

APPENDIX 4(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>	
R1	The training needs of staff involved in advertising and sponsorship should be reviewed to ensure that best practice and techniques are being deployed.	3	Agreed. Will be picked as part of the IPA process.	Head of Tourism and Communications	December 2019	A training module was delivered in October 2020 via PowerPoint by the Business Development Manager (BDM) to those involved in customer facing interactions, on basic sales cycles and negotiation skills. More cross channels sales are now occurring and as a result the sharing of best sales practice. A refresh of this training will be undertaken in 2022

Recommendation		Priority	Agreed Action	Responsible officer	Target Date	Progress
R2	A specific policy should be developed that governs the wider spectrum of advertising and sponsorship.	2	Agreed. It is currently in progress. High level advice has been sought which will contribute to the production of guidance for the Council.	Director of Communications and Regeneration	November 2019	An advertising policy was developed with the corporate team and the BDM and an updated version was produced in October 2020. This provided clear advertising guidelines applicable to Council assets and other Council-owned companies.
R3	The production of an advertising and sponsorship strategy and operational plan should be seen as a priority.	2	Agreed.	Head of Tourism and Communications	March 2020	A Council Advertising Business Plan was created by the BDM which encompasses improvements to strategy and income generation across all revised Council-owned assets. The operational plan is frequently reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose. A refresh is currently underway to reflect the COVID-related disruption to key advertising markets

<i>Recommendation</i>		<i>Priority</i>	<i>Agreed Action</i>	<i>Responsible officer</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Progress</i>
R4	We recommend that the Advertising team updates their web presence and also the literature to promote their services, using good examples from other local authorities.	2	Agreed.	Head of Tourism and Communications	March 2020	Web presence for all areas of advertising has been revised on the blackpool.gov.uk site, making our products more visible and communication much simpler.
R5	Any strategy or operational plan should also be supported by a risk register.	2	Agreed.	Head of Tourism and Communications	March 2020	Elements of risk relating to income generation currently sit within risk registers for individual services within the Tourism & Communications portfolio. As a more co-ordinated approach is developed to cross-selling across various assets, it is intended to produce a standalone risk register for Advertising by the end of 2022

Recommendation		Priority	Agreed Action	Responsible officer	Target Date	Progress
R6	The responsibility for securing sponsorship should be clearly assigned and be part of the overall strategy.	2	Agreed. This will be looked at part of the strategy that will be written as per Recommendation 3.	Head of Tourism and Communications	March 2020	This is assigned to the Business Development Manager and covers the Illuminations, events and publications. The BDM also looks at cross-selling opportunities to benefit both the advertiser and the Council assets income.
R7	Market testing of what an external advertising agency could offer to build on and enhance the current advertising function should be considered.	2	Agreed. Will test market to see whether an external agency can help deliver national advertising.	Head of Tourism and Communications	March 2020	Discussions continue with the possibility of outsourcing a number of shelter and bill board sites for digital marketing opportunities. Progress has been delayed to a degree by the impact of the pandemic on advertising markets but will gather pace as those markets start to recover

	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Agreed Action</i>	<i>Responsible officer</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Progress</i>
R8	<p>The Advertising team should conduct a stock-take to ascertain the entirety of advertising assets maintained by the Council. This stock-take should include assets that are little used, such as litter bins and also vehicle advertising. It should also include the Council's digital and social media platforms.</p>	2	<p>Agreed. Will need to capture assets from across the Council.</p>	<p>Head of Tourism and Communications</p>	<p>March 2020</p>	<p>A detailed audit has been carried out for the assets that fall within the remit of the Communications & Regeneration directorate. This comprises bus and tram shelters, billboards, poster sites, the screens in Bickerstaffe, and free-standing pods and panels. It also includes the digital and social media platforms and Illuminations. Further work is being done on identifying assets in other directorates and arms-length companies.</p>

<i>Recommendation</i>		<i>Priority</i>	<i>Agreed Action</i>	<i>Responsible officer</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Progress</i>
R9	A central asset register should be established by the Advertising team.	2	Agreed. As above	Head of Tourism and Communications	March 2020	This is in development as move to more cross-channel marketing packages. This is also a part of the long-term advertising strategy contained within the Business Plan
R10	A comprehensive and supported rate card for the advertising assets should be maintained.	2	Agreed. Head of Tourism and Communications felt that this was already in place for Visit Blackpool, and will check. However these need to be in place across all advertising assets, with necessary baselines and volume discounts.	Head of Tourism and Communications	March 2020	Rate-cards are in place for the assets and products that sit within the Tourism & Communications services. This will form the basis of a uniform rate-card that can be utilised across all Council assets where appropriate.
R11	Charge rates should be benchmarked periodically with similar and/or nearby local authorities to ensure that a fair market rate is being achieved.	2	Agreed.	Head of Tourism and Communications	March 2020	This is undertaken on a regular basis.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Agreed Action</i>	<i>Responsible officer</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Progress</i>
<p>R12 The Advertising team should conduct an analysis on achieving an effective balance between selling Council advertising space primarily to external advertisers as opposed to internal council customers within the context of a potentially increased advertising offer.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Agreed. Campaigns – consider assets (if appropriate) before spending on external advertising. Some free capacity is already being given to Council Services.</p>	<p>Head of Tourism and Communications</p>	<p>March 2020</p>	<p>We work closely with other Council services so that they are able to access advertising platforms where appropriate. This can be done without charge (subject to availability) or at discounted rates if advertising space needs to be guaranteed. Currently demonstrated by the use of the Tower lights and bus shelters as part of an Illuminations sponsor package. Throughout the COVID pandemic when commercial advertising dried up, vacant sites were extensively used for COVID-related public information messages.</p>

	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Agreed Action</i>	<i>Responsible officer</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Progress</i>
R13	As part of the above assessment the Advertising team should assess their income models to allow for internal customers to access advertising space at a reduced rate where mutually beneficial.	2	Agreed. This will be linked to Recommendation 12 (Rate Card). Free space is offered to Council services presently, but not everything can be free.	Head of Tourism and Communications	March 2020	As above
R14	The Advertising team should incorporate the leisure centres and other customer facing buildings as part of their overall Council advertising assets and look to actively place appropriately selected adverts, even if it is to advertise local council services.	3	Agreed. Will discuss with Head of Leisure, Catering and Parks, to ascertain what opportunities exist.	Head of Tourism and Communications	March 2020	This has been tested during Covid with a number of temporary digital screens in select leisure assets and Council offices, and is included in the Advertising Business Plan future strategy. These discussions continue to take place particularly as digital advertising is increasingly replacing traditional methods of advertising.

	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Agreed Action</i>	<i>Responsible officer</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Progress</i>
R15	A thorough review of the current physical advertising asset base should be undertaken to produce a scheduled maintenance and replacement programme.	2	Agreed.	Head of Tourism and Communications	March 2020	A full review of advertising assets was carried out and a schedule of maintenance and replacement is being developed. Where possible, funding bids are being developed in support of this activity
R16	On future advertising related projects, a closer working arrangements should be established with Planning and Highways to allow for problems and issues to be discussed and rectified earlier in the process.	2	Agreed.	Head of Tourism and Communications	March 2020	Future plans and developments continue, especially around the digital strategy for Blackpool, and working closely with Planning and Highways is currently key to its development.
R17	The advertising business and strategic plans, when developed should incorporate planned increases to the advertising assets.	2	Agreed.	Head of Tourism and Communications	March 2020	This forms part of the Business Plan completed by the BDM

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Agreed Action</i>	<i>Responsible officer</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Progress</i>
R18 The Advertising team should engage with the relevant teams within the Council to influence the creation of advertising assets in key new development locations.	2	Agreed.	Head of Tourism and Communications	March 2020	This continues as part of the Growth and Prosperity Agenda, and a recent example of this is currently seen with talks for digital bill boards being developed within the Enterprise Zone at the Airport as part of the existing shelter advertising portfolio and at the new integrated tram terminus at Talbot Gateway

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Agreed Action</i>	<i>Responsible officer</i>	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Progress</i>
<p>R19 The Advertising team should review the feasibility and the income generation potential from advertising on websites, which should at a minimum include advertising local Council Services.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Agreed. Head of Tourism and Communications asked that Internal Audit send some examples of other Council's advertising on their websites.</p>	<p>Head of Tourism and Communications</p>	<p>March 2020</p>	<p>This is currently being explored with an external company. Initial progress was delayed due to the main focus on the corporate website being placed on COVID-related messaging. This will be reviewed again during 2022 as to whether the potential income opportunity outweighs the risk of damaging the integrity of our website. Our VisitBlackpool tourism website continues to generate a healthy income stream</p>