

## APPENDIX 3(a)

### Agreed Action Plan

	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Agreed Action</i>	<i>Responsible officer</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Progress</i>
<b>R1</b>	Formal aims and objectives for Business Support should be determined, including identifying any future prioritisation on support to businesses with greater perceived growth potential, any development plans for the service and links to wider strategies and Growth and Prosperity aims and objectives.	2	Agreed. Strategic objectives to be put in place and linked to resources. Will be included in the Communications and Regeneration directorate business planning process.	Director of Communications and Regeneration	March 2020	<p>Business planning at year-end disrupted by pandemic, whereby the team moved to delivering discretionary COVID business grants.</p> <p>Currently reviewing the focus for the business support team, in line with staff changes and key projects (see R4). Aim to produce clearer evidence based objectives by December 2021.</p>
<b>R2</b>	Research should be undertaken to identify the particular reasons for the comparatively low level of start-ups and self – employment in Blackpool and where and why business advice is sought, in order to inform any future approach by the Council to supporting business start-ups.	2	Agreed. The business start-ups that receive Council support have a good survival rate. There is an outline research proposal which will be worked up.	Business Growth Manager	March 2020	<p>A draft research proposal was prepared but again COVID disrupted planning and delivery. Remains a key issue, highlighted only recently in related research over workspace demand. More in depth analysis and research will be undertaken to inform R1, R3 and R4. By December 2021.</p>

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<b>R3</b>	The approach to the Business Support drop – in service should be evaluated.	3	Agreed. The drop – in service is gaining momentum now. Resource would be the barrier to any further expansion. Working with library staff on awareness raising and signposting of service available.	Business Growth Manager	March 2020	Will review entire approach to delivering the start-up advice service taking into account the enhanced 'Ask About Business' Library information service. Clearly face to face/drop in advice ceased over the last year in all locations as the advice service switched to online and telephone. Any review will take into account all channels of engagement and staffing capacity. New approach embedded by March 2022.

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<b>R4</b> A full business case should be developed for any future investment in additional managed workspace facilities.	2	Agreed. Business case will be prepared.	Business Growth Manager	As the opportunity arises	The Edge (redevelopment of Stanley Buildings) enterprise facility is one of seven key projects within Blackpool's Towns Fund programme. A pre-condition of approval of the £6.3m project (£4.5m capital grant, and match funding of £1.8m) is a Treasury Green Book Business Case. This is underway and will be independently appraised prior to Executive and HMG approval. November 2021.
<b>R5</b> Data should be collected promptly on the Business Growth funding leveraged measure and a performance target should be set against the measure.	3	Agreed. Data is now captured / monitored. Will consider how this can be reported.	Business Growth Manager	March 2020	Data is being collected (via the Evolutive system) evidencing leveraged investment and jobs created. Completed.
<b>R6</b> An appropriate and consistent approach to job targets should be considered for Business Support services to support improved outcomes.	3	Agreed. Data is now captured / monitored. Will consider how this can be reported.	Business Growth Manager	March 2020	Jobs created as a result of direct support for start-ups and growth companies are recorded. Available on request for directorate business planning and monitoring. Completed.

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<b>R7</b> The impacts of events and workshops should be identified with partners.	3	Agreed. Data is now captured / monitored. Will consider how this can be reported.	Business Growth Manager	March 2020	Face to face workshops have ceased in the last year, including online workshops. Advice moved to 121 online. We will look to reintroduce events when it is safe to do so. We have however facilitated workshops with the tourism sector and a wider audience on recovery, grants and COVID safe measures on video conferencing.
<b>R8</b> The possibilities for increased digital delivery of Business Support services through the Blackpool Unlimited portal should be explored.	2	Agreed.	Business Growth Manager	March 2020	Part of larger review required. Have piloted bite sized YouTube advice sessions – including: 10 Steps to Self-Employment, Pricing, Selling, Business Insurance, Financial Forecasting, Market Research, Google My Business. This content will be promoted through the updated website, please see R9.

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<b>R9</b>	The potential for further website targeting and for evaluating the impact of the website should be considered.	3	Agreed – to be linked to R8.	Business Growth Manager	March 2020	New look website to be launched April 2021, to include development of membership area to promote targeted content.
<b>R10</b>	As resources permit, a bespoke business survey on Business Support and a research report should be considered.	2	Agreed.	Business Growth Manager	March 2020	Not progressed for reasons set out above re COVID. May be required as part of wider discussions over economic recovery. The team has assessed more than 2300 applicants for discretionary COVID grants schemes. Application data highlights business recovery planning for business sectors most affected by COVID, including some insight to future business support needs. This information is almost certainly far more rich than a pre COVID business survey would have been.

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<b>R11</b>	Alternative approaches to obtaining customer feedback should be considered, including consideration of possible qualitative approaches.	2	Agreed. To be linked to the implementation of Recommendation 10. Need to also consider people not using Council business Support services.	Business Growth Manager	March 2020	Considered varying approaches. Need to revisit as economy starts to reopen and services recommence. Enhanced digital offer will be required. Linked to R2. Note the service is ISO9001 & Matrix accredited so evaluation of feedback is a compliance requirement and externally reviewed.
<b>R12</b>	The level, type and complexity of Airport Enterprise Zone enquiries requiring business support over the next few years should be identified and the development of a costed service level agreement for an agreed package of support from the Business Support Team to the Airport Enterprise Zone should be considered.	2	Agreed.	Head of Economic & Cultural Services	March 2020	EZ has had to focus resources on additional project management expertise. Business support proposal was not progressed due to pandemic. Business support for EZ businesses continues irrespective of a service level agreement. Post pandemic discussions will resume to formalise arrangements. Target date March 2022.
<b>R13</b>	Information sharing arrangements with Boost and its providers should be explored.	3	This has now been implemented.	-	-	Completed.

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<b>R14</b> A Council wide vision and approach for its interactions with businesses should be developed and agreed and coordinating and communication mechanisms across different service areas should be considered.	2	Agreed. A paper will be taken to the Corporate Leadership Team for decision.	Director of Communication and Regeneration	Paper to CLT by 31st March 2020. Outcome implementation pending decisions taken.	This is closely linked to R15 below. Work has been delayed due to the pandemic. However the operation of grant schemes and other support in the past year has led to closer working relationships with other business facing departments. These will be used to take a more unified approach forward. Target date for CLT paper 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2022.
<b>R15</b> A 'business friendly' guide for businesses interacting with the Council and the Council approach to businesses should be considered.	3	Agreed. A paper will be taken to the Corporate Leadership Team for decision.	Director of Communication and Regeneration	Paper to CLT by 31st March 2020. Outcome implementation pending decisions taken.	Please see response to R14.
<b>R16</b> The potential for more effective use of the Evolutive system for data management should be explored.	2	Agreed.	Business Growth Manager	March 2020	Progress has been delayed due to impact of pandemic on normal team activity. This will be integral to R3 above and embedded by March 2022.