

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO ACCOUNTS & AUDIT COMMITTEE

DECISION

Agenda Item No 6

meeting date: 25 NOVEMBER 2020
title: ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
principal author: SUZANNE RAWSON

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1. To provide members with details of the Annual Governance review for 2019/20 and seek approval of the resulting Annual Governance Statement.
- 1.2. Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
 - Community Objectives – none identified.
 - Corporate Priorities – assessing the Council's system of internal control contributes to the achievement of the corporate priority of being a well-managed Council.
 - Other Considerations – none identified.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. All councils are required to prepare an Annual Governance Statement each year in accordance with the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework' and to report publicly on the extent to which they comply with their own Local Code of Corporate Governance. This should include how we have monitored the effectiveness of our governance arrangements in the previous financial year, and detail any planned changes in the coming period.
- 2.2. The Annual Governance Statement is the **backward looking** review of how the Council has performed or acted in relation to the principles that it said it would abide by as detailed within the Local Code of Corporate Governance at the beginning of the year. As such the Local Code of Corporate Governance is the council's **forward looking** statement of how the governance culture of the organisation will be driven.
- 2.3. The process of preparing the Annual Governance Statement should itself add value to the governance and internal control framework of the council.

3 GOVERNANCE REVIEW

- 3.1. A detailed exercise has been undertaken in the annual review of the council's governance arrangements. As previously mentioned this review reflects on the council's Local Code of Corporate Governance and how it has actually performed.
- 3.2. The annual review examines the seven principles of:
 - Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of the 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 intended outcomes;

- Developing the council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it;
- Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management; and
- Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

3.3. In reviewing how the council and its staff and members have acted over the period of review, evidence is also gathered to support the conclusion reached. Examples of evidence that is used to support the conclusion is detailed in the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

Review of Significant Governance Issues Raised in the Annual Governance Statement 2018/19

3.4. There were a number of actions recommended in the 2018/19 annual governance review, and progress with these is detailed in the attached statement and summarised below.

Subject Area	Description	Status	Action
Peer Challenge Review <i>This was carried forward from the 2017/18 review and raised again in the 2018/19 review</i>	As a result of the recommendations of the Peer Challenge Review carried out in 2017/18, the approved action plan from has been attached at Annex 1 for implementation in line with the timescales identified.	Whilst a number of actions are completed there are a number of outstanding actions that continue to be addressed and are being monitored. The latest status is provided at Annex 1.	To be carried forward and addressed in 2020/21
Refuse Vehicle Maintenance Costs <i>This was carried forward from the 2017/18 review and raised again in the 2018/19 review</i>	A significant increase in refuse vehicle maintenance costs was highlighted to the relevant committees and Budget Working Group during 2017/18 and also then in 2018/19.	Causes of the increase in costs were identified and a number of actions were identified by the Council's Corporate Management Team to minimise the ongoing impact of increased vehicle maintenance costs. The actions helped to reduce the level of overspend however there continued to be an overspend on the budget for 2018/19 and this has again been a significant issue in 2019/20.	To be carried forward and addressed in 2020/21
Communications Strategy <i>This was carried forward from the 2017/18 review and raised again in the 2018/19 review</i>	The council does not have an up to date Communications Strategy in place. It is important that there is a structured approach in place as to how the council interacts with its internal and external stakeholders with changing patterns of communication.	The new Corporate Communications Strategy 2019-2021 was approved by Policy and Finance Committee on 18 th June 2019.	Completed

Subject Area	Description	Status	Action
Members Code of Conduct – Complaints Process <i>This was a significant issue in the 2018/19 review</i>	In light of the considerable disruption to council business over the last 18 months it is recommended that the members Code of Conduct is reviewed and the process for dealing with such complaints.	This review was due to be undertaken in 2019/20. It has started but has not yet been completed.	To be carried forward and addressed in 2020/21

Review of Significant Governance Issues for 2019/20

- 3.5. There have been a number of areas raised as a result of this year's annual review. These are detailed within the statement and summarised below. A number of these are carried forward from the 2018/19 review as detailed above.

Peer Challenge Review <i>Carried Forward from 2017/18 and 2018/19 reviews</i>	<p>Work continues to address the issues raised as part of the Peer Challenge Review in 2017/18 and follow-up visit in September 2019. The recommendations made at that time are attached at Annex 1, showing progress and the outstanding issues as last reported to Policy and Finance Committee.</p> <p>As part of this review it is recognised that progress has been made, but that the outstanding recommendations need to be addressed.</p>	Remaining actions to be addressed and an updated report to be taken to Policy and Finance Committee.
Refuse Vehicle Maintenance Costs <i>Carried Forward from 2017/18 and 2018/19 reviews</i>	<p>There has continued to be an overspend in refuse vehicle maintenance costs which have been highlighted to the relevant committees during the year.</p> <p>Work needs to continue to review the overspend and the associated budgets.</p>	A full detailed report to be prepared by the Head of Service, exploring the underlying reasons for the significant overspends seen in each of the recent years (£170k in 2019/20) and detailing proposed action.
Members Code of Conduct – Complaints Process <i>Carried Forward from 2018/19 review</i>	In light of the considerable disruption to council business over the last 18 months it is recommended that the members Code of Conduct is reviewed and the process for dealing with such complaints.	A review has been undertaken and a report prepared for presentation to the Accounts and Audit Committee. This has been delayed due to Covid-19 and the suspension of committee meetings. To be presented to the November 2020 committee meeting.

- 3.6. Progress in addressing the issues raised will be monitored during the year and will also be reviewed at the time of next year's annual review.

3.7. The Annual Governance Statement must be published alongside the council's Statement of Accounts and is currently on the council website together with the draft (subject to audit) copy of the Statement of Accounts. Once approved this will be updated to reflect the approval of the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement at this meeting.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1. The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – work is underway on addressing the issues that have been raised as part of the annual governance review and it is anticipated that all actions can be completed within existing budgets and staffing resources.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None identified
- Political – None identified
- Reputation – The Council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control in place. Failing to adhere to the principles detailed in the Local Code of Corporate Governance has the potential to significantly harm the reputation of the council.
- Equality & Diversity – None identified

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1. Approve the attached Annual Governance Statement 2019/20, which is attached at Annex 1.

INTERNAL AUDITOR

DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

AA14-20/SR/AC
11 November 2020

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

For further information please ask for Suzanne Rawson.

Annual Governance Statement

2019/20



Ribble Valley
Borough Council

www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

Annual Governance Statement **2019/20**

1. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

- 1.1 Ribble Valley Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards; that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and is used economically, efficiently and effectively. The council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, the council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, including arrangements for the management of risk and for dealing with issues which arise.
- 1.3 The council has approved and adopted a Local Code of Corporate Governance, which is reviewed annually and is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016). A copy of the Local Code is on our website at www.ribblevalley.gov.uk.
- 1.4 This statement explains how the council has complied with the Local Code and also how it meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an Annual Governance Statement.
- 1.5 The council's annual review of the effectiveness of its corporate governance for 2019/20 provides assurance on the governance arrangements in place, the progress made against significant governance issues raised at the last annual review and includes an action plan to address significant governance issues identified through this year's review.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

- 2.1. The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the council is directed and controlled, and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its communities. It enables the council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money.
- 2.2. The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.
- 2.3. The governance framework has been in place at the council for the year ended 31 March 2020 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

3. THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The Local Code of Corporate Governance is structured across the seven principles detailed in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016). The governance framework review below has followed this same format.

Principle A - Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

Behaving with Integrity

- 3.2. The council's Constitution sets out how the council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The Constitution is published on the council's website and is reviewed annually.
- 3.3. The standards of ethical behaviour expected from Members and Staff are defined in codes of conduct that are distributed as part of the induction process. On an annual basis Register of Interest forms are completed by both staff and members. The council also operates an annual performance appraisal process for all staff.
- 3.4. All Councillors have to register and declare certain pecuniary interests such as employment, land holdings and contracts with the council, which is published on the council's website. Councillors must declare such interests at meetings which they attend and this is minuted.
- 3.5. There are also procedures laid down for staff and councillors relating to the receipt of gifts and hospitality, and the recording of such.
- 3.6. Included in the Constitution are the terms of reference for Committees and a protocol for Member/Officer Relations.
- 3.7. The council has a Scheme of Delegation to Officers within the Constitution. This clearly details a number of specific areas that are delegated to officers for the purposes of decision-making, without the requirement for a decision to be made by the council, a Committee or sub-Committee.
- 3.8. The council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and accountability. In line with this commitment the council has adopted a whistle-blowing policy to encourage employees and others with serious concerns to come forward in confidence.
- 3.9. The procedures for the public to follow in order to register a complaint regarding the deliverance of the council's services or a breach of the member's code of conduct are detailed on the council's website.
- 3.10. The terms of reference for the Accounts and Audit Committee includes responsibilities around the monitoring and promotion of standards.

Demonstrating Strong Commitment to Ethical Values

- 3.11. Under its terms of reference, the Accounts and Audit Committee champions high standards of ethical governance from elected members and the council as a whole.
- 3.12. The Local Government Association (LGA) is currently in the process of reviewing the 'Model Code of Conduct'. This is suggested national good practice and councils can adopt this code or abide by their own local code. It is proposed that the updated Model Code of Conduct will be taken to LGA General Assembly at the July 2020 annual conference.
- 3.13. The Council has its own Code of Conduct for Members. Allegations that the Code has been breached are dealt with under a procedure approved by the Accounts and Audit Committee. In the Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19 it was recommended that a review of the Members Code of Conduct be carried out in 2019/20. A review has been undertaken and a report has been prepared for presentation to the Accounts and Audit Committee however this has been delayed due to Covid-19 and the suspension of committee meetings.

- 3.14. Whilst the codes of conduct for members and staff are in place, there has been no formal training on ethical awareness over the 2019/20 financial year, but this has been done as part of the new members' induction following local elections in May 2019. It is recommended that there should be an annual refresher on the key elements of the Constitution for all members and that this be included in the members' training plan. The council's performance appraisal process does not specifically take account of values and ethical behaviour.
- 3.15. Procurement activity is undertaken in line with the council's Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations, with any requirements to seek exemption from the same being reported to, or requested from, the relevant service committee through submission of a report.
- 3.16. The council's ethical requirements are expressed through its procurement activity in the form of contract documents and its standard terms and conditions of purchase.

Respecting the Rule of Law

- 3.17. The council has designated the Head of Legal and Democratic Services as Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer has the specific duty to ensure that the council, its officers and its elected members maintain the highest standard of conduct in all they do and as such holds three main roles:
- to report on matters they believe are, or are likely to be, illegal or amount to maladministration;
 - to be responsible for matters relating to the conduct of councillors and officers; and
 - to be responsible for the operation of the council's Constitution.
- 3.18. With reference to the Constitution, this is reviewed annually and approved by Full Council. The council's Monitoring Officer has statutory reporting duties in respect of unlawful decision making and maladministration.
- 3.19. The council's Chief Executive, in the statutory role of Head of Paid Service is responsible for:
- the manner in which the discharge by the council of their different functions is coordinated;
 - the number and grades of staff required by the council for the discharge of their functions;
 - the organisation of the council's staff; and
 - the appointment and proper management of the council's staff.
- 3.20. The council's Chief Financial Officer (S151 Officer) is the Director of Resources. The council complies with CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government.
- 3.21. The council's decision-making hierarchy and terms of reference for each committee are clearly identified within the Constitution.
- 3.22. Any legal advice provided by officers would be retained on the relevant files for future reference. Committee reports include a section in respect of legal risks, and the input from the legal team should be sought in the completion of this section where relevant.
- 3.23. The council has in place an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy which was due to be reviewed in 2019/2020. This has been postponed and will now be reviewed in 2020/21.

Principle B - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Openness

- 3.24. Council meetings are open to the public, other than in limited circumstances where consideration of confidential or exempt information means that the public are excluded. Each meeting also includes public participation with an opportunity to speak regarding items on the agenda.
- 3.25. The council utilises its website to provide an open culture with access to meeting agendas, reports and minutes. Transparency information is also reported in a timely manner and is grouped together for ease of access.
- 3.26. The information which residents use most, such as Council Tax and Planning can be accessed quickly and easily from the main page.
- 3.27. The council's priorities and core values are clearly identified in the Corporate Strategy 2019-2023 and includes key actions. This is available on the council website, as is the Community Strategy. The Community Strategy is currently under review and will be completed in 2020/21. It will cover the period 2020-2025.
- 3.28. All decisions of the council are made in accordance with principles laid down in the Constitution. All reports follow a format that is repeated across all committees and where a decision is needed, they provide the information necessary for members. Any further requests for information are minuted.
- 3.29. A set timetable is in place for meetings, the production and distribution of agenda packs, and the holding of briefings prior to the meeting between key officers and committee chairs and vice-chairs.
- 3.30. We make use of a Citizens Panel and other consultations and surveys wherever possible in informing decisions.

Engaging Comprehensively with Institutional Stakeholders

- 3.31. The council's Communications Strategy for 2019-2021 can be viewed on the council's website.
- 3.32. The council does not have any formal partnerships in place and so there were no reviews to be undertaken in this area. There was representation on the Local Enterprise Partnership for only part of the year.

Engaging Stakeholders Effectively, Including Individual Citizens and Service Users

- 3.33. When the council is looking to consult, it reviews the parties that need to be involved and looks to ensure that those with an interest are involved. The council has previously been part of the Infusion Research partnership which assisted the Council with research and consultation activity. Any future consultation will be arranged on an ad-hoc basis as and when required and, if required, expertise will be procured from research and consultation consultants.
- 3.34. The council has a Citizens Panel which can be used to enable the council to access the views of Ribble Valley people. The results can be used to develop policies and strategies, inform decision-making and identify where service improvements may be required.
- 3.35. The bi-annual Perception Survey was due to be undertaken in May 2020 but this has been delayed due to the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's day to day operations. The survey

provides residents with the opportunity to have their say on a range of issues affecting their locality and quality of life. When the survey is undertaken a report of its findings will be reported to Policy and Finance Committee in due course.

- 3.36. The council actively promotes the use of its social media sites and engagement with its website.

Principle C – Defining Outcomes in Terms of Sustainable Economic, Social and Environmental Benefits

Defining Outcomes

- 3.37. The council's vision, priorities and objectives are clearly set out in the approved Corporate Strategy document 2019 - 2023, which is available to view on the council's website. The Corporate Strategy Action Plan sets out underlying actions that have been established in order to support, and measure progress towards, the achievement of the council's objectives detailed in the strategy. The document is reviewed on an annual basis. There are no individual service plans in place.
- 3.38. The Core Strategy 2008-28 sets out the long-term vision for the Borough and the strategic policies that will deliver that vision, including the Development Management policies.
- 3.39. The Community Strategy 2014-2019 sets out the Council's community aspirations, needs and priorities. The strategy outlines a series of priorities and objectives, including tackling rural isolation, affordable housing, tourism, the environment and public transport. The Strategy will be reviewed in 2020 to cover the period 2020-2025.
- 3.40. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy outlines how we intend to raise and use the resources needed to deliver our services and priorities over the medium term. The financial strategy includes a budget forecast that is reviewed bi-annually. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy is a 3-year strategy which is fully reviewed annually to reflect any changes. The strategy covers both revenue and capital budgets.
- 3.41. The council has a performance management framework which allows it to monitor progress on a number of key service areas. Progress is reported to the Corporate Management Team and final outturn performance is reported to relevant Service Committees at the end of the financial year.
- 3.42. The Council's Risk Register sets out the risks that we have to manage to help us achieve our objectives.
- 3.43. The council also has processes in place to identify and manage risks. The Risk Register is used to provide assurance over actions being taken to manage key risks, and to inform risk management planning and help in seeking to mitigate such risks.

Sustainable Economic, Social and Environmental Benefits

- 3.44. Consideration is given to economic, social and environmental benefits in the assessing of bids for the council's capital programme.
- 3.45. As capital resources are limited, a large proportion of the capital programme is committed to the ongoing replacement of items such as vehicles and plant. The latest environmental best practice is always reflected upon when procuring such items, within the budgets that are available.

- 3.46. Full detailed information is provided to members in the budget setting process for both revenue and capital. The Budget Working Group is valued and allows for more focused work to be undertaken and specific guidance to be given to Service Committees.
- 3.47. All decision reports include a section on risks, which includes those risks in relation to the decision to be taken by members:
- Resources.
 - Technical, Environmental and Legal.
 - Political.
 - Reputation.
 - Equality and Diversity.
- 3.48. The council's Core Values state that we will:
- Lead the Community;
 - Strive to achieve excellence;
 - Ensure that access to services is available to all;
 - Treat everyone equally;
 - Respect all individuals and their views; and
 - Appreciate and invest in our staff.

Principle D – Determining the Interventions Necessary to Optimise the Achievement of the Intended Outcomes

Determining Interventions

- 3.49. It is ensured that the financial management of the council is sound, by regular and timely reporting to budget holders, Management Team, Leaders and the Council as a whole. Budget setting, control and reporting requirements are set out in the council's Financial Regulations, which have full regard to internal and external regulations and relevant codes of practice.
- 3.50. Capital and Revenue budgets are monitored closely and reports on budget allocations and actual performance are provided to the Corporate Management Team and to relevant Committees. Further reporting is provided to the Budget Working Group and minutes of the same are reported to Policy and Finance Committee.
- 3.51. Delegation of decision making to officers is detailed in the Constitution so that they can deal with the day-to-day running of the service without the need to constantly refer matters back to Committees. Details of what decisions are taken in this way are included in the Scheme of Delegation in the council's Constitution. Further specific delegations may be granted through recommendation in public reports to Committee.

Planning Interventions

- 3.52. There are clear timetables in place for the various Service Committee meetings. These are published on the council's website.
- 3.53. A timetable is set and approved by the Policy and Finance Committee for the council budget setting process, detailing key dates for meetings to consider reports on capital and revenue

budgets and the setting of fees and charges. Also included in such timetables are the regular meetings of the Budget Working Group.

- 3.54. A further timetable is also set by the Accounts and Audit Committee for the closure of accounts process, similarly detailing key dates and meetings in the process. The closure of accounts for 2019/20 has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic which has seen the deadline for the issuing of a draft Statement of Accounts postponed from 31 May 2020 to 31 August 2020. Likewise, the date for publishing the audited accounts has been postponed from 31 July 2020. The Council now has until 30 November 2020 to do this.
- 3.55. Where relevant, service areas provide key performance indicators which are monitored and reported on centrally to all service committees at the end of the financial year. There is also in-year monitoring and reporting to the Corporate Management Team. It is likely that due to the effect of Covid-19 on the council's resources and additional demands placed upon the council during the period of the pandemic, there will be an impact on the achievement of some of the key performance indicators, particularly in the 2020/21 financial year.
- 3.56. All service budgets are matched to the various council priorities and analysis of the distribution of the budgets across priorities is given in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for both revenue and capital.
- 3.57. The medium-term financial forecast is reported to the Policy and Finance Committee twice a year and is also reported to the Budget Working Group. Clear budget guidance is given to all service committees through the Budget Working Group and also to the finance team and budget holders.

Optimising Achievement of Intended Outcomes

- 3.58. The council balances service priorities whilst setting the overall budget in line with the work of the Budget Working Group. This includes both revenue and capital budgets.
- 3.59. Very little of the council's procurement activity falls under the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations due to the level of expenditure involved. As a result, the undertakings around The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 are satisfied through the various Framework Agreements that are used.

Principle E – Developing the Entity's Capacity, Including the Capability of its Leadership and the Individuals Within it.

Developing the Entity's Capacity

- 3.60. The council has a performance appraisal process in place for all staff. As part of this process targets are set and also future training needs are identified for provision at a service level, or where applicable through the provision of corporate level training.
- 3.61. The requirement for key property, plant and equipment is reviewed on a regular basis, particularly through the capital programme process and the bidding for resources with a detailed narrative on need.
- 3.62. Various service areas undertake differing levels of service comparison with other local authorities. There is no formal planned benchmarking of services; however, ad-hoc service comparisons are undertaken as needed.
- 3.63. During 2019/20 the Local Government Association (LGA) carried out a follow-up visit in relation to the Corporate Peer Challenge review that they undertook with the Council in 2017/18. The team were on-site from 26 to 27 September 2019.

- 3.64. The key areas that the Peer Challenge team looked at on their initial visit in 2017 were the issues of leadership, governance, corporate capacity and financial resilience. In addition, the agreed scope of the Peer Challenge included:
- Promoting Local Growth
 - Balancing Growth and Housing
- 3.65. There were a number of suggestions and observations made following the Corporate Peer Challenge review that led to some key recommendations for the Council. These were put into an action plan and their implementation was monitored periodically.
- 3.66. The latest version of the action plan, prepared in advance of the follow-up visit is attached at Annex A. It has not yet been presented to Policy and Finance Committee due to the impact of Covid-19 and suspension of committee meetings.
- 3.67. The council does not have a workforce plan in place, it currently takes more of a reactive approach in terms of staffing, however it is intended to devise a plan in 2020/21.

Developing the Capability of the Entity's Leadership and Other Individuals

- 3.68. The functions of statutory officers are detailed in the Constitution and the roles of the Committees are documented within the Constitution. The arrangements in place for the discharge of functions by specific officers under delegation are set out in the Officer Delegation Scheme.
- 3.69. The Corporate Management team meets on a weekly basis to discuss matters of strategic and operational importance to the council. Weekly meetings take place between the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) and the Leader of the Council.
- 3.70. The Chief Executive leads on implementing strategy and managing service delivery and other outputs set by members.
- 3.71. The council's Constitution is reviewed annually, including the Scheme of Delegation. Additionally, the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules are all reviewed annually. As a result of Covid-19 a temporary addendum to Part 4 of the Constitution (Standing Orders) has been approved that, amongst other matters, allows meetings and voting to be conducted remotely via internet access.
- 3.72. To enable Elected Members and Senior Officers to have a shared understanding of their respective roles the Council has a Protocol governing Member and Officer relations.
- 3.73. All newly elected members receive an induction and an ongoing training plan for members is in place, however it needs to be reviewed and refreshed. Requests for training by members and senior management will always be considered.
- 3.74. A standard induction process is in place for members and also for staff. The HR team does not tailor staff inductions to the employee's specific role, however further induction is generally provided separately by the relevant section.
- 3.75. The council's performance management appraisal process includes a section reviewing past training and identifying new training that may be required for the employee. This training may be provided at a service level, or if there is demand, at a corporate level.
- 3.76. Records are monitored regarding member attendance, but there is no formal review of individual member performance or training needs. There are no personal development plans in place for members.

- 3.77. The council undertook a Peer Challenge review led by the LGA who carried out an assessment and provided feedback. The key areas that the team looked at were the issues of leadership, governance, corporate capacity and financial resilience. There were a number of suggestions and observations made within the report that led to some key recommendations for the council. An action plan was formulated to implement recommendations and the latest version of the plan is attached at Annex A.
- 3.78. The council has a staff handbook which is published on its Intranet, ensuring that all policies are available to staff. There is also a hard copy maintained at various sites for those with no access to the Intranet.
- 3.79. With regards to the physical and mental wellbeing of staff, the council offers a range of proactive measures including a formal programme of Health and Safety training and advice/guidance on coping with stress. There is also an osteopathy policy and the Cultural and Leisure Services Team offers Tai Chi sessions as well as advice on healthy living that includes weight and blood pressure checks. Various tips and articles are also published for all staff in the monthly newsletter.

Principle F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

Managing Risk

- 3.80. The council has embedded a structure and system for identifying, evaluating and monitoring all significant business risks at an operational level. The council has a risk management policy in place which is published on the council's Intranet site. The policy clearly outlines the processes and responsibilities that are in place and the monitoring procedures to be followed.
- 3.81. The Corporate Management Team receive monthly risk management updates and areas of high risk are reported promptly to Accounts and Audit Committee for scrutiny.

Managing Performance

- 3.82. Where relevant, service areas provide key performance indicators which are monitored and reported on centrally to all service committees at the end of the financial year. There is also in-year monitoring and reporting to the Corporate Management Team. Whilst the Performance Management Framework was reviewed in 2018, it is recommended that a review of performance indicators is undertaken as a number of them are no longer relevant or do not actually measure performance.
- 3.83. Various service areas undertake differing levels of service comparison with other local authorities. There is no formal, planned benchmarking of services; however, ad-hoc service comparisons are undertaken as needed.
- 3.84. Performance against budget is reported to the Corporate Management Team and also on a regular basis to service committees. The overall position is also considered in reports to the Policy and Finance Committee.
- 3.85. Outturn reports are also reported to all services committees and this is also considered by the Budget Working Group and used in the budgeting process for future years.
- 3.86. A set timetable is in place for meetings, the production and distribution of agenda packs, and the holding of briefings prior to the meeting between key officers and committee chairs and vice-chairs. Included in the Constitution are the terms of reference for all committees. The minutes of all meetings are published on the council's website.

- 3.87. Debate and discussion on issues is actively encouraged at committee meetings. The council also have a call-in procedure for any decisions, which allows for further scrutiny. The call-in procedure should normally only apply to decisions which are considered to be contrary to policy or not in accordance with the budget.
- 3.88. Full detailed information is provided to members in the budget setting process for both revenue and capital. The Budget Working Group is valued and allows for more focused work to be undertaken and specific guidance to be given to Service Committees.
- 3.89. Budget setting, control and reporting requirements are set out in the council's Financial Regulations, which have full regard to internal and external regulations and relevant codes of practice.
- 3.90. It is likely that performance levels and consequently budgets, will be impacted by Covid-19. The virus has seen the council having to redeploy some staff into different roles during the pandemic.
- 3.91. In order to retain some level of normal day to day operations the council invested in technology in order to allow some members of staff to work remotely from home. As a result, the council has incurred the costs of purchasing new hardware and software, some of which will have ongoing costs for the foreseeable future, for example, licenses to allow council meetings to be conducted online. Some of these costs were incurred within 2019/20 but will largely impact on the 2020/21 financial year.

Robust Internal Control

- 3.92. Internal Audit is an independent and objective appraisal function established by the council for reviewing the system of internal control. This is in compliance with Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 that specifically requires a local authority to undertake an adequate and effective system of internal audit.
- 3.93. An Internal Audit Plan is produced each financial year and is risk based. This is agreed and monitored by the Accounts and Audit Committee. The reporting process for Internal Audit requires a report of each audit to be submitted to the relevant service. The report includes recommendations for improvements that are included with an Action Plan.
- 3.94. Since February 2020 there has been a vacancy for the role of Principal Auditor within the Internal Audit Team and although this did not adversely impact upon the achievement of the 2019/20 Audit Plan it will undoubtedly impact on the 2020/21 plan, the longer the position remains vacant. During 2020/21 Audit Team staffing has also been impacted upon by Covid-19 which has resulted in the need for one of the Audit Team members to assist the Finance Team. As with the vacancy, this will also impact on the achievement of the 2020/21 Audit Plan. It will be assured that any audit work undertaken by this member of the Audit Team does not cover this service area in 2020/21.
- 3.95. The Risk Management Strategy is reviewed on a regular basis and is approved by the Accounts and Audit Committee.
- 3.96. The European Institute for Combatting Corruption and Fraud (TEICCAF) issues a checklist for the 'Protecting the Public Purse' document. Authorities are encouraged to use the checklist to ensure that they have sound governance and counter-fraud arrangements in place and that they are working as intended. No significant issues were highlighted as a result of this review.
- 3.97. The Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally strategy (2016-2019) was developed by local authorities and counter fraud experts. It set out the approach local authorities should take and the main areas of focus over the three-year period in order to transform counter fraud

and corruption performance. There is a checklist to measure counter fraud and corruption culture and response. No issues were highlighted as a result of this review. A new strategy has been devised for 2020.

- 3.98. The Accounts and Audit Committee normally meets four times a year and has a clear Terms of Reference. Ad-hoc training is provided to members as and when required and open debate and discussion on all items is encouraged.
- 3.99. Regular consideration is given to high-level risks that have been flagged as areas of concern, and where necessary action is called for, or references made to relevant service committees.

Managing Data

- 3.100. The council is committed to safeguarding the personal data it holds and sharing this data only in circumstances required or permitted by law. Personal data is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR and in particular the key principles of both.
- 3.101. The council's ICT Manager is the designated Data Protection Officer. This creates the potential for conflict of interest, but the Council continually seek to mitigate any perceived risks in this area.
- 3.102. The council has a Data Protection Policy which is published on the council's Intranet and is available to all staff.
- 3.103. There has been no formal training for staff on data protection over the last financial year, however since the introduction of GDPR in May 2018 the Council has obtained a license to rollout GDPR training for all staff and members. It is planned for this to be undertaken in 2020/21.
- 3.104. The Council's current Data Retention Policy is dated February 2010 and it is recommended that this be reviewed in light of the introduction of GDPR.
- 3.105. The council has a Data Quality Policy in place. Any staff involved in providing performance indicator data are required to acknowledge that they have read and understood the policy.
- 3.106. The Internal Audit team reviews the accuracy of the performance indicators that are published at the end of the financial year.
- 3.107. The council makes information available to the public via the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Individuals may also access their own personal data by exercising the right of subject access under the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 3.108. The council complies with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 by publishing accurate data online in the areas mandated by the Code.

Strong Public Financial Management

- 3.109. Regular monitoring of the council's financial position helps ensure that services perform within the resources allocated to them. Mechanisms within the Financial Regulations allow for flexibility in meeting demands that could not be anticipated.
- 3.110. The medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) is the council's key financial planning document. It aims to provide the council with assurance that the council's spending plans are affordable over the medium term.

- 3.111. More detailed short-term financial information is provided through the council's detailed and summary budget books. The budget books and the medium-term financial strategy are all published on the council's website.
- 3.112. Budget monitoring against these financial plans is reported in full to service committees with variances highlighted and action plans regarding specific areas published within the reports where relevant. All committee reports are published on the council's website and meetings are minuted.
- 3.113. The Budget Working Group plays a key role in considering the Council's finances and are key in developing the council's budgets, making recommendations to Policy and Finance. The minutes of the group are reported to the Policy and Finance Committee and are again published on the council's website.
- 3.114. All reports across all committees are published in a consistent style.
- 3.115. Financial outturn reports are presented to all service committees.
- 3.116. The council's approach to Financial Management ensures that public money is safeguarded at all times ensuring value for money. Its approach supports both long-term achievement of objectives and shorter term financial and operational performance.
- 3.117. The Chief Finance Officer (Director of Resources) ensures that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, proper financial records and accounts are kept, and oversees an effective system of internal financial control.
- 3.118. As part of the 2018/19 assurance review, the Director of Resources highlighted the need to provide formal training to members and staff on the council's Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules. This was in light of the new administration following the elections in May 2019 and the high proportion of newly elected members. Although formal training has not taken place the Director has briefed members on relevant financial matters prior to committee meetings and it is intended for formal training to take place in 2020/21.

Principle G - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

Implementing Good Practice in Transparency

- 3.119. The council follows the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, which includes requirements and recommendations for local authorities to publish certain types of data.
- 3.120. All transparency-related data is published together in a single area on the council's website.
- 3.121. Content on the council's website seeks to meet the needs of the public and where issues are raised through social media, or through the council's contact centre, steps are taken to ensure information is made available where possible on the website to satisfy the queries being raised.
- 3.122. Socitm is the Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation. Their mission is to maximise the effectiveness of ICT and digital technology in public sector organisations. Socitm has partnered with Silktide, a leading provider of website testing and governance software to rate the accessibility of public sector organisation websites in line with website accessibility laws, with which all public sector websites must comply by 22nd September 2020.

- 3.123. Silktide measures Council websites on their accessibility out of 100 and ranks the top 30. Although the council is not in the top 30, it scores 70 out of 100 which is deemed to be rated 'good'.

Implementing Good Practices in Reporting

- 3.124. All transparency-related data is published together in a single area on the council's website.
- 3.125. The council's Statement of Accounts are published in a timely manner (see section 3.55 of this report regarding the impact of Covid-19) and are published on the council's website. The Statement of Accounts includes a narrative statement which allows for a more understandable format of the outturn position of the council, away from the statutory presentation requirements seen in the statements themselves. Financial outturn reports are presented to all service committees.
- 3.126. Following external audit, the Statement of Accounts is approved by the Accounts and Audit Committee.
- 3.127. The Council explains how it reviews its governance arrangements, and how it has complied with CIPFA's "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016)" principles by producing this Annual Governance Statement (AGS). This includes an action plan identifying what governance challenges it will need to address in the next financial year.
- 3.128. Financial performance is also reported throughout the year to all service committees. Such documents are openly available on the council's website.

Assurance and Effective Accountability

- 3.129. The council's external auditors, Grant Thornton attend the meetings of the Accounts and Audit Committee and provide reports to the members of that committee.
- 3.130. The external auditor prepares an Annual Audit Letter which is reported to the council's Accounts and Audit Committee. Any actions that may arise from that report would be monitored by the Accounts and Audit Committee to ensure compliance and that they result in positive improvements. This year's External Audit report for the period 2019/20 has been delayed due to Covid-19.
- 3.131. A review has been undertaken of CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit and no issues were identified. Compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards was also confirmed.
- 3.132. The work of the council's Internal Audit team is reported on a regular basis to the Accounts and Audit Committee.
- 3.133. The Council welcomed a re-visit by the Peer Challenge Review team during the 2019/20 financial year and the updated action plan prepared for that visit has been included as part of this statement. A further updated version of the action plan exists however it has not yet been reported to Policy and Finance Committee due to delays caused by Covid-19.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 4.1. Ribble Valley Borough Council has a legal responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. This was done by following the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016).

- 4.2. After conducting this review, the Council has assurance that its governance arrangements and systems of control are robust and reflect the principles of the Code of Corporate Governance. This section explains what arrangements were reviewed, and how this assurance was achieved.

Corporate Management Team

- 4.3. The Corporate Management Team meets each week to discuss policy issues and also considers internal control issues, including risk management, performance management, compliance, efficiency and value for money, and financial management.

Corporate Level Review

- 4.4. The Corporate Management Team reviewed the compilation of the Annual Governance Statement and consisted of the following officers during 2019/20.

- Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)
- Director of Resources (S151 Officer)
- Director of Community Services
- Director of Economic Development and Planning

- 4.5. The group has considered a detailed corporate level review of the council's system of governance in accordance with the guidance provided by CIPFA/SOLACE.

Directorate Level Review

- 4.6. The council also has in place Directorate Assurance Statements requiring Directors to review the operation of a range of governance systems and procedures within their service areas and indicate whether there are any significant non-compliance issues. These are analysed to ascertain whether there are any common areas of concern, and if so, whether these constitute significant governance issues and as such need to be included in the Annual Governance Statement.

Monitoring Officer

- 4.7. As the council's Monitoring Officer, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services has a duty to monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure its aims and principles are given full effect. The council reviews the Constitution each year at its Annual Meeting. As the Head of Legal and Democratic Services retired in February 2020 assurances this year were provided by the Temporary Monitoring Officer with regard to the matters that fall within their jurisdiction. The new Head of Legal and Democratic Services took up their post in June 2020.

Accounts and Audit Committee

- 4.8. The council has appointed an Accounts and Audit Committee whose terms of reference comply with the latest CIPFA guidelines. These extend to monitoring the council's governance and risk management framework and include reviewing the adequacy of the governance framework.

Internal Audit

- 4.9. Internal Audit is responsible for monitoring the quality and effectiveness of the system of governance and internal control. A risk-based Internal Audit Plan is produced each financial year. The reporting process for Internal Audit requires a report of each audit to be submitted

to the relevant Directorate. The report includes recommendations for improvements that are included within an Action Plan and require agreement or rejection by Heads of Service. The process includes follow-up reviews of agreed recommendations to ensure that they are acted upon.

- 4.10. The Internal Audit Annual Report contains an opinion on the overall levels of internal control (a view based on the relative significance of the systems reviewed during the year, in the context of the totality of the control environment).
- 4.11. The overall internal audit opinion for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 provides substantial assurance, in that the Council can place substantial reliance on the level of control in operation

External Audit

- 4.12. In accordance with the National Audit Office's Code of Audit Practice, the council receive regular reports on elements of its internal control environment, including performance management, risk management, financial management and governance.

Peer Review Challenge

- 4.13. The review of effectiveness this year continued to take into account the findings and action plan of the Corporate Peer Challenge review which took place during 2017/18. The Peer Challenge team focussed on the key areas of leadership, governance, corporate capacity and financial resilience. The action plan was periodically updated and monitored and reported to Policy and Finance Committee. The latest version of the action plan, prepared in advance of the Peer Challenge Team's follow-up visit on 26-27 September 2019 is attached at Annex A.

European Institute for Combatting Corruption and Fraud (TEICCAF) – Protecting the Public Purse Checklist

- 4.14. The European Institute for Combatting Corruption and Fraud (TEICCAF) issued a checklist for the 'Protecting the Public Purse' document. Authorities were encouraged to use the checklists to ensure that they have sound governance and counter-fraud arrangements in place and that they are working as intended.

'Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally 2016-19'

- 4.15. The 'Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally 2016-19' strategy set out the approach local authorities should take and the main areas of focus in order to transform counter fraud and corruption performance in the three-year period covering 2016-2019. There is a checklist to measure counter fraud and corruption culture and response. A new strategy has been devised for 2020.

CIPFA 'The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government'

- 4.16. CIPFA published a document on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer. Achieving value for money and securing stewardship are key components of the Chief Financial Officer's role and the document includes a list of principles that were assessed as part of this review of governance arrangements

CIPFA 'The Role of the Head of Internal Audit'

- 4.17. The Head of Internal Audit occupies a critical position in any organisation, helping it to achieve its objectives by giving assurance on its internal control arrangements and

playing a key role in promoting good corporate governance. This CIPFA document is to clarify the role of the Head of Internal Audit and to raise its profile.

5. SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES

5.1. A governance issue arises when something has gone wrong which will affect the achievement of the council's objectives. There is a need to respond and often recover from an issue and in financial terms, responding and recovering may add significant cost to the organisation or its processes. An issue may arise unexpectedly or may result from a poorly managed risk.

5.2. Whilst determining the significance of an issue will always contain an element of judgement, an issue is likely to be significant if one or more of the following criteria applies:

- It has significantly prejudiced or prevented achievement of a principal objective;
- It has resulted in the need to seek additional funding to allow it to be resolved, or has required a significant diversion of resources from another service area;
- It has had a material impact on the accounts;
- It has been identified by the Accounts and Audit Committee as significant;
- It has resulted in significant public interest or has seriously damaged reputation;
- The governance issue may, or has been publicly reported by a third party as a significant governance issue;
- It has resulted in formal actions being taken by the Section 151 Officer or Monitoring Officer.

6. REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES RAISED IN THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2018/19

6.1 Within last year's review there were a number of issues raised as part of the Annual Governance statement for 2018/19. The status of these issues is provided in the table below:

Subject Area	Description	Status	Action
<p>Peer Challenge Review <i>This was carried forward from the 2017/18 reviewed and raised again in the 2018/19 review</i></p>	<p>As a result of the recommendations of the Peer Challenge Review carried out in 2017/18, the approved action plan from has been attached at Annex 1 for implementation in line with the timescales identified.</p>	<p>Whilst a number of actions are completed there are a number of outstanding actions that continue to be addressed and are being monitored. The latest status is provided at Annex 1.</p>	<p>To be carried forward and addressed in 2020/21</p>
<p>Refuse Vehicle Maintenance Costs <i>This was carried forward from the 2017/18 reviewed and raised again in the 2018/19 review</i></p>	<p>A significant increase in refuse vehicle maintenance costs was highlighted to the relevant committees and Budget Working Group during 2017/18 and also then in 2018/19</p>	<p>Causes of the increase in costs were identified and a number of actions were identified by the Council's Corporate Management Team to minimise the ongoing impact of increased vehicle maintenance costs. The actions helped to reduce the level of overspend however there continued to be an overspend on the budget for 2018/19 and this has again been a significant issue in 2019/20.</p>	<p>To be carried forward and addressed in 2020/21</p>
<p>Communications Strategy <i>This was carried forward from the 2017/18 reviewed and raised again in the 2018/19 review</i></p>	<p>The council does not have an up to date Communications Strategy in place. It is important that there is a structured approach in place as to how the council interacts with its internal and external stakeholders with changing patterns of communication.</p>	<p>The new Corporate Communications Strategy 2019-2021 was approved by Policy and Finance Committee on 18th June 2019.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>Members Code of Conduct – Complaints Process <i>This was a significant issue in the 2018/19 review</i></p>	<p>In light of the considerable disruption to council business over the last 18 months it is recommended that the members Code of Conduct is reviewed and the process for dealing with such complaints</p>	<p>This review was due to be undertaken in 2019/20. It has started but has not yet been completed.</p>	<p>To be carried forward and addressed in 2020/21</p>

7. REVIEW OF SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES 2019/20

7.1 In considering the criteria for significant governance issues as listed at section 5 there are a number of areas to be raised as part of this Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20.

7.2 A number of these are items that have been carried forward from the review of actions raised as part of the Annual Governance Statements in 2017/18 and 2018/19 as work continues to address these areas (see section 6). It must be noted that progress has been made in the areas that have been carried forward, but that this work needs to continue to fully address the issues raised.

Action Plan

Subject Area	Details	Action
<p>Peer Challenge Review <i>Carried Forward from 2017/18 and 2018/19 reviews</i></p>	<p>Work continues to address the issues raised as part of the Peer Challenge Review in 2017/18 and follow-up visit in September 2019. The recommendations made at that time are attached at Annex 1, showing progress and the outstanding issues as last reported to Policy and Finance Committee.</p> <p>As part of this review it is recognised that progress has been made, but that the outstanding recommendations need to be addressed.</p>	<p>Remaining actions to be addressed and an updated report to be taken to Policy and Finance Committee in November</p>
<p>Refuse Vehicle Maintenance Costs <i>Carried Forward from 2017/18 and 2018/19 reviews</i></p>	<p>There has continued to be an overspend in refuse vehicle maintenance costs which have been highlighted to the relevant committees during the year.</p> <p>Work needs to continue to review the overspend and the associated budgets.</p>	<p>A full detailed report to be prepared by the Head of Service, exploring the underlying reasons for the significant overspends seen in each of the recent years (£170k in 2019/20) and detailing proposed action</p>
<p>Members Code of Conduct – Complaints Process <i>Carried Forward from 2018/19 review</i></p>	<p>In light of the considerable disruption to council business over the last 18 months it is recommended that the members Code of Conduct is reviewed and the process for dealing with such complaints</p>	<p>A review has been undertaken and a report prepared for presentation to the Accounts and Audit Committee. This has been delayed due to Covid-19 and the suspension of committee meetings. To be presented to the November 2020 committee meeting.</p>

7.3 We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that have been identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed:




Leader of the Council
On behalf of Ribble Valley Borough Council



Chief Executive





CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE - ACTION PLAN



Key Recommendations:


- Strengthen engagement with staff and partners to ensure clarity of vision and desired outcomes in relation to the Corporate Strategy, priorities and initiatives.
- Review the Performance Management Framework linked to the Corporate Strategy.
- Review the resourcing of Corporate Strategy priorities.
- Develop an Economic Development Strategy.
- Explore opportunities to strengthen early engagement with developers in order to maximise community benefits, as well as opportunities to strengthen community engagement/communication in relation to development.
- Strengthen engagement between the Leadership and Corporate Management Team – this includes the chairs of committees.



	Outstanding (deadline passed)
	Partial Completion/Ongoing (deadline not yet reached)
	Completed




Issue (from the report)	Required Action	Milestones	Due Date	Lead	Update	Status
Strengthen engagement with staff and partners to ensure clarity of vision and desired outcomes in relation to the Corporate Strategy, priorities and initiatives						
More needs to be done to ensure clarity of vision and priorities. Key to this will be recognising and valuing the good work that the council has already undertaken which provide the building blocks for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini review of the existing Corporate Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Corporate Strategy – CMT & Leader • Revised Corporate Strategy – Policy and Finance Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO/ Principal Policy and Performance Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed – reported to Policy and Finance Committee June 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 
A new Corporate Strategy will be developed next year. This provides an opportunity for the Leadership to develop a clear timetable of engagement with both staff and partners. This will	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform staff, public and other key stakeholders of the revised Corporate Strategy and progress updates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulation of revised Corporate Strategy to staff • Publish revised Corporate Strategy on the Council's website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal Policy and Performance Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed – information in Backchat and published on the Council's website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 






Issue (from the report)	Required Action	Milestones	Due Date	Lead	Update	Status
<p>help ensure wider ownership of the vision, ambitions and priorities.</p> <p>The council need to ensure continued, timely engagement of staff at all levels to ensure wider understanding and buy in.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Internal Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Internal Communications – Personnel Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of HR/ Principal Communications Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the Staff Survey an action plan was developed and approved by personnel Committee in June 2018. Several actions around Internal Communications were included and are now being implemented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 
<p>It is important that the council continues to engage staff at all levels of the organisation to ensure ownership of future ambitions and priorities. Feeding back to staff following the staff survey is key.</p> <p>Regular Corporate Strategy progress updates to staff and celebration of successes will help to keep the whole organisation engaged around delivery of the plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a shared vision for the Borough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to Policy and Finance setting out plans for developing new Corporate Strategy 2019-2023 Develop new Corporate Strategy 2019-2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 2018 September 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO/ Principal Policy and Performance Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported to Policy and Finance Committee September 2018 A new Corporate Strategy for 2019-2023 was approved by Policy and Finance Committee in September 2019.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  
Review the Performance Management Framework linked to the Corporate Strategy						
<p>As part of the development of the new Corporate Strategy, the framework should be reviewed to ensure it is rooted in the priorities and ambitions of the council moving forward.</p> <p>There are opportunities to review the monitoring information shared with committees to maintain clear governance, ownership and constructive challenge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Performance Management Framework in light of revised Corporate Strategy Review performance monitoring information provided to committees to enable progress with key priorities to be better monitored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised Performance Management Framework and Indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMT, Heads of Service and Principal Policy and Performance Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Performance Management Framework reported to Policy and Finance Committee September 2018. Review of Performance Indicators is ongoing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 

Issue (from the report)	Required Action	Milestones	Due Date	Lead	Update	Status
Review the resourcing of Corporate Strategy priorities						
<p>Ensuring capacity to deliver corporate priorities.</p> <p>The challenge now will be to ensure good 'succession planning' for the years to come.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider resource implications of new Corporate Strategy and Council priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodic review of priorities and resources 2019/2020 Budget – review of priorities and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 monthly February 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 
<p>Anecdotal evidence suggesting delivery of appraisals and one to ones may be patchy in some areas. The council should consider reviewing its current approach to ensure consistency across all teams.</p> <p>There is also an opportunity to review the current appraisal system, including competency-based approaches. This should be aligned to the development of a new Corporate Strategy next year so that the appraisal system is rooted firmly within the council's future priorities and ambitions and the type of council it wants to be.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Performance Appraisal system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised Performance Appraisal System – Personnel Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMT/ Head of HR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Performance Appraisal System was reviewed in April 2018. 95% of the 2018/2019 appraisals were conducted (an improvement on previous years). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 

Issue (from the report)	Required Action	Milestones	Due Date	Lead	Update	Status
<p>The council may benefit from further work to review its use of ICT linked to its ambitions for the future. The peer team had a sense that some service areas may still rely quite heavily on paper copies of documents and files. If this is the case, could more be done to reduce the need for this which may have the potential to reduce the costs of printing as well as supporting the council's sustainability agenda?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a comprehensive IT Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of IT Strategy – Policy and Finance Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Financial Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopted by Policy and Finance Committee - June 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 

Issue (from the report)	Required Action	Milestones	Due Date	Lead	Update	Status
Develop an Economic Development Strategy						
<p>Develop an Economic Strategy that better reflects the borough's standing as a key player in the region.</p> <p>Economic Development to play a key part in overseeing the Economic Development Strategy.</p> <p>An Economic Development Strategy developed with partners should help prioritise resources and future investment in the key areas that will make a difference.</p> <p>The new strategy might include how to attract new and diverse industries, inward investment, marketing of key employment sites, higher value jobs for local people (harnessing good local educational outcomes) and branding.</p> <p>The Economic Development Strategy should reflect the council's appetite for risk in terms of economic development investment going forward.</p> <p>The Economic Development Strategy could be used to help raise the economic profile of the borough both regionally and nationally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that is realistic and achievable and follows the Council's vision and priorities for the economic development of the Borough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Report to Economic Development Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 2018 December 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director of Economic Development and Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action was delayed due to the appointment of a new Director (in post August 2018). The due date was amended accordingly with the intention of reporting the Strategy to Economic Development committee in January 2019. Economic Development Committee approved the publication version of The Economic Plan in September 2019. At the start of 2019 the Council set up an Economic Partnership with businesses in the Borough. Information gathered at the initial two events has been used to formulate a draft Economic Plan which will be reported to Economic Development Committee in June and subject to public consultation. The final plan is expected to be finalised in autumn 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  

Issue (from the report)	Required Action	Milestones	Due Date	Lead	Update	Status
<p>Work with partners to better articulate growth ambitions.</p> <p>Become a stronger voice regionally and nationally, particularly through the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The council have a real opportunity to raise their profile through the LEP; stepping up to the plate to harness their relatively strong economic position to better influence and shape future work. In particular, discussions relating to the Strategic Economic Plan and Growth Deal for Lancashire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempt to gain Council representation on the LEP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seat on the LEP Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> December 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Leader of the Council has recently been appointed to the LEP Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 
<p>The council should continue to work in partnership with the other councils in the region outside of any Combined Authority if it is to realise its ambitions for the borough, particularly the LEP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political Leadership and Member involvement through Lancashire Leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed system of collaborative working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> December 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Leader regularly attends meetings of both District Leaders and the Lancashire-wide Leaders group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 
<p>Explore opportunities to strengthen early engagement with developers in order to maximise community benefits, as well as opportunities to strengthen community engagement/communication in relation to development</p>						
<p>Through infrastructure planning and costing, the council should maximise contributions to meet infrastructure needs arising from development.</p> <p>There may be opportunities to review the pre-application offer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absorb changes to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline Plan to Planning Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> April/ May 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Regeneration and Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to NPPF were published later than anticipated (24 July). We are now operating to the changes which are reflected in current planning policy decisions and integrated into the Development Plan review process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 

Issue (from the report)	Required Action	Milestones	Due Date	Lead	Update	Status
<p>to developers, agents and architects to strengthen current approaches, including early engagement with councillors. Holding the line on viability, particularly in the face of demands around affordable housing, is key. Recognising there is often the opportunity to adjust the housing mix and/or tenure, which can deal with some of the gap on the viability to maintain affordable housing numbers, is also important.</p> <p>Explore opportunities to develop an 'implementation group' to take a programme-based approach to oversee delivery of major sites with planning permission and associated infrastructure.</p> <p>The council should continue to share learning and offer support to parishes who wish to pursue neighbourhood plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articulate the vision for the area in terms of house building and economic development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion and debate on the extent of new development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Regeneration and Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will be incorporated into the Local Plan review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Core Strategy Determine infrastructure requirements Consider adopting the Community Infrastructure Levy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim reports to Planning Committee Updated Core Strategy/Local Plan Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throughout 2018 - 2020 March 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Regeneration and Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In November 2019 a reviewed concluded, and members determined, to review the Core Strategy. Members have considered the Planning White Paper and are considering the implication for the Local Plan Programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development of neighbourhood plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to be offered as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Regeneration and Housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web pages have been updated. Assistance is offered whenever requested. Longridge Neighbourhood Plan has now been adopted. The Council has undertaken measures to promote Neighbourhood Plans with Parishes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 
Strengthen engagement between the Leadership and Corporate Management Team – this includes the chairs of committees						
<p>Strengthen engagement between the Leadership and Corporate Management Team in order to take the council forward positively; the council should consider a 'top team development' session to begin to shape this work going forward.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Council's Governance arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct review of the Council's Governance arrangements Report to Policy and Finance Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> September 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO/ Head of Legal Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review of the Council's Governance arrangements takes place annually as part of the Annual Accounts and any issues raised are considered by the Accounts and Audit Committee The Annual Governance Statement 2018/2019 has made recommendations with regards to governance issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 

Issue (from the report)	Required Action	Milestones	Due Date	Lead	Update	Status
<p>To ensure continued cohesive leadership of the council in meeting the challenges ahead, the development of a standard approach to senior member and Corporate Leadership Team engagement should be considered. Investing this time together will support collaborative working. This might involve regular meetings e.g. quarterly, between the Leader, committee chairs and CLT. It could also involve a future programme of 'top team days' – particularly leading up to the development of the new Corporate Strategy next year.</p> <p>The relationships between members and officers, including communication and understanding of respective roles, will be key in helping the council move forward positively. To this end, the council may benefit from re-visiting its current Member Officer protocol to ensure continued understanding and buy in across the council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise training sessions for senior members and officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify training requirements Develop training programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Head of Legal Services/ Head of HR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Training Plan is being compiled and will include Member training. Member training is regularly reported to Personnel Committee. The focus has recently shifted to inductions for new members following the local elections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit the Officer/ Member Protocol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to Accounts and Audit Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO/ Monitoring Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Head of Legal reported the Member Officer Protocol, as a part 1 Information item, to each committee in the 2nd cycle 2018/19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a forum for two-way communications between senior members and corporate management team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular meetings with CMT/Committee Chairmen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commencing April 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMT and Senior members held an Away Day was in May 2018. The intention is to hold similar meetings at regular intervals. The next one to be organised will look at setting the new Council's priorities for the 2019-2023 Corporate Strategy. The Chief Executive has meetings with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Conservative group and the Leader of the Liberal Democrats on a regular basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">