

**Report to:**

**AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**Relevant Officer:**

Steve Thompson, Director of Resources

Philip Welsh , Head of Tourism and Communication

Kate Aldridge, Head of Corporate Delivery Performance and Commissioning

**Meeting**

23 November 2023

## STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER DEEP DIVE – INFORMATION

**1.0 Purpose of the report:**

1.1 To consider a progress report on individual risks identified in the Council’s Strategic Risk Register.

**2.0 Recommendation(s):**

2.1 To consider the controls being implemented to manage the strategic risk relating to information.

**3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):**

3.1 To enable CLT and Audit Committee to consider an update and progress report in relation to an individual risk identified on the Strategic Risk Register.

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:**

4.1 N/a

**5.0 Council priority:**

5.1 The risk impacts on all of the Council’s priorities.

**6.0 Background information**

6.1 At its meeting in March 2022, the Audit Committee agreed to continue to invite Strategic Risk Owners to attend future meetings to provide updates and progress reports in relation to the individual risks identified on the Strategic Risk Register.

6.2 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

**7.0 List of Appendices:**

7.1 Appendix 4(a) - Strategic Risk Register Deep Dive – Information

**8.0 Financial considerations:**

8.1 The controls being implemented will be done so within current budget constraints.

**9.0 Legal considerations:**

9.1 Risks need to be effectively managed in order to comply with relevant legislation.

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 To enable CLT and Audit Committee to gain assurance that strategic risks are being effectively managed.

**11.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young People:**

11.1 Equality analysis should have been undertaken, where necessary, when decisions were made in relation to the identification of the actions identified in this document. As this report presents monitoring against pre-agreed actions, no further equality analysis has been undertaken as part of this report.

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

12.1 Sustainability, climate change and environmental matters should have been considered, where necessary, when decisions were made in relation to the identification of the actions identified in this document. As this report presents monitoring against pre-agreed actions, no further analysis has been undertaken as part of this report.

**13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

13.1 The progress report has been prepared in conjunction with risk owners.

**14.0 Background papers:**

14.1 None.

## APPENDIX 4(a) - Risk Category: Information

Risk Appetite: Open

**Risk: a) Residents unable to access / influence information about Council Services.**

**Risk Owner: Director of Communication and Regeneration, Director of Strategy and Performance (Assistant Chief Executive), Director of Resources**

Gross Risk Score	16	Impact – 4	Likelihood – 4
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### What impact does this have?

- Lack of community engagement to inform Council service provision.
- Residents unable to access Council services due to a lack of information.

### What opportunities does this create?

- Strong two way communication channels with residents.
- Residents feel listened to and supported.
- Ease of access to Council services for residents.

### What controls do we already have in place?

- Increased use of new communication channels such as social media and newsletters.
- Increased commitment to one brand for the Blackpool resident.
- Merger of the Communications Team and Visit Blackpool to increase overall capacity and resilience in terms of communications.
- Communications Grid in place which identifies potential stories / events which are coming up over a three month period to enable the Council to effectively plan for its response / communication strategy.
- Channel Shift project group in place which has been further supported by a Scrutiny Review in this area.
- Community Engagement Framework in place.

Net Risk Score	12	Impact – 4	Likelihood – 3
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### What are we doing to further manage the risk?

**Continue to grow the Council's communication with residents, through the use of a wide range of communication channels.**

The Corporate Communications Team continue to use a number of methods of communication. The traditional blackpool.gov.uk website is in place and this is updated on a daily basis. Social media, including Facebook and 'X', is also used to communicate key messages and this continues to grow in terms of usage and customer base.

A printed version of Your Blackpool is produced at least three times a year with the aim being that this is delivered to all households. As with all mass distribution campaigns a 100% successful rate is not

achieved however this is monitored by the Communications Team who continue to liaise with the distributors. There is a monthly e-version of the Your Blackpool newsletter which is e-mailed to residents who have signed up for this service and the Corporate Communications Team continue to grow this database.

A campaign based approach is used where appropriate. Whilst there are channels in place for mass communications these will also be refined and used for specific campaigns. The Communications Team will work with services to identify the relevant target audience and develop a communication strategy around this. Current examples include the work around the Financial Inclusion Strategy, benefit maximisation and the risk of using loan sharks. For events and other key campaigns such as fostering, poster sites will also be used by the Communications Team, such as bus and tram shelters, in order to reach as many people as possible through targeted marketing campaigns.

Where there are specific projects which will affect certain cohorts of residents then a more personalised communications strategy is adopted such as the use of letter drops. Examples of this could involve regeneration schemes or the introduction of other changes such as selective licensing.

#### **Embed the Community Engagement Framework across Council services.**

During this financial year steps have been taken to pilot the new ways to engage with the community as outlined in the framework. Examples include:

- The Blackpool SEND Partnership have co-produced a Young Persons SEND Preparation for Adulthood Strategy. 19 people, with a mix of lived, practice and leadership/commissioning experience met weekly for 6 weeks to co-produce the strategy. A further 15 people with lived experience fed into the group. The draft strategy is now out to consultation and will be reviewed and signed off by the end of the year;
- The Born into Care Project is working to improve services and systems for families who have experienced separation from their baby/babies due to safeguarding concerns. The project involves a mix of people including parents with lived experience, academics and those who work in the system working together as equal partners to bring about change, for more families to be able to stay together, or where this is not possible for the families to experience kind, compassionate trauma informed and trauma responsive care; and
- An engagement process with the LGBTQ is currently underway being led by the Infusions Team.

The Community Engagement Lead has recently returned from maternity leave and the focus over the next twelve months will be to embed the Community Engagement Framework across all Council services.

#### **Channel shift project underway to look at ways to enable residents to contact the Council for services using alternative methods such as the internet.**

A Channel Shift Group is in place which supports services with the delivery of channel shift projects. Significant work has been done in this area over previous years including a number of 'quick win' changes such as for fly tipping, Bulky Matters and Now Cards. For some time the Council have promoted channel shift campaigns using the strapline "Don't waste time, report it online", "Don't waste time, do

it online” and “Don’t waste time, sign up online” This is to encourage residents to carry out tasks such as paying Council Tax and reporting fly-tipping online.

A single sign-on enabling users to access an account through which to conduct Council tasks is being developed by ICT Services.

There is no dedicated team in place for Channel Shift work nor any additional budget so a reliance is placed on services wanting to drive channel shift and fund any changes, with support provided by the multi-disciplinary Channel Shift Group chaired by the Head of Revenues Benefits and Customer Services and supported by ICT Services.

A Scrutiny of Channel Shift has been undertaken and progress against implementing the actions identified in this is reported to the Leadership Scrutiny Board with the last update provided in October 2023.

<b>Target Risk Score</b>	<b>8</b>	Impact – 4	Likelihood – 2
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**What will these additional actions achieve?**

All the actions are aimed at further improving how the Council communicates with its residents and local communities.

**What barriers do we face?**

It is recognised that not all forms of communication are suitable for all residents and therefore it is important that the Council continues to get the balance correct in terms of how messages are communicated.

**Do these actions contribute to the sustainability of the Council?**

Not directly, however good communication helps ensure that residents have key information relating to such matters as climate change and the Council’s budget position.

**Do these actions impact on the Council’s finances?**

By giving residents the option to engage with the Council online helps reduce staffing costs through automation.

**How does this contribute to the Council Plan?**

The provision of good information and communication helps ensure that residents are aware of what the Council is doing to deliver the priorities identified in the Council Plan.

**Any links to other strategic risks?**

Strategy, Governance, Technology

**Any additional changes to this strategic risk?**

The Channel Shift Group continue to consider new technological advancements which can be used for channel shift projects with web/online chat being one area of development and also the increased functionality of artificial intelligence.