

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>AUDIT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Mark Towers – Director of Governance and Partnerships
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	15 June 2023

## ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022/23

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Audit Committee with the opportunity to review and approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23.

One approved the Annual Governance Statement will be published as part of the Council's Statement of Accounts.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 To consider and approve the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015) require the Council to conduct a review on the effectiveness of its system of internal control and publish an Annual Governance Statement reporting on the review with the Statement of Accounts.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

N/a

### 4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The Annual Governance Statement is relevant to all Council priorities.

### 5.0 Background Information

5.1 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 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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 and up to the date of the approval for the statement of accounts for that year.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

**List of Appendices:**

Appendix 6(a) – Draft Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

**6.0 Legal considerations:**

6.1 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.

**7.0 Equalities considerations:**

8.1 The Councils approach to equality and diversity is set out as part of the Annual Governance Statement.

**9.0 Financial considerations:**

9.1 Each of the actions identified in the Annual Governance Statement will be delivered within the constraints of the agreed budget for 2023/24.

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 Risk management and the control environment have been considered throughout the draft of the Annual Governance Statement.

**11.0 Ethical considerations:**

11.1 N/a

**12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

12.1 None.

**13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

13.1 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, including reviewing the 2021/22 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, Head of Legal Services, Head of ICT, Chief Accountant, Head of Information Governance and the Head of Organisation and Workforce Development.

An elected member workshop took place on the 27 April 2023.

**14.0 Background papers:**

14.1 N/a