer which align with their job description and the Business Plan for the Service in which they work.

The Corporate Leadership Team has been extended once a month to involve key Heads of Service in the decision making process. Steps have been taken to address some of the concerns with 'hard to recruit to posts' such as the development of the Next Step Blackpool website to recruit Children's Social Workers and Teachers to the area. In addition, there is ongoing investment in digital technologies to help improve capacity across the Council.

The Council's Constitution, including the Scheme of Delegation, sets out the arrangements and protocols which are in place to enable effective communication within the authority.

The Council has in place effective arrangements to discharge the Head of Paid Service function and this role is undertaken by the Chief Executive.

The Council has designated a Monitoring Officer and Deputy with appropriate qualifications and experience. The Monitoring Officer has the specific duty to ensure that the Council, its officers and its Elected Members maintain the highest standards in all they do and is responsible to Blackpool Council for ensuring that governance procedures are followed and all applicable statutes and regulations are complied with.

Decision Making

The Constitution sets out the functions and responsibilities of the Council, the Executive and Committees. Included in this are the delegation arrangements adopted by the Council and the Executive and this is reviewed on a regular basis.

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All Executive Decisions contain all relevant policy implications including financial, risk management, human resources, equality analysis, ethical considerations, legal considerations and links to Council priorities. All Executive Decisions are subject to finance and legal approval before they are taken forward for a decision to be made. The Monitoring Officer or a designated representative, receive all decisions before they are processed and therefore are able to check the robustness of data quality prior to a decision being submitted for formal approval.

Cabinet Member and relevant Officer Decisions are published to meet transparency requirements and inform the public.

A framework for undertaking compliance checks to ensure that decision making processes are appropriate has been developed and these reviews are jointly carried out by Internal Audit and Democratic Governance and the findings reported to Audit Committee.

Compliance with relevant Laws, Regulations, Internal Policies and Procedures

A wide range of corporate policies and procedures are in place to ensure compliance with laws and regulations. These cover all key areas including financial management, human resources, procurement, contract management, risk management, business continuity, data protection, health and safety management arrangements and safeguarding arrangements.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that their service adheres to the relevant policies and procedures and Disciplinary and Capability Procedures are in place to deal with non-compliance. An audit was undertaken to assess current levels of compliance and identify any necessary actions for improvement the results of which have been shared with the Corporate Leadership Team and Senior Leadership Team.

Internal and external audit arrangements are in place to provide a reasonable level of assurance with compliance of the Council's system of internal control. The Health and Safety Team also undertake a programme of audits to ensure that managers maintain their manuals and comply with statutory requirements.

The Council has obtained PSNN, PCI and N3 security compliance so that it can effectively share data with other organisations including the National Health Service and Department for Work and Pensions. There is an ongoing review of cyber risks and progress against this is monitored by the Audit Committee. An ICT Security Policy is in place. Considerable work has been undertaken throughout the year to help ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations which come into effect in May 2018.

A Corporate Procurement and Projects Team is in place to support Heads of Services and Service Managers to undertake market engagement for those goods, services and works which are delivered through third-party organisations. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with the Public Contract Regulations Act 2015, European Union Procurement Directive 2014 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. Standard Control Documents are used to ensure consistency of practice, demonstrate value for money and to maximise Social Value through tendering and contract arrangements.

Mandatory training is delivered in a number of ways including through the iPool online system to advise staff of legislative requirements. Reporting tools have been developed to enable Managers to monitor completion of mandatory training courses and completion of Individual Performance Appraisals.

The Council's Monitoring Officer has a role in ensuring that the Council acts within the remit of relevant law and regulations and that a robust democratic process ensures the application of the Constitution. The Monitoring

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Officer is responsible for the in-house legal team which serves as an additional control to ensure that the Council operates within the constraints of the law and the team hold LEXCEL accreditation.

A number of arrangements are in place to deal with potential breaches to compliance and these include a Data Breach Panel, Corporate Complaints Panel and Serious Case Reviews. These are chaired independently of the service which has breached requirements to ensure that objective decisions can be taken.

A Disclosure and Barring Service Panel (DBS) is in place which reviews any positive DBS's in relation to pre-employment checks to ensure Council wide robust and consistent decision making.

Financial Management

The Council has an appropriately qualified and experienced designated Chief Financial Officer who holds Section 151 responsibilities and a deputy has also been appointed. The Chief Financial Officer has arrangements in place for financial management, financial reporting and value for money which is assessed annually by the Council's external auditors.

Financial Regulations are in place which are supported by a Scheme of Delegation to ensure that managers are aware of the level of expenditure they are able to authorise.

The Council sets a lawful annual budget and is part way though a six year Medium Term Financial Sustainability Strategy. The associated plan is updated on an annual basis to enable early planning on the financial position to take place.

Monthly financial monitoring reports, starting from month 0, are reported to the Corporate Leadership Team, the Executive and Tourism, Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee. The Transformation Board also has a role in monitoring key saving targets and considers ways to address funding shortages in underachieving areas.

The Council's financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016).

The Council facilitates a Public Inspection of the Accounts and publishes details of all payment transactions over and above the minimum requirements of the Transparency Code.

Audit Arrangements

An Audit Committee is in place which is independent of the scrutiny function. As a full committee of the Council it is able to discharge all the core functions of an Audit Committee outlined in the CIPFA Audit Committee: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities (2013), from which the Committee has adopted the model terms of reference. Over the past twelve months that Chair of the Audit Committee has continued to raise the profile of the Audit Committee and has presented a report to Full Council on the work of the Committee and has proactively requested Chief Officers to attend Committee to be challenged and held to account where controls issues have been identified. In the year an independent member was co-opted onto the Committee to enhance the robustness of the Committee.

Modular training is delivered prior to each Audit Committee meeting to ensure that members have the appropriate skills and knowledge to effectively discharge their duties. The Audit Committee undertake annual self-assessments of their performance to identify strengths and areas for development.

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The Council has an internal audit team who prepare an Annual Internal Audit Plan which is approved by the Corporate Leadership Team and Audit Committee. This includes a balance of risk and compliance work. The audit opinion and assurance statement for each audit is reported quarterly to the Audit Committee.

In 2017/18 the Head of Audit and Risks Annual Audit Opinion was that sufficient assurance work was undertaken to provide a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the control environment and that the overall control environment at the Council is adequate. Where weaknesses were identified through internal audit work the team have worked with management to agree appropriate remedial actions and a timescale for improvement.

The Council's internal audit arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010) and the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. An external review of the Council's compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards took place in 2016/17 which confirmed conformance with the standards. The recommendations made in the external assessment report have been incorporated into the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme for the service.

External audit arrangements are in place and representatives are invited to attend Audit Committee to present the findings of their work and raise any concerns which they may have. Effective working relationships are in place with external audit which help ensure that the Council provides timely support, information and responses to the external auditors and considers audit findings and recommendations.

Risk Management

A Corporate Risk Management Group is in place to coordinate and promote risk management activity in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework 2014-2017. The Risk Management Framework was reviewed in the year and a version covering 2018-2021 is now in place. It is supported by directorate and thematic risk management groups.

All directorates have nominated risk champions to promote best practice in their areas and ensure that service level risk registers are in place and that risk registers are developed for major projects and partnerships where appropriate.

The Strategic Risk Register is reviewed by the Corporate Leadership Team and considered by the Audit Committee annually. Chief Officers identified in the Strategic Risk Register are required to attend Audit Committee to explain how the risks are being managed and what further mitigating controls may be required.

Risk management should be considered for all decisions made by the Council and these are evidenced in the dedicated section on the decision making template.

A Corporate Business Continuity Plan and Critical Activities List are in place and this is supported by service level business continuity plans.

Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Arrangements

The Council has developed counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption (2014). A Fraud Prevention Charter has been developed and approved by the Corporate Leadership Team and Audit Committee. Any suspected instance of fraud or

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corruption should be reported to the Head of Audit and Risk so that an appropriate investigation into the matter can be undertaken.

A dedicated Corporate Fraud Team is in place which deals with a range of corporate fraud issues and proactive work has commenced on high risk areas such as insurance fraud, blue badges and council tax.

The Council has appropriate procedures in place to deal with the risk of money laundering and also to raise awareness of the Bribery Act and ensure that appropriate controls are in place to reduce the risk.

The Council participates in the National Fraud Initiative and progress against this and outcomes, are reported to Audit Committee on quarterly basis.

A corporate group is in place to review the Council's use of covert surveillance and to ensure compliance with the Regulatory of Investigatory Powers Act (2000).

Scrutiny Arrangements

Three Scrutiny Committees are in place which reflect the Council's priorities including a Resilient Communities and Children's Scrutiny Committee, Tourism, Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and an Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee. These committees help empower elected members and provide them with the opportunity to challenge and hold decision makers to account. These Committees meet on a regular basis and the minutes of the meetings and supporting documentation are published.

Learning and Development

An Induction and Probation process is in place for all new employees in the Council. Following successful completion of the probation process employees will then receive a mandatory Individual Performance Appraisal (IPA). The IPA incorporates an annual and interim review, held at an appropriate time in a private, comfortable space and can be considered as the setting of a 'roadmap' for an employee for the coming twelve months.

A wide range of training is available corporately which is informed from development needs identified in the Individual Performance Appraisal. The Council is committed to leadership development and various courses are available to continue to develop skills and knowledge. A revised leadership development programme will be delivered in 2018/19 based upon the outcomes of the Leadership survey which has been conducted.. An aspiring leadership programme has been delivered but further work is required in relation to succession planning and this will form part of HRs Business Plan for 2018/19.. The attainment of professional qualifications in relevant disciplines is encouraged and the Council is committed to funding studies where appropriate.

Many professionals across the Council maintain continuing professional development records to ensure they continue to meet the requirements of their professional bodies.

A Workforce Strategy is in place and steps have been taken through the new Business Planning Framework to better align workforce planning with the business plan process. However it is recognised that this is in its infancy.

The Council runs an apprentice programme to encourage young people and those who may have struggled to access work previously to engage in employment with the Council. From 2016/17 the way apprentices are funded has changed as employers with a pay bill of more than £3m are now required to pay an Apprenticeship Levy. The Council pays the levy and is able to use this to access funding to meet the cost of apprenticeship

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training and assessment against the approved apprenticeship framework or standard and this funding is used for existing employees as well as new starters.

Project Search, the job scheme for young people with learning disabilities also ran for a third year where each of the students learn personal and job skills for a two month period before embarking on work placements to find a suitable job for them.

An induction programme is in place for all elected members. A three year development plan is in place for elected members which helps deliver training to help them fulfil their role. All elected members have a personal development plan which helps to identify training needs.

Partnerships and Joint Working

The Council is involved in a number of key projects with partner organisations in order to transform the way in which services are delivered. Examples include the Better Start Project and Head Start Project which focus on early intervention in order to build resilience in the community. Boards with representation from partner organisations are also in place for key risks faced by the Council to introduce an element of independence and challenge. Transformation is also been achieved through the Opportunity Area funding stream which seeks to improve educational attainment.

Arrangements are in place for the provision of Shared Services with Fylde Borough Council in a number of areas, the most significant being the Revenues and Benefits Service. Shared arrangements are also in place with Blackpool Teaching Hospital in relation to legal services, governance and emergency planning. The Council is also working jointly with other Fylde Coast authorities on the development of an enterprise zone and other economic prosperity opportunities to improve the local economy.

Where joint working arrangements are not achieving the desired outcomes this is recognised in the pilot phase of the scheme so that other opportunities and delivery models can be identified.

The Council has a number of wholly-owned companies, including the acquisition of Blackpool Airport in the year, and a Good Governance Framework has been developed and rolled-out across each company in order to strengthen the governance arrangements in place and ensure that the Council's vision for the town, as the shareholder, is able to form part of the direction of travel of each company. The Framework also gives assurance that each company is operating in an effective and accountable way.

In order to strengthen the democratic accountability and due to the increasing number of companies, a Shareholder Advisory Board was appointed in September 2017. This Board, consisting of four councillors meets senior company representatives on a twice yearly basis and helps co-ordinate the work of the Council and its companies. It advises the shareholder on key strategic performance and helps inform long term development across Blackpool. The Council is looking at the use of wholly owned companies further in the future and this new Board is an important mechanism to ensure any business case adds to the Council delivering its priorities and vision going forward.

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In the community @theGrange was developed and launched in the year to provide a hub for community activity in the Grange Park area of Blackpool which is a partnership between the Council and Groundworks.

Value for money in the procurement process is also been sought through collaborative tender exercises with other local authorities in the region to achieve economies of scale.

Annual Review of Effectiveness

Blackpool Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control. The stages included in the review process and the key findings from each are summarised below.

Good Governance Group

A Good Governance Group was established in October 2016 and has led on the review of effectiveness and the production of the Annual Governance Statement to ensure that governance issues identified have subsequently been addressed. This group is chaired by the Director of Governance and Partnerships and attended by the Head of Audit and Risk, Head of Democratic Governance, Transformation Manager, Deputy Head of Legal Services, Head of ICT, Chief Accountant, Equality and Diversity Manager and the Head of Organisation and Workforce Development.

Elected Member Workshop

A workshop was held on the 13th March 2018 with representation from Scrutiny, Audit and Standards Committees and facilitated by the Head of Audit and Risk, Head of Democratic Governance and the Transformation Manager. A representative of the Executive was also consulted as part of the process.

The workshop was based around the principles of good governance and elected members were asked to establish what arrangements are already in place and these have been reflected in the overview of the governance framework included in this report. Elected members were also asked to identify areas for further development and these have been incorporated into the governance issues action plan.

Key Officer Workshop

A workshop was held on the 13th March with key officers involved in governance. This included representatives from the core Good Governance Group and also the Head of Revenues and Exchequer Services, Fairness Commission Manager and Head of Procurement and Projects.

The workshop was based around the principles of good governance and an assessment was made as to what controls already form part of the Council's governance framework and also areas which needed further development. This process identified a number of areas of good practice and these have been summarised in the

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governance framework outlined earlier in this report and areas for improvement have been captured in the significant governance issues action plan.

Control Self-Assessment Questionnaire

The Corporate Leadership Team was required to complete a control self-assessment questionnaire providing assurance that their directorates were compliant with a number of key controls.

Review of 2016/17 Actions

A summary of the actions completed in 2016/17 can be seen in **Appendix 1** and any partially implemented actions have been carried forward into the 2017/18 action plan.

Assurance Statement

The results of the effectiveness of the governance framework have been considered by the Corporate Leadership Team and Audit Committee who have determined that the arrangements are fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework.

Governance Issues

Actions have been identified as part of the 2017/18 review of the effectiveness of the governance framework and these are captured in the following table. It should be noted that some of the issues identified are not deemed as significant but have been included to aid openness and transparency.

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date
Code of Conduct and Behaviours	Raise awareness of the whistleblowing policy to officers and elected members through communication and training.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	Before mid-term review
	Review the guidance available for elected members relating to conflict management / intimidation in public office and communicate the support packages available such as training and access to the Employee Assistant Programme.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	After mid-term review
Commitment to Openness,	Continue to improve how the Council	Director of	Before mid-

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Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date
Communication and Consultation	communicates through the implementation of the recommendations identified in the LGA Peer Review.	Strategy (Assistant Chief Executive)	term review
	Continue to deliver the channel shift agenda to improve accessibility to residents and reduce demand on Council resources.	Director of Resources	After mid-term review
	Continue to improve the level of information published on the Council website so that this is readily available.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	After mid-term review
	Undertake a resident's survey to assess how they perceive the Council and use the outcome to inform the future direction of the Council.	Director of Strategy (Assistant Chief Executive)	Before mid-term review
	Develop and roll out a toolkit to services in relation to good practice when undertaking consultation exercises.	Director of Public Health	Before mid-term review
Developing, Communicating and Translating the Vision	Develop a communications plan ready for translating the Council Plan into information which is accessible and interesting to different audiences.	Director of Strategy (Assistant Chief Executive)	After mid-term review
Performance Management	Embed a new performance management framework with outcome based indicators across the Council.	Director of Strategy (Assistant Chief Executive)	Before mid-term review
Roles and Responsibilities	Update the organisational charts to accurately reflect the Senior Leadership Teams roles and responsibilities to assist elected members identify who to contact to seek advice.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	Before mid-term review
Compliance with Relevant Laws, Regulations, Internal Policies and Procedures	Ensure that the Council complies, as far as reasonably possible, with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	Before mid-term review
	Increase monitoring of the Policy and Strategy Framework to ensure that key	Director of Strategy	Before mid-

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Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date
Risk Management	documents are refreshed on a timely basis.	(Assistant Chief Executive)	term review
	Assess how to strengthen contract management arrangements across the Council.	Director of Resources	After mid-term review
	Undertake an independent review of all service level risk registers to improve the quality of the information contained in the risk registers.	Director of Resources	After mid-term review
	Embed and ensure buy in to the Risk Management Framework 2018/21 across the Council focusing not only of the threats which risks can create but the opportunities that they bring for innovation and transformation.	Director of Resources	After mid-term review
	Enhance how strategic risks are reported to the Audit Committee to enable effective review and challenge and demonstrate to correlation between the strategic risk register and Council strategies and plans.	Director of Resources	Before mid-term review
Scrutiny Arrangements	Deliver the actions arising from the review of the scrutiny function by North West Employers.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	After mid-term review
Learning and Developing	Review methods of training available for elected members through the Member Training Panel and consider the wider use of e-learning, webinars and involvement in training sessions being held for officers.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	After mid-term review
	Increase the robustness of succession plans across the Council.	Chief Executive	Before mid-term review
	Deliver a Leadership Development Programme based on the outcome of the Leadership Survey.	Chief Executive	After mid-term review
	Continue to develop digital skills across the Council to assist in the use of innovation	Director of	After mid-

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Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date
	technological solutions to build capacity through the further roll out of new devices and Microsoft 365 and training around cyber skills.	Resources	term review
Partnership and Joint Working	Consider how elected members can network with other public sector partners at neighbourhood level.	Director of Public Health	After mid-term review
	A Framework for the implementation of shared services and partnership / joint working arrangements will be developed.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	After mid-term review

Conclusion

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the significant governance issues identified to further enhance governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed: (Leader of the Council)

Signed: (Chief Executive)

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Appendix 1 – Actions Completed in 2016/17

- Developed and piloted a new face to face diversity awareness course.
- Developed an Equality Compliance tool and performance scorecard.
- Reviewed the Whistleblowing Policy to ensure that this aligns to best practice, trained names contacts and implemented a central recording system for complaints received.
- The revised ethical principals have been embedded throughout the decision-making processes.
- The Community Orientated Primary Care work has been piloted and rolled out.
- The Fairness Commission has delivered a number of community engagement events throughout the year.
- Elected members have been invited to be part of the Steering Group for the Community Orientated Primary Care work to ensure they are involved in the engagement work in their ward.
- Community Engagement and Fairness Commission awareness sessions have been held with elected members.
- A review of what other Councils are doing in relation to Community Engagement and in particular the Wigan Model which is extremely effective was undertaken.
- The new FYI website is live and makes the relevant links with Blackpool Council's website.
- The Channel Shift Team and Strategic Customer Service Group have been established to deliver the channel shift agenda.
- Embedded the process for reporting and monitoring the success and benefits of the Corporate Delivery Unit.
- The three year planning process implemented via the Business Planning is further evolving to create new Strategic Business Plans linked directly to the Priority Boards and therefore the Council Plan, ensuring that CLT and Councillors have oversight of the key strategic activity being delivered and progress to date.
- There has been a significant amount of work done to develop the Corporate Indicators with CLT and their DMTs. Scrutiny now receives reports on performance relevant to the main agenda to encourage further scrutiny and feedback from members in line with the Forward Plan.
- Peer reviews have taken place with regard to corporate communications and children's services.
- Embedded the Leadership Charter within the Individual Performance Appraisal process.
- The Compliance Calendar has been finalised and rolled-out to all managers.
- The managers 'quick guide' section on the Hub has been developed.
- Two decision making audit reviews were carried out during 2017/18 focusing on the Resources Directorate and Public Health Directorate and illustrated that there were no immediate areas of concern to address.
- Provided an annual update to Audit Committee on the robustness of the arrangements in place to reduce the risk of a cyber threat.
- Implemented an action plan setting out any required process changes under the General Data Protection Regulations which come into force in May 2018 and raised awareness of the new requirements.

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- Ensured that 2017/18 savings targets were delivered with reduced resource and significant demand pressures.
- An independent member was appointed to the Audit Committee.
- The Property Risk Management Group was re-established and is meeting quarterly.
- The Risk Management Framework was reviewed approved by CLT and Audit Committee.
- A risk management i-pool course has been developed and launched.
- A number of face to face training sessions relating to business continuity planning were held in the year.
- The Business Continuity Framework was reviewed and approved by CLT and the Audit Committee.
- Identified those staff for which counter fraud training is mandatory and completion rates are being reported to CLT and Audit Committee.
- A leadership survey was undertaken and the results have been analysed and reported to CLT in January the Senior Leadership Team.
- Implemented a robust action plan to ensure that the Council maximises the Apprenticeship Levy.