Notice of:	**EXECUTIVE**
Decision Number:	EX31/2021
Relevant Officer:	Victoria Gent, Director of Children's Services
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jim Hobson, Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Schools.
Date of Meeting:	12 July 2021

BLACKPOOL LITERACY STRATEGY

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To approve the Blackpool Literacy Strategy and agree that to move onto the next stage of implementing the strategy.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To approve the Blackpool Literacy Strategy attached at Appendix 3a to the Executive report, with effect until 30 August 2030.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 Blackpool has a poor record in relation to standards of literacy at all age-levels and in all age groups. Exam results at GCSE level are low comparable to other areas nationally and other similar areas. Adult literacy levels are also low. Only with a collaborative effort to improve literacy levels across Blackpool in all age groups, but particularly in the Early Years and through Key Stage 1, will we see lasting change in these outcomes.

3.2	Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council?	No
3.3	Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget?	Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is: "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience".

6.0 Background Information

6.1 Blackpool Council and its partners have developed the "2020-30 Education Strategy" for Blackpool. The Literacy strategy is an integral part of this strategy, alongside the Inclusion Strategy, NEET Strategy and Attendance Strategy. The strategy has been developed alongside Children's scrutiny over the last twelve months and has been open as a consultation to all stakeholders in Blackpool. Numerous working parties have been established to feed relevant information and perspectives into the strategy. Charities such as the National Literacy Trust have also been involved and have contributed.

6.2 It is important that this strategy is developed and then delivered upon because literacy is a fundamental building block of the education improvement strategy / timeline in Blackpool. The strategy will be monitored by the Blackpool Education Improvement Board and the Children and Families Partnership Board. Strategic delivery partners will be recruited, via an open tender and a literacy lead will be in post by the end of December 2021.

6.3 The strategy will begin in September 2021 and will be reviewed annually up to 2025, then onwards until 2030.

6.4 The Literacy Strategy has been developed with input from the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee. The draft strategy has been amended to include suggestions made by the Committee. The attached version was approved by the Committee at its meeting on 22 April 2021.

6.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 **List of Appendices:**

Appendix 3a: Literacy Strategy.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk Management considerations:

10.1 Without successful implementation of a strategy and the associated plans related to literacy, Blackpool will be unable to improve the outcomes for children and families above the levels that we currently see. This is a considerable issue for the town and it significantly hinders attempts to improve the education provision in Blackpool and to open up access to the job market for more Blackpool residents, including "Our Children".

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 The Equality duty makes it an obligation for Blackpool to ensure that there is equal access to services and as far as possible, opportunities in Blackpool. Literacy is one of the key parts of equality for all, in Blackpool and wider.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 This strategy has been co-produced with children and education partners across Blackpool, over the last 10 months. It has been to Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee in a number of forms and has been approved by the members of Scrutiny. It is also supported, fully, by Blackpool Education Improvement Board.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

15.0 Key decision information:

15.1	Is this a key decision?	Yes
15.2	If so, Forward Plan reference number:	8/2021
15.3	If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days?	N/A
15.4	If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:	

16.0 Call-in information:

16.1	Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process?	No
16.2	If **yes**, please give reason:	

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: Date approved:

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1 None.

19.0 Executive decision:

19.1 The Executive agreed the recommendation as outlined above namely:

To approve the Blackpool Literacy Strategy attached at Appendix 3a to the Executive report, with effect until 30 August 2030.

20.0 **Date of Decision:**

20.1 12 July 2021

21.0 Reason(s) for decision:

21.1 Blackpool has a poor record in relation to standards of literacy at all age-levels and in all age groups. Exam results at GCSE level are low comparable to other areas nationally and other similar areas. Adult literacy levels are also low. Only with a collaborative effort to improve literacy levels across Blackpool in all age groups, but particularly in the Early Years and through Key Stage 1, will we see lasting change in these outcomes.

22.0 Date Decision published:

22.1 13 July 2021

23.0 Executive Members in attendance:

23.1 Councillor L Williams

Councillor Benson, Hobson and Smith

24.0 Call-in:

24.1

25.0 Notes:

25.1 The following Executive members while not present in the room and not able to vote, joined and participated in the meeting virtually:

Councillors Brookes, Campbell, Farrell, Hugo and I Taylor