

APPENDIX 6(a)

Annual Governance Statement 2020/2021 Half-Year Review

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
Code of Conduct and Behaviours	A Governance Framework for the Council will be developed.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	Before mid-term review	<u>Implemented</u> The Code of Governance which includes the Governance Framework was considered by the Audit Committee in June 2021 and adopted by Full Council in September 2021.
	Details of refresher training for elected members will be provided in conjunction with the approval of the new Code of Conduct.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	After mid-term review	<u>In Progress</u> Workshops have been held with the Standards Independent members and the Standard Committee members from Blackpool and Fylde Council to review the LGA model code alongside the current version. A revised Code is to be submitted for approval in February 2022. Training for members will be rolled out once approved.

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
	Provide elected members with an up to date organisation structure detailing officer responsibility areas.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	After mid-term review	<p><u>Implemented</u></p> <p>Up-to-date directorate structure charts, with contact details, were emailed to all members in November 2021. These are to be revisited quarterly, to ensure the information remains current.</p>
Ethical and Responsible Governance	A training course regarding applying the Public Sector Equality Duty to decision making should be developed and rolled out to officers and elected members.	Director of Resources	Before mid-term review.	<p><u>In Progress</u></p> <p>The course has been developed and two pilot sessions undertaken to ensure that it is ready to launch in 2022. The concept and rationale has been discussed with the relevant Cabinet Member and Chief Officers in November 2021.</p>
	Develop an Ethical Policy clearly defining expectations of the wholly owned companies and the Shareholder and the decision making process.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	After mid-term review	<p><u>In Progress</u></p> <p>A draft policy is in place which will be incorporated into the wider Governance Framework. The revised Governance Framework will be considered by Shareholder Committee in February.</p>

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
	Produce an action plan setting out the roadmap to net zero as part of the climate change agenda for Blackpool.	Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Strategy	Before mid-term review	<p><u>Implemented</u></p> <p>The Climate Change Action Plan has been produced and was approved by the Executive on the 8th November 2021.</p>
<p>Commitment to Openness, Communication and Consultation</p>	Continue to deliver the channel shift agenda to improve accessibility to residents and reduce demand on Council resources with a focus on helping with the recovery of Blackpool following the pandemic.	Director of Resources / Director of Communication and Regeneration	After mid-term review	<p><u>In Progress</u></p> <p>Progress continues to be made in a number of areas including the introduction of automated chat bot on some Council webpages, new online forms and automated processing for Revenues.</p> <p>A new online application form for Household Support has been introduced to continue to provide support to residents following the pandemic.</p> <p>A number of projects to improve processes for both the website and internal use within the Council are ongoing and progress will continue to be made on these in the coming months.</p>

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
	<p>Implement a Community Engagement Strategy and supported guidance to ensure a coordinate and robust approach is in place building on the learning gained during responding to the current pandemic.</p>	<p>Director of Public Health</p>	<p>Before mid-term review</p>	<p><u>In Progress</u></p> <p>Following a scrutiny review steps are being taken to revise some of the documentation to work together with pre-existing documents developed by Headstart in order to create some consistency in engagement activity and documents across the Council.</p> <p>A draft strategy will be ready by January that will consider both the Headstart participation guidance and the NHS' engagement strategy.</p>
	<p>Consider the potential of developing a programme of potential schemes which would be ready should a funding stream become available. Where appropriate seek ways in which to better involve the community, businesses and the third sector in the development of this programme.</p>	<p>Corporate Leadership Team</p>	<p>After mid-term review</p>	<p><u>In Progress</u></p> <p>The Growth and Prosperity Team has and is continuing to develop a list for capital funding projects. This enabled the Council to submit successful bids for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £8.66m for Houndshill Phase 2 extension and Abingdon Street Market

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
				<p>acquisition and refurbishment under the Getting Building Fund.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The largest Town Deal in the country for 7 schemes • £733,000 Community Renewal Fund for 4 schemes including the Youth Hub. • £53,000 for housing at the Mountford Centre under the Brownfield Land Release Fund <p>As part of the Town Deal Programme the Council established a Town Deal Board, a Town Deal Investment Panel (with public, private and voluntary sector partners). A Community Engagement Team was established which has coordinated a programme of community engagement activity to help develop the initial Town Deal Investment Plan and</p>

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
				programme and is now securing ongoing engagement on the individual projects.
Developing, Communicating and Translating the Vision	Complete the review of the Council Plan to ensure that the impact of the pandemic is captured and ensure that Council strategies are reviewed in light of the pandemic and amended accordingly.	Assistant Chief Executive and Director of Strategy	Before mid-term review	<u>In Progress</u> A public engagement exercise has been undertaken. A draft document is to be presented for discussion at the Executive and Full Council in Spring.
	Consider ways in which to better involve elected members in the development of the Capital Strategy to ensure the mix of schemes not only focus on the economy but also improving our communities' wellbeing in residential areas.	Director of Communication and Regeneration / Director of Resources	After mid-term review	<u>Implemented</u> The Informal Scrutiny Leadership Board of 13th July 2021 did consider the Capital Strategy 2021/22-23/24 and their work-plan includes capital budget scrutiny on the 19th January 2022 and revisit the Capital Strategy on 13th July 2022. Regular reporting on capital projects takes place at the Executive and Full Council.

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
<p>Performance Management</p>	<p>Ensure that the changes implemented as a result of the Ofsted Report on Children’s Services are adequately embedded to drive performance improvements.</p>	<p>Director of Children’s Services</p>	<p>After mid-term review</p>	<p><u>In Progress</u></p> <p>The most recent Ofsted monitoring visit had found the service to be making steady progress. The visit highlighted key areas for continued focus over the following twelve months including tackling variability of practice, ensuring a solid workforce of social workers and strengthening the management team.</p> <p>The Getting to Good Board is responsible for overseeing the input of all partners and for providing scrutiny and challenge to the improvement process.</p> <p>There are regular meetings with the Department for Education Improvement Partner who provides a further level of external challenge.</p>

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
Compliance with Relevant Laws, Regulations, Internal Policies and Procedures	Implement the recommendations made by the ICO in their recent audit of the Council's Information Governance arrangements.	Director of Governance and Partnerships	Before mid-term review	<u>In Progress</u> The Council has implemented the majority of recommendations and their robustness is subject to an internal audit prior to their submission to the Information Commissioners Office.
Financial Management	Undertake a full review of the Council's Medium Term Financial Sustainability Strategy.	Director of Resources	Before mid-term review	<u>Implemented</u> The Medium Term Financial Sustainability Strategy has been reviewed and was approved by the Executive on the 8 th November 2021.
Audit Arrangements	Continue to embed effective working relations with the Council's new external auditors.	Director of Resources	Before mid-term review	<u>Implemented</u> Quarterly liaison meetings have now been scheduled between internal and external audit.
	Participate in an external assessment of the adequacy of the internal audit services in terms of PSIAS compliance.	Director of Resources	Before mid-term review	<u>Implemented</u> The external assessment took place in June / July 2021 and the report confirmed that the internal audit team conform to

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
				<p>the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. The report was presented to Audit Committee in September 2021.</p>
	<p>Opportunities to review good practice with other Audit Committees will be explored.</p>	<p>Director of Governance and Partnerships</p>	<p>After mid-term review</p>	<p><u>In Progress</u></p> <p>The Audit Training Academy has been established to ensure that all members of the committee receive regular modular training on a range of issues. This includes good practice and lessons learned from elsewhere.</p> <p>In addition, many of the members sit on Audit Committees on the wholly owned companies where training and networking opportunities are now available. This helps share knowledge and skills which can then be adapted to the Council's Audit Committee.</p>

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
<p>Risk Management</p>	<p>Undertake a project to assess the benefits of hybrid working when employees return to the office post pandemic.</p>	<p>Assistant Chief Executive / Director of Strategy and Performance</p>	<p>After mid-term review</p>	<p><u>In Progress</u></p> <p>The Council is seeking to adopt an agile work style, embracing the positive changes that the Covid pandemic has had on the way Council Services are delivered, with some staff working from home part time and in the office part time.</p> <p>Staff have adapted extremely well during the lock down restrictions, bringing forward transformational change in the way that services are delivered. A staff survey was undertaken which has highlighted that the majority of staff are supportive of a move to hybrid working.</p> <p>The Council has considered what impact this shall have on its property and office requirements for the future, with the expectation that the core Council offices will reduce from a 7 to 10 desk ratio, to a 5</p>

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
				<p>to 10 desk ratio on average. This will enable further rationalisation of the Council’s operational portfolio and present opportunities to active further savings on property running costs and sites for disposal or development.</p> <p>New technology and software has enabled more remote working in the majority of service areas, providing customer support and access to be delivered in different ways.</p>
Learning and Development	Undertake further work on succession planning for Senior Leadership Team roles.	Chief Executive	After mid-term review	<p><u>In Progress</u></p> <p>A report has recently been agreed by the Corporate Leadership Team which maps out the process for this exercise.</p>
	Use the findings from the staff survey to develop a new Workforce Development Strategy for the Council.	Chief Executive	After mid-term review	<p><u>In Progress</u></p> <p>The results of the staff survey have recently been taken to the Corporate Leadership Team for consideration. Individual</p>

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
				<p>directorate reports will now be made available for consideration by Departmental Management Teams. Findings will be factored into the Workforce Development Strategy for the Council.</p>
	<p>Develop succession planning processes for elected members who are appointed to non-executive director roles at the wholly owned companies to enable a smooth transition.</p>	<p>Director of Governance and Partnerships</p>	<p>After mid-term review</p>	<p><u>In Progress</u></p> <p>Directorships have been reviewed and where appropriate renewed. New role descriptions are being developed for non-executive directors which will be used for succession planning and will be shared with political group leaders.</p>
	<p>Review the role profiles of elected member positions to include more guidance on what training courses, seminars and conferences would be beneficial as the roles develop year by year.</p>	<p>Director of Governance and Partnerships</p>	<p>After mid-term review</p>	<p><u>Implemented</u></p> <p>All role profiles have been reviewed and there is now the inclusion of how training can be accessed and hyperlinks to further reading /resources provided by relevant national organisations.</p>

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
				Role descriptions are accessible to all members via a MS Teams group, which can be viewed via the iPad.
Partnership and Joint Working	Develop a Partnership Governance Framework setting out partnership governance principles and including a register of significant partnerships.	Director of Governance and Partnership	Before mid-term review	<p><u>Implemented</u></p> <p>The Partnership Governance Framework was presented to Audit Committee in September 2021 and adopted by Full Council in November 2021.</p>
	Continue to strengthen communication with and support for the business sector particularly in terms of recovery from the pandemic and seek to maximise the benefits from opportunities such as the Enterprise Zone.	Director of Communication and Regeneration	Before mid-term review	<p><u>In Progress</u></p> <p>The Blackpool Council Business Loans Fund has been in place for a number of years the total fund being £200million. The fund has twin aims: to promote economic development in Blackpool in a sustainable manner in line with the Council's priorities; and, to generate a return on investment as a source of income for the Council. The Council's loan fund is to enable growth and regeneration rather than a last resort for external businesses</p>

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
				<p>during the pandemic as national schemes have been available (e.g. Bounce Back, CBILS, Recovery Loans).</p> <p>The value of business grants issued in response to the 2020/21 Covid-19 pandemic was £100,962,031.</p> <p>There are online links to national business support and finance via Blackpoolunlimited.com</p> <p>Earlier this year, the Council unveiled a £1m package to kick-start the town's tourism economy after businesses suffered unprecedented losses over the course of the pandemic. These initiatives have been put in place to accelerate resort recovery and help businesses recoup some of their losses.</p> <p>In June 2020 a Blackpool Tourism Recovery Group was established. It includes key stakeholders from attractions, venues, transport</p>

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
				<p>services and the accommodation sector. Almost 18 months on, it continues to meet on a weekly basis to share performance and customer insights, disseminate and interpret Government guidance and restrictions, as well as focusing on forward-looking activities around recruitment, training and destination marketing.</p> <p>The Government's Welcome Back Fund is also being used to support town centre and resort recovery. It has already been utilised to provide the pop-up al fresco eating area in St John's Square, a deep clean of town centre streets and radio campaigns supporting the reopening of the town centre and tourism industry in May and June.</p> <p>Meetings of the Blackpool Business Leadership Group were suspended at the onset of the</p>

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
				<p>pandemic in March 2020. Communication with group members continued during 2020 and the first half of 2021 via email updates and some virtual briefing sessions, but physical meetings were not reintroduced until July 2021. Meetings have now returned to a two-monthly cycle and while attendance levels are not quite at pre-pandemic levels, more than 100 businesses attended each of the meetings in July, September and November.</p> <p>Progress continues to be made on delivering the Enterprise Zone. A key factor in this was bringing the management of Blackpool Airport back in house.</p>
	<p>Maximise the opportunity for digital literacy via the Fibre Blackpool project in order to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents.</p>	<p>Director of Resources</p>	<p>After mid-term review</p>	<p><u>In Progress</u></p> <p>To date Fibre Blackpool co-operative members have connected a community centre and a youth club, sponsored a</p>

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
				<p>digital skills programme for girls in Blackpool secondary skills and sponsored Youth Pride.</p> <p>Further discussions are ongoing about how co-op members can assist in the reduction of digital poverty across Blackpool.</p>
	<p>Implement a new Shareholder Committee to strengthen Shareholder Governance Arrangements with the Wholly Owned Companies.</p>	<p>Director of Governance and Partnership</p>	<p>Before mid-term review</p>	<p><u>Implemented</u></p> <p>The Shareholder Committee has now been established. The Powers and Duties were approved by the Executive on the 14th June 2021 and revised at the Executive on the 8th November 2021.</p>
	<p>Review the training opportunities for Non-Executive Directors (including elected member appointments) on the wholly owned companies.</p>	<p>Director of Governance and Partnership</p>	<p>After mid-term review</p>	<p><u>In Progress</u></p> <p>A series of Audit Committee training sessions have been held for those non-executive directors serving on company Audit Committees.</p> <p>A rolling programme of training for non-executive directors will be launched in the spring to</p>

Issue	Actions	Responsible Officer (s)	Target Date	Half-Year Progress
				include training on legal duties of directors, audit training, GDPR and other subjects as appropriate.