

Annual Governance Statement 2018/2019

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 2019 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 define 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.

A Leadership Charter is in place which 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 Performance 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.

Organisational Culture

The Council's organisational culture is driven by the Corporate Leadership Team and Executive and a set of values have been defined which all employees and elected members are expected to adhere too and these include:

- We are **accountable** for delivering on the promises we make and take responsibility for our actions and the outcomes achieved
- We are committed to being **fair** to people and treat everybody we meet with dignity and respect
- We take pride in delivering **quality** services that are community focussed and are based on listening carefully to what people need
- We act with integrity and we are **trustworthy** in all our dealings with people and we are open about the decisions we make and the services we offer
- We are **compassionate**, caring, hard-working and committed to delivering the best services that we can with a positive and collaborative attitude.

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 and Full Council meetings. 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.

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Consultation and engagement with the public takes place by the lead service area, which can access the Council's in-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.

Developing, Communicating and Translating the Vision

A thorough review of the Council Plan was undertaken in 2018 to ensure it continues to address the key issues facing the town. As a result, the Council Plan 2019-2024 sets out the vision for Blackpool to continue 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'*. The two priorities remain the same as the previous iteration of the plan:

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

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. The concept of organisational resilience – ensuring that the organisation is capable of delivering the priorities, meeting its legal requirements, and maintaining sustainability into the future – is captured throughout the plan, with the detail included in the Council's wider policy framework.

The new style plan illustrates through extensive photography and clear narrative the changes being made across the Borough, making it even more accessible than previous versions. In order to comply with new website accessibility guidelines, key parts of the plan are reproduced on the Council's website.

As in previous years the Council held a staff conference in 2018, hosted by the Chief Executive, with breakout sessions focussing on aspects of the Council's work across its directorates. These covered topics relevant to the plan, helping to encourage staff understanding of the direction taken by the Council and its Wholly Owned Companies.

The Corporate Delivery Unit has evolved since its introduction in 2016. Initially providing challenge to ensure that key outcomes identified in the Council Plan are achieved, it now also seeks to develop the provider market, allowing the Council to purchase services which meet needs more effectively. The business of the Transformation Board has been absorbed into the Corporate Leadership Team.

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 and is due to be reviewed in late 2019.

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's performance management system is now well established, with strategic performance reported to Corporate Leadership Team and the relevant Scrutiny Committees, whilst local performance indicators are

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managed through the Business Planning Process. A specific partnership board was established in July 2017 to focus on the particular challenges of improving performance in Children's Services. The Children's Improvement Board has since been strengthened and is responsible for strategically driving and co-ordinating the response to the Ofsted inspection of Children's Services in November 2018 and subsequent inadequate judgement. An improvement plan has been developed, supported by a series of service plans to address the twelve areas for improvement identified in the inspection report. In addition the Youth Offending Partnership Board has been reviewed and an Executive Board created in response to the HMIP inspection of youth offending services in Blackpool in October 2018 and the inadequate judgement. The delivery of both improvement plans is supported by a robust performance and quality assurance framework to ensure that improvements in performance and practice are embedded within 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 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 supports the Council's priorities and values and is included in the Managers IPA template. The Council's second Leadership survey has been undertaken to benchmark our performance and progress 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 within the Executive Framework 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 continue to be 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.

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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 the 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.

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, receives all decisions before they are processed and therefore is 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 on compliance with 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

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place. Considerable work has been undertaken throughout the year to help ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations which came 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 permanent and temporary employees of legislative requirements. Reporting tools have been developed to enable Managers to monitor completion of mandatory training courses and completion of Individual Performance Appraisals in real time.

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 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 (DBS) Panel 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 through 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 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.

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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 (2018), from which the Committee has adopted the model terms of reference. Over the past twelve months the 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 and Head of Services to attend Committee to be challenged and held to account where controls issues have been identified. An independent member has been 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 Council has an internal audit team who prepare an Annual Internal Audit Plan which is approved by the Corporate Leadership Team and the 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 2018/19 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, with the exception of Children's Services where significant risks have been identified by Ofsted. 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.

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 2018-2021. 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. A full review of all service level risk registers has been undertaken by Risk Services during the year to ensure consistency in approach and the identification of key risks.

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.

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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 the Audit Committee. Any suspected instance of fraud or 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 2019/20. The attainment of professional qualifications in relevant disciplines is encouraged and the Council is committed to funding studies where appropriate.

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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 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 A Better Start and HeadStart 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 NHS Foundation Trust in relation to legal services, information 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 is in place for 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.

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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 provides feedback to 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.

Value for money in the procurement process is also being 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 7th March 2019 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 Consultation

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Key officers who are involved in governance were consulted as part of the production of the Annual Governance Statement. This consultation identified a number of areas of good practice and these have been summarised in the 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 2018/19 Actions

A summary of the actions completed in 2018/19 can be seen in **Appendix 1** and any partially implemented actions have been carried forward into the 2019/20 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 2018/19 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 significant but have been included to aid openness and transparency.

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date
Code of Conduct and Behaviours	Review the Government response to the consultation on Intimidation in Office issued by the Committee on Standards in Public Life and assess whether the Council needs to put additional arrangements in place for elected members. This should include ensuring that all elected members are aware of the mitigations in place to prevent intimidation and delivering training	Director of Governance and Partnerships	Before mid-term review

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Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date
	to members for dealing with threatening situations.		
	Consider the potential national changes to the Standards and implement any changes identified as part of this.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	Before mid-term review
Commitment to Openness, Communication and Consultation	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
	Implement a Community Engagement Strategy and supported guidance to ensure a coordinate and robust approach is in place.	Director of Public Health	Before mid-term review
	Continue to deliver the web development plan ensuring that the Council adheres to the new accessibility requirements which are being introduced.	Director of Communication and Regeneration	After mid-term review
	Consider using targeted social media groups for specific groups of residents to share relevant information.	Director of Communication and Regeneration	After mid-term review
	Undertake an evaluation of the benefits of a Wigan deal approach to communications and engagement and if it would be of value to Blackpool / what we can learn from it.	Director of Public Health	After mid-term review
Developing, Communicating and Translating the Vision	Deliver an employee conference which ensures that all staff are aware of how their role fits into the overall vision of the Council building on the findings of the employee survey.	Chief Executive	Before mid-term review
Roles and Responsibilities	Role descriptions for key elected member responsibility areas should be developed identifying the knowledge required for the role, competencies, behaviours, time	Director of Governance and Partnerships	Before mid-term review

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Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date
	commitment and the requirement to attend training.		
Compliance with Relevant Laws, Regulations, Internal Policies and Procedures	Ensure that data protection training is rolled out to staff who do not have IT access, monitor and renew the Council's Information Asset Register and start a programme of GDPR compliance audits to ensure continued compliance with GDPR.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	Before mid-term review
	Ensure that the recommendations highlighted in the Ofsted Report on Children's Services are adequately addressed.	Director of Children's Services	Before mid-term review
	Strengthen contract management across the Council including improved measurement of social value, launch of an iPool course and exploration of software tools.	Director of Resources	After mid-term review
	Improve the recording and scrutiny of driving at work documentation for the Council's grey fleet.	Director of Communities and Environmental Services	Before mid-term review
Audit Arrangements	Ensure that effective working relations are developed with the Council's new external auditors.	Director of Resources	Before mid-term review
Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Arrangements	Implement joint working for investigations with the Department for Work and Pensions.	Director of Resources	Before mid-term review
Scrutiny Arrangements	Deliver the actions arising from the review of the scrutiny function by North West Employers via the working group which has been established.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	Before mid-term review
Learning and Developing	Develop an information pack for managers to use with casual and agency staff for CLT approved mandatory training.	Chief Executive	Before mid-term review

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Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date
	Ensure that succession planning is embedded in the appraisal process.	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 the roll-out of Windows 10 incorporating training on how to work smarter using Office 365.	Director of Resources	After mid-term review
	Encourage the use of a buddy system / mentoring arrangements for newly elected members.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	Before mid-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

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 2018/19

- Awareness raising of the whistleblowing policy has been undertaken for officers and elected members. Specific training for elected members has been incorporated into the member induction programme.
- Elected members have been made aware of their ability to access the Employee Assistance Programme.
- Elected members have been made aware of the option to use a political party address for their contact details available on the Council website.
- A Director responsible for Communications has been appointed to ensure that this important function receives the appropriate profile and steps have been taken to increase resilience in the Communications Team.
- The Channel Shift Group has continued to deliver online projects for the benefit of residents and to assist with demand on Council Services. Examples of projects delivered in the year include changes to the bulky matters on line process, residential bin changes, street cleansing reporting, environmental protection complaint reporting, tip permits and alley gate key ordering.
- Improved the level of information published on the Council website so that it's readily accessible.
- A residents' survey has been undertaken and the findings reported to the Corporate Leadership Team with a clear majority of indicators showing positive change.
- Refreshed the Council Plan to capture priority actions for the Council.
- Implemented a new Performance Framework supported by appropriate data gathering and reporting mechanisms.
- The organisation charts for Chief Officers and their senior managers have been updated to illustrate the roles and responsibilities for services across the Council.
- GDPR training has been rolled out to office based staff and elected members.
- The process for monitoring the Policy and Strategy Framework to ensure that forthcoming documents are reviewed on a timely basis has been strengthened.
- A review of all service level risk registers has been undertaken to ensure that these are up to date and reflect the risk environment.
- The Risk Management Framework 2018-2021 has been rolled out across the Council and an internal audit review has established that this is embedding well.
- A revised approach for reporting progress against the Strategic Risk Register to the Corporate Leadership Team and the Audit Committee has been implemented.
- Alternative ways to delivery member training, such as webinars, have been developed.
- Conducted the second leadership survey to assess the effectiveness of leadership across the Council.
- Developed and rolled-out new cyber security training across the Council.
- A framework for the implementation of shared services has been developed.