Draft Annual Governance Statement 2019/20

Executive Summary

The Leader of the county council (County Councillor Geoff Driver CBE) and the Chief Executive and Director of Resources (Angie Ridgwell) both recognise the importance of having good management, effective processes and other appropriate controls in place to run the county council in delivering services to the communities of Lancashire.

Each year the council is required to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) which describes how the corporate governance arrangements have been working across the group. To help do this both the council's Corporate Management Team (CMT) and the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee undertake a review of the council's governance framework and the development of the AGS.

This year, the Covid-19 (CV-19) crisis has brought unprecedented challenges for local government and the county council has sought to minimise disruption to the services we deliver. The county council has shown that it can thrive in the most challenging of circumstances. We have seen a combination of a flexible dynamic committed workforce and implementation of new ways of working that will reshape the council going forward.

The first week of the crisis was a logistical challenge translating work patterns and programmes into a different operating model. In some respects we did six months transformation in a week. As we move to recovery we will look to build on the best parts of our response that point the way to the future.

Whilst CV-19 will have impacted on our governance during March 2020 we also need to ensure that the AGS is current at the time of its publication, so it is essential therefore that the AGS reflects the impact of the CV-19 pandemic on governance. Therefore we will include a second conclusion on the adequacy of governance arrangements during this period to make clear the impact.

The impact on governance falls broadly into the following broad categories:

- Impact on business as usual in the delivery of services

- New areas of activity as part of the national response to coronavirus and any governance issues arising

- The funding and logistical consequences of delivering the local government response

- Assessment of the longer term disruption and consequences arising from the coronavirus pandemic.

Once the crisis is over we will conduct a review of the lessons to be learned from our response. As such, this will be one of the organisation's significant governance issues for 2020/21.

On the 27 July 2020 the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee considered the content of the proposed governance statement to ensure that it properly reflects how the council is run. The final statement is signed by the Leader of the council and the Chief Executive and Director of Resources.

Governance Issues

Overall it can be confirmed that the council has the appropriate systems and processes in place to ensure good governance is maintained. Whilst these generally work well our review has identified the following issues which are currently underway but not yet completed:

Key Delivery/Improvement Area	Lead Officer	To be delivered by
Reshaping the council	Chief Executive & Director of Resources	
• Delivering Our Improvement Journey	Director of Organisational Development & Change	31 March 2021
• Develop a sustainable financial strategy	Director of Finance	Ongoing
Getting to Good (Children's Social Care)	Executive Director of Education & Children's Services	Ongoing
Response to Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) inspection	Executive Director of Education & Children's Services	Ongoing

Key Delivery/Improvement Area	Lead Officer	To be delivered by
Managing major projects	Executive Director of Growth, Environment & Transport	31 March 2021
Financial leadership challenges in health and social care	Executive Director of Adult Services & Health & Wellbeing	31 March 2021
Core systems and data	Director of Strategy & Performance	31 March 2021
Future provision of ICT Services	Chief Digital Officer	31 March 2021
Response to and recovery from CV-19	Chief Executive & Director of Resources	Ongoing

Progress made against the issues identified in last year's AGS is reported in this year's statement.

We propose over the coming year to address the matters identified and will monitor implementation and operation as part of the performance management role of the Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet. The Audit, Risk and Governance Committee will also help us with independent assurance during the year.

--- county councillor Geoff Driver CBE
Leader of the council

--- Angie Ridgwell
Chief Executive and Director of Resources

Signed on behalf of Lancashire county council

Introduction

Local authorities are required by statute to review their governance arrangements at least once a year. Preparation and publication of an Annual Governance Statement in accordance with the CIPFA/Solace "*Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework*" (2016) (the Framework) helps fulfil this requirement. The Framework requires local authorities to be responsible for ensuring that:

- their business is conducted in accordance with all relevant laws and regulations
- public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for
- resources are used economically, efficiently and effectively to achieve agreed priorities which benefit local people

The Framework also expects that local authorities will put in place proper arrangements for the governance of their affairs which facilitate the effective exercise of functions and ensure that the responsibilities set out above are being met.

As mentioned in the executive summary, coronavirus will have impacted on governance during March 2020 and authorities also need to ensure that the AGS is current at the time of its publication, so it is essential therefore that the AGS reflects the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on governance.

What is Corporate Governance?

Corporate governance is about the systems, processes and values by which councils operate and by which they engage with, and are held accountable to, their communities and stakeholders.

The council has adopted a Code of Corporate Governance which follows the CIPFA/Solace guidance "*Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*" (2016) which defines the seven core principles that should underpin the governance framework of a local authority:

- Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law
- Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
- Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
- Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
- Developing the council's capacity, including 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.

Key Elements of the County Council's Governance Framework

Key elements of Lancashire County Council's governance framework are set out below:

Leader, Cabinet & council	Decision Making	Risk & Performance Management
- The Leader provides leadership - Cabinet develops and sets policy - Full Council agrees the annual budget, sets Council Tax and the policy framework including the Corporate Strategy (the cornerstone of our policy framework)	- Meetings are held in public and many are webcast - Decisions are recorded on the council's website - Scheme of delegation	- Risk registers identify both operational and strategic risks - Key risks are considered by Corporate Management Team (CMT), Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement (CCPI) and Audit, Risk and Governance Committee - Processes are in place for managing and reporting performance to CMT and members (CCPI) - Directors complete assurance statements
Council's Leadership Team	**Scrutiny & review**	**External & Internal Audit and review**
- Head of Paid Service is the Chief Executive who is responsible for all council staff and leading Corporate Management Team - Chief Executive is the council's S151 Officer and is responsible for ensuring the proper administration of the council's financial affairs - The Monitoring Officer is the council's Director of Corporate Services who is responsible for ensuring legality and promoting high standards of public conduct	- Scrutiny Committees review council policy, decisions and budget proposals - Work to deliver local public sector accountability	- External audit provides an opinion on the council's annual statement of accounts and whether the council has secured economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources - Internal Audit provides regular assurance on the governance, risk management and internal control framework - External inspections provide an accountability mechanism - Peer challenge/reviews highlight good practice and areas for improvement

How do we Comply with the CIPFA/SoLACE Framework?

The council has approved and adopted:

- a Local Code of Corporate Governance
- the requirements of the CIPFA/SoLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016
- a number of specific strategies and processes for strengthening corporate governance.

An updated Local Code of Corporate Governance can be found here [insert link]. This shows how the county council has complied with the seven principles set out in the CIPFA/SoLACE Framework. The Code is reviewed annually, and the outcome reported to Audit, Risk and Governance Committee and presented to Full Council for approval. It sets out the requirements underpinning these principles and how the council ensures that it meets them along with the evidence base used to assess their effectiveness.

Managing Risk & Performance

Performance management is a key component of the council's approach to achieving its outcomes. Part of this process involves identifying and where appropriate, mitigating risks, ensuring that performance and risk management processes are in place throughout the organisation with effective processes to ensure sound financial management. Managing risks is the responsibility of services. All service risks are scored on the same basis and the greatest risks are elevated onto the Corporate Risk Register.

Service risk & opportunity registers are updated regularly, and the Corporate Risk and Opportunity register is reported to Corporate Management Team, Cabinet Committee for Performance Improvement (CCPI) and Audit, Risk & Governance Committee on a quarterly basis. Following a pilot in Education and Children's Services, CMT have agreed to report risks at a directorate rather than service level and introduced a risk profile summary to improve decision making. This has not yet been implemented across the organisation as quarterly reporting was suspended as a result of Covid-19. Instead, weekly service level situation reports were introduced and continue to be in place. The Corporate Risk & Opportunity register and further information about the approach to risk management can be found here [insert link]

Equality Impact Assessments are used throughout the organisation to assess the impact of service proposals and to inform decision making.

The budget setting process is well established, and services prioritise budgets and spending to achieve intended outcomes. In recent years the budget setting process has inevitably focused on achieving savings whilst still focusing on the priorities of the political administration.

The medium term financial strategy is updated and reported to Cabinet together with relevant resource forecasts and takes full account of the changing regulatory, environmental, demographic and economic factors that impact on the financial environment in which the county council operates. The quarterly report to the Cabinet, 'Money Matters', includes in-year revenue and capital expenditure monitoring information along with updates on the multi-year capital programme. The final outturn position was reported to Cabinet in July. Financial Monitoring Boards are also embedded to oversee challenge options that have been agreed as part of budget savings with exception reporting to CMT.

Last year, Full Council agreed a new corporate strategy 'Our Vision for Lancashire' that includes a new set of high-level metrics which will enable the overall success and progress of the strategy to be monitored and demonstrated. Members of all Scrutiny Committees were invited to attend the 'Corporate Strategy – Scrutiny of Key Metrics' workshop held in June 2019, to debate the proposed key metrics or identify additional ones. The outcomes of the workshop were reported to CCPI.

In addition to the high-level metrics relating to the strategy, the CCPI will continue to regularly receive the more detailed, service specific performance metrics which enable members to monitor ongoing service delivery and performance. The reports highlight good performance and areas for improvement (further reports setting out improvement action plans are presented when necessary). A detailed forward plan for the annual reports has been developed with the Leader of the county council, as Chair of the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement.

A new Performance Board was established that is chaired by the Director of Strategy & Performance. The Board receives a suite of performance dashboards, which draw attention to concerns with performance, describe recovery plans, and escalate issues for discussion and action to CMT. Any concerns with the quality of the data are highlighted immediately and the recovery plan will focus on improving the data quality. Once there is confidence in the data, performance concerns are the focus of discussion. This approach requires a deeper understanding of data presented and is driving up the quality of data and reporting across the council.

Managing our Resources (Value for Money)

The council's external auditors, in their assessment of 2018/19, gave an unqualified opinion on the group's financial statements on 29 July 2019 and were satisfied that the council put in place proper arrangements to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources this year.

The auditors commented that the council's financial position remains challenging and continuing reliance on reserves is recognised as unsustainable. The savings programme and budget gap remains highly challenging, and it is important that the momentum for change established over the last few years is maintained and financial control remains robust.

Therefore, throughout 2019/20 projections were reported to both the CMT and Cabinet in the 'Money Matters' report which forms a regular review point for assessing the effectiveness of financial plans. The current budget strategy remains to use budget savings with the use of reserves and capital receipts to ensure funding requirements are met. However, this will be impacted by our response to CV-19 and the forecast will need to be reviewed in light of any central government funding proposals for local government.

The council ensures that it provides timely support, information and responses to its external auditors – properly considering audit findings and assumptions around what may happen in the future particularly relating to those elements that cannot be directed by the council.

Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability remains the greatest risk facing the county council. However, whilst the council's financial position has not been fully stabilised, over the course of the last year considerable work has been done to improve it.

As a result, the 2020/21 revenue budget approved at Full Council did not require any structural funding support from reserves and it was anticipated that available reserves will be sufficient to support the council's expenditure until at least 2022/23. However, whilst work is continuing to identify further savings so that a financially sustainable position can be achieved, the impact of CV-19 on the council's financial resources is not clear at this time. Further information on this is set out in the specific section on CV-19.

The council regularly updates its medium term financial strategy. The forecast for future years takes into account anticipated cost pressures (both inflationary and demand led), planned savings and expected resource levels. The forecast is necessarily underpinned by a range of estimates and recommendations are reviewed through the Corporate Management Team, Cabinet and the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee as appropriate.

The financial management arrangements of the council conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the *Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government*.

Public Bond Issue

The county council has been considering long term loan financing through accessing the capital markets and using alternative sources of funding to the Public Works Loan Board for many years. Some of the perceived obstacles that have prevented us from pursuing these options in the past have been addressed and it was considered that it may now enable the council to obtain financing at reduced costs. This was agreed by Cabinet in February 2020.

How do we Know our Arrangements are Working?

There are a number of ways we do this:

The Role of Management
The Corporate Management Team oversee the review of the council's governance arrangements. Following this review, they can confirm that appropriate internal controls for which they have responsibility are in place, in particular their scrutiny of regular budget and performance reports including performance against savings targets within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Directors have the day to day responsibility for managing and controlling services – they are accountable for their successful delivery. They set the culture, develop and implement policies, procedures, processes and controls. Directors have completed an 'assurance statement' for 2019/20 that reports on service compliance and they produce in-year quarterly service risk registers that set out appropriate mitigating actions for significant risks. Where the evidence needed to provide full assurance is not available, improvement plans are in place.

The Monitoring Officer regularly reviews the council's Constitution and ethical governance arrangements and there are regular briefings on key corporate governance issues to Directors and Heads of Service.

The Role of the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee
The council's Audit, Risk and Governance Committee plays a vital role in overseeing and promoting good governance, ensuring accountability and reviewing the way things are done.

The committee provides an assurance role to the council by examining such areas as audit, risk management, internal control, counter fraud, treasury management and financial accountability. The committee exists to challenge the way things are done, making sure the right processes are in place. It works closely with both Internal Audit and senior management to continually improve the council's governance, risk and control environment.

In addition to the standard items on the agenda, the committee considered reports on the following:

- Code of Conduct – Summary of Complaints. For this item the appointed 'Independent Persons' who advise the Conduct Committee, were invited to attend the meeting in October 2019.
- Update report: Outstanding actions from 2017/18 Audit work programme, Adult & Children's Services
- Update on Neighbourhood Wellbeing Grants

In July 2019, the Chairman presented his second annual report. The report set out the work the committee had undertaken and provided a means by which it was able to review its own effectiveness. Appropriate training and development opportunities have been put in place during the year.

Further information about the role of the committee can be found here
[insert link]

The Role of the Head of Internal Audit

The Head of Internal Audit is required to provide an independent opinion on the council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and therefore the extent to which the council can rely on them. The Internal Audit Annual Report and opinion have been considered in the development of the Annual Governance Statement.

Audit work has progressed well against an ambitious plan and **75%** of the work completed by the year end has yielded favourable assurance over the design and operation of the services, systems and processes audited. Despite the challenges facing managers across the council the Internal Audit Service has been welcomed and supported in undertaking its work during 2019/20. The auditors have withdrawn from work in some areas where necessary whilst further action has been taken by management to understand the issues and plan the improvements still required but, overall until March 2020, have had access to services in every directorate.

As a result, the Head of Internal Audit's overall opinion as set out in the Annual Report is that **moderate** assurance can now be given regarding the adequacy of design and effectiveness in operation of the organisation's frameworks of governance, risk management and control for 2019/20. The organisation still faces a number of challenges, as set out in the rest of this statement, and during the year a number of areas were subject to ongoing necessary improvement as well as additional cost-saving activity. Even before the onset of covid-19 there were still considerable demands on the council's resources that put the improvement of its services, systems and processes at risk. The need to support service improvements and cost savings with improvements in ICT systems in particular remains, and will be particularly challenging in the coming year as the council prepares for the return of the ICT Service from BT Lancashire Services Ltd. However the organisation as a whole is well controlled and is clearly demonstrating its strong ambition to improve further.

External Assurances

The opinions and recommendations of the External Auditor and other inspection and review agencies and peer reviews offer us further assurance.

Information Governance

The council has a comprehensive Information Governance Framework in place, overseen by the Corporate Information Governance Group. The group is attended by the Senior Information Risk Officer and Data Protection Officer. Last year, the council was being monitored by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in terms of response times to subject access and freedom of information requests. In response we improved capacity and put in place better monitoring procedures. In June 2020 the ICO informed us that they were satisfied that we had acted promptly to remedy the issue and ceased monitoring.

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

During 2019/20 Full Council considered three public reports from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman in relation to children's social care. In all three cases the Ombudsman found fault causing injustice. Full Council noted the actions already taken and endorsed further actions to remedy the complaints.

Lancashire County Developments Limited

Lancashire County Developments Limited is an owned subsidiary of the county council. As a material entity it forms part of the council's group accounts. The county council has the power to change decision making rights, and to appoint and remove Directors of the company. Board Directors are county councillors who regularly meet, and receive financial and performance reports. In the 2019/20 financial year there have been no governance issues reported. The company is annually subject to a separate external audit to the county council.

Scrutiny Committees

The work of the five Scrutiny Committees is presented to Full Council on an on-going basis for comment and discussion.

There is also a cross party Budget Scrutiny Review Panel. The Panel:

- Provides further support to the overall budget monitoring process
- Considers and formulates recommendations on Cabinet budget proposals
- Monitors progress of agreed budget savings

The Review Panel in exercising this function contributes to a robust budget scrutiny process and supports effective monitoring of the county council's budget. The Review Panel's role is not to lead on the management of the budget or to set a budget, but to provide support as a 'critical friend'. The Review Panel reports to the Internal Scrutiny Committee.

Political Governance

During the year, the Political Governance Working Group met with the remit to make recommendations to Full Council on revisions to the Constitution, Standing Orders and other democratic processes and procedures. The working group operates on a cross party basis with representation from all political groups. The working group recommended changes to standing orders that were adopted by Full Council. The agreed changes focused on Full Council procedures, including Question Time and Notices of Motion. The protocol on language and behaviour was also updated. At its meeting in February 2020 Full Council agreed a number of changes to the Constitution including: updates to Articles 2, 3 and 8 to bring the wording in line with current practice, amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Regulatory Committee and a change to the designated Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

Looking Back on 2019/20

Several improvement actions were identified as part of the 2019/19 Annual Governance Statement. All of these have been the subject of detailed reports to Cabinet and/or committees or Full Council. Set out below is an update in relation to each area:

Reshaping the Council

A lot of excellent work had taken place in 2018/19 with the implementation of the Operational Plan and adoption of a Corporate Strategy. However, there was a risk that the council would not be sufficiently radical or innovative to transform services at the required pace to achieve the scale of change needed during 2019/20 and beyond.

Without the required workforce plans, capacity and skills in place, or the necessary drive to support and deliver a financially sustainable organisation, there was a risk that change opportunities were missed that may result in us not meeting the needs of service users or delivering a balanced budget.

Therefore, building on the achievements of the Operational Plan, the county council pursued two priorities in 2019/20:

1. **Through our People Strategy ensuring adequate workforce plans, capacity and skills are in place across the organisation**
   This focused on:
   - Supporting the development of managers through continued leadership and management modules
   - Workforce sustainability including succession planning & recruitment and retention

- Continuing use of the apprenticeship levy to increase the number of apprentices and support critical development needs
- Continuing to respond to the issues raised in the staff survey
- Managing absence effectively

During the year, we implemented a new recruitment system to improve the speed of recruitment and streamline processes. To attract people to work for us we started building a Lancashire brand and established a new career website. A new suite of leadership and management modules to support our managers were introduced that are linked to national standards.

The staff survey was completed and analysed. Managers have put in place action plans to address the issues raised. There has been a key focus on health and wellbeing to improve attendance at work and embed a healthy workplace. A narrative on 'Our Improvement Journey' was published with an aspiration to be council of the Year 2021. To support us with this aspiration, Cabinet agreed to appoint a partner to work us on organisational development. Initial scoping work and a diagnostic has been completed as part of the concept and shape phase. The Concept and Shape sprint exercise which the council undertook between Jan 2020 and April 2020 resulted in a final report which sets out the current position, and proposes six key areas of activity in the future which will help to deliver Our Improvement Journey:

- Our customer experience
- Our staff experience
- Our strategies and priorities
- Our process
- Our digital and technology
  Transition governance

2. Embed a focus on service delivery

Building on the success of the service challenge work carried out during 2018, a phase 2 service challenge process was implemented to help reduce the financial gap that is still anticipated for 2022/23. To take this forward a new board was established to oversee the process. Several cross-cutting strands were identified to develop new savings proposals and as a consequence this constituted the programme of work focused on developing a sustainable financial strategy. In addition to the cross-cutting themes, some services from phase 1 were subject to further challenge based on updated benchmarking data. The outcome of the challenge process was fed into the budget setting process.

Getting to Good

There were continued pressures throughout 2019/20 on our children's social care services, with high rates of children in need, child protection and children looked after (CLA), a position which needed to be safely reversed. More recently, CLA numbers have started to stabilise, with a stronger focus on permanence and a move away from a risk model to a more strengths based approach to practice. Data relating to children and young people leaving care showed a need for continued focus on the support that we provide to enable young people to live in suitable accommodation and to access education, employment and training. More positively, the experience of our workforce grew, and average caseloads continued to fall, helping to ensure that more visits were occurring on time and that there was better supervision. Strengthened leadership is helping to ensure an increasingly confident and experienced workforce and we are seeing good performance against an increasing number of key indicators. Our decision to implement Family Safeguarding will give us challenge to improve practice.

Our progress on key areas included:

- Developed a Multi-agency Early Help Strategy which has been endorsed by the Children, Young People & Families Partnership Board. This will support a cultural shift towards an enabling asset based approach that recognises the potential in families to help themselves
- Early Help Partnership Officers were appointed (September 2019) in each area to support partners in their delivery of the multi-agency early help strategy
- Our social work workforce is growing in experience. Social workers know their children well and the June 2019 Peer Review found examples of good practice observed from both experienced social workers and newly qualified (AYSEs). Turnover rates for social workers remains low
- Alongside our work on Early Help, we began work to implement the Family Safeguarding Model in Lancashire, building on national best practice and using the approach to build strength based practice
- Our performance management arrangements and management oversight has led to improved practice in response to issues we identified. For example, the timeliness of assessments is currently at 88.8% (Dec 19), well above national, north west and statistical neighbour rates, and an improvement from 82% in 2018/19
- A Permanence Action Plan and Sufficiency Strategy was developed to help reduce Children Looked After numbers and increased use of family group conferencing as a demand management strategy

Managing Major Projects

Control measures had been put in place for projects that reflected the Major Projects Review. Key projects for the year were to be included in the following programmes:

- Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal

- Growth Deal (e.g. Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre)
- Enterprise Zones (e.g. Salmesbury)

Each project was developed in line with the processes established in the Major Projects Review and the Capital Board continued to monitor progress. An Internal Audit identified that a considerable amount of work had been completed on the asset management strategy that underpins both the capital strategy and the development of a risk register for the capital programme.

- Internal Audit have given substantial assurance over the effectiveness of controls operating over the Systems Support function within Core Systems
- The establishment of a Quarterly Portfolio Review Board at Head of Service level will manage issues and escalations

Core Systems & Data

As part of the senior management restructure completed last year, Core Systems and Business Intelligence were brought together under the direction of the Director of Strategy & Performance. This allows them to be considered in their entirety to ensure synergies are optimised so that consistent and triangulated management information is delivered alongside measurably improved service performance. This was further strengthen by the appointment of a Chief Digital Officer. Such a move is consistent with the highest performing councils and ensures the delivery of organisational performance sits with the directorate ultimately responsible for the setting of the organisation's strategic direction.

The decision not to extend the BTLS contract creates new expectations for how we are going to deliver services to our customers and the launch of the Digital First Strategy has given us an ambitious programme and focus for the future. The appointment of a Chief Digital Officer strengthens the IT

Leadership capacity and will help deliver on these and other major programmes for staff, customers, residents and members.

Our progress on key areas included:
- 'Project Accuracy' for Adults Services focussing on procedures and data quality. A 'Proof of Concept' project is underway which will quantify the cost and resource needed in order to develop the trackers from core systems. This solution will form part of the Business Intelligence toolkit for use across the council. A data quality dashboard is included which will support work to improve data quality
- A Corporate Reporting Strategy has been developed by Business Intelligence in conjunction with Core Business Systems and BT Lancashire Services. This is also featuring as part of the data strategy which forms part of the council's Digital First strategy
- The Internal Audit Service have given substantial assurance over the effectiveness of controls operating over the Systems Support function within Core Systems

Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND)

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Written Statement of Action (WSoA) has been implemented by Lancashire partners. There has been a significant focus on developing governance, accountability, strategic direction, establishing key posts and engaging partners, including parents and supporting the new, independent Parent Carer Forum to engage as an equal, strategic partner.

We are clear that some of our services still require improvement; the WSoA was revised and supported by an Improvement Plan for 2019-2020; of the 47 actions; 33 had been completed and 14 were carried forward into the Improvement Plan. The plan, agreed in April 2019, set out the action partners will continue to take together as part of the improvement journey.

Our progress on key areas included:

- Improvements in the quality of Education, Health and Care Plans took place; a quality framework has been agreed and individual service quality assurance, training, and audit is supported by multi-agency audits. A plan to accelerate the pace of change was agreed
- Leaders from across the partnership are working together strategically to deliver a shared vision.
- The SEND Partnership is now well established, involving all key partners, parents, carers and young people. Governance structures are clearly defined and the Partnership has a shared vision and strategy
- Parents and carers are part of the strategic governance and leadership arrangements in Lancashire. A variety of communication mediums have been established and are being embedded. The Parent Carer Forum members are active members of the Partnership.
- A Partnership Improvement Plan is in place to ensure that the progress made to date continues to take place. The Partnership board is proactive in addressing delay and/or limited progress; agreeing five Accelerated Progress Plans where it is felt insufficient progress has been made to improve outcomes for children, young people and families or where pace has been slow to implement agreed action

The SEND revisit by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) was completed in March 2020. However, as all Ofsted and CQC inspections are currently suspended we do not expect to receive the published report for some time and this will be following the re-introduction of inspection processes.

Residential Rehabilitative Support

The review of Residential Rehabilitative Support concluded with a final report at the end of May 2019. The Better Care Fund Steering Group

reviewed the report and identified that there were additional benefits and opportunities for significant improvement and cost savings across the NHS local government system. An Advancing Integration Board that the Executive Director of Adult Services & Health & Wellbeing co-chairs with an Accountable officer from East Lancashire CCG stepped up to progress this programme and reports into the Health & Wellbeing Board and Integrated Care System.

Early discussions suggest an exit from this model of delivery may be agreed in Pennine (during 2020/21) and Fylde Coast (2020/21 and beyond), but other areas have yet to reach conclusions.

Supporting Disadvantaged Families to Fulfil Their Potential (Troubled Families Programme)

We can evidence significant and sustained change for the families in Lancashire through the interventions of the Troubled Families Programme. The programme has been extended up to March 2021. During this year the national team will be working with us to develop a proposal to continue or replace the current programme which will be submitted for consideration by ministers.

Recruit & Retain Experienced Staff Across the Organisation

A strategic approach to further develop succession planning requirements across the organisation is underway. This will include the recruitment to 'hard to fill' posts and reduce the reliance on agency staff. Proposals on reshaping the apprenticeship programme to maximise the apprenticeship levy and support the delivery of the Peoples Strategy started to be implemented. Work on developing a more focused graduate offer commenced and steps to improve the health and wellbeing of staff through initiatives such as the 'time to change' programme were implemented. As mentioned earlier we have established a new career website and developed the 'Lancashire Brand'.

Future Provision of ICT Services

The current ICT contract expires on 31 March 2021. Failure to put in place suitable arrangements will impact on organisational effectiveness and service delivery so we engaged the Society of IT Management to undertake an independent review of our options. The review considered current provider service performance and how it benchmarks with other authorities.

Following the review, Cabinet agreed not to extend the current contract and transfer the service back into the council. To facilitate this, an ICT transition partner was appointed together with a Chief Digital Officer. Appropriate governance arrangements have been put in place.

Financial Leadership Challenges in Health and Social Care

A new risk that emerged during 2019/20 focused on the collective leadership ability to ensure secured joint funding to support vulnerable children and adults. Mitigating actions included:

- Health & Wellbeing Board (HWBB) oversight of key priorities including intermediate care and SEND
- Individual Patient Activity (IPA) Board established for adults/children's services to develop effective arrangements for joint funding. The IPA was set up by NHS under the aegis of the Integrated Care System (ICS) to tackle the delays in funding primarily for individuals being considered for continuing healthcare
- SEND Partnership Board providing system governance for the SEND Improvement Plan
- Internal Health Integration Board established to ensure a clear county council approach to integration

- Representation at key Integrated Care System meetings has been agreed including cabinet member at executive board level and chief executive at system leadership executive level
- Review of Health and Wellbeing Board Arrangements including support for a more significant role

Neighbourhood Wellbeing Grants

It was reported to Audit, Risk & Governance Committee in May 2019 that there had now been some contact with all recipients of the grant apart from one who had received £1,000 (this recipient had since ceased operations).

Contact had also been made with an additional two organisations and the requested paperwork was anticipated (now received). Partial monitoring information had been received for a further five organisations. In total this equated to less than 3% of the grant funding issued. An update has been provided on the progress of the remaining groups to members of the committee outside of the committee meeting.

Responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic

CMT agreed to add CV-19 to the Corporate Risk register at the beginning of March 2020 and started to consider its implications. However, events moved very quickly and the council's response is set out in a separate section of this statement.

Governance Challenges for 2020/21 and Actions to be Taken

Reshaping the Council

Our Improvement Journey - In 2019/20 we commenced on Our Improvement Journey with an aspiration to be council of the year 2021. This work stopped when staff were redeployed into new roles to respond to the CV-19 pandemic. However, as we move out of crisis response to recovery our focus will be on how we can develop Our Improvement Journey to help deliver our vision. The first phase of the journey – Concept and Shape – has been completed. A new set of priorities have been agreed and the next stage will be to turn everything we have learnt from phase one into a series of plans for how we support our staff and partners to deliver those priority improvements. We have recently appointed a new Director of Organisational Development and Change to lead this work.

CMT have recently agreed our transitional approach that sets out the priority areas to focus on in the short term as we look to align our recovery efforts following Covid-19 with our improvement journey. Phase 1 work packages will be developed in four key areas (all of which will support recovery) and we will be looking to commence:

- Staff experience (reconnecting with staff)
- Customer experience
- Programme governance
- Data and insight

Further work packages will be developed based on the high-level action plans set out in the final Concept and Shape Report, for roll-out as we transition into recovery & beyond.

Financial Sustainability - Like many councils, Lancashire County Council is facing significant financial pressures, and whilst good progress has been made in addressing the forecast financial shortfall over the medium term, further work is required to ensure the council can achieve a financially sustainable position. To achieve a balanced budget from 2022/23 the council will need to address a funding gap of around £33 million (but this is necessarily being reviewed and updated in light of CV-19) and the increased uncertainty regarding future funding and spending pressures. Work continues to address the budget deficit through a number of work streams that include - Organisational, Finance & Commercial and Health & Care.

There are inherent risks with savings plans of this scale and scope and any significant under-delivery of agreed savings as a result of our response to CV-19 will further impact on achievability. The Service Challenge Board will continue to have oversight and progress will be monitored by Financial Management Boards at service level.

Getting to Good

Children's Social Care - We will continue to establish the new senior leadership team, following the appointment of two new Directors for Education and Skills and Children's Social Care in 2019/20. We will refresh our Getting to Good Plan to ensure continued focus and pace in improving the quality of practice, making the shift from 'requires improvement' to 'good', using 'sprints' to achieve traction. Implementing the Family Safeguarding approach will help us secure progress against the 'good criteria' with a focus on demand management and permanency for children outside of local authority care. We will look to maintain and improve our performance, working with Partners in Practice to support work on improved use of performance data and work to ensure consistency of practice across localities.

Our other improvement priorities include multi-agency work on thresholds, completing the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)/ Front Door review and strengthening the multi-agency early help offer.

Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) - There has been a significant focus on developing governance, accountability, strategic direction, establishing key posts and engaging partners, including parents, and supporting the new, independent, Parent & Carer Forum to engage as an equal, strategic partner. Our improvement priorities for the next twelve months include:

1. Delivering our five Accelerated Improvement Plans
   - Quality of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's)
   - Education Outcomes
   - Transition arrangements
   - Information about the Local Offer
   - Implementing Neuro-development Pathway

2. Being clear about maintaining our challenge to
   - Improve the experience for those using our services
     e.g. to the process of transition in health, education and social care
   - Accelerate our pace to improve quality and outcomes
     e.g. quality of EHCP's and outcomes in education
   - Demonstrate that we have made a difference
     e.g. to the lives of our children as they become young adults

3. Showing we are committed to a coherent way of working by
   - Extending our Joint working arrangements
     e.g. delivering the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) re-commission and the neurodevelopmental pathway
   - Improving service practice to better meet need e.g. implementing the Behaviour Strategy with our education and health providers

- Reviewing provision and the estate to support our offer
  e.g. reshaping the school offer in line with identified need

Future Provision of ICT Services

The BTLS contract comes to an end on the 31 March 2021 and we are currently preparing for this. The contract is, however, much more than just ICT, and we will need to ensure that all the services that are currently delivered by BTLS are transferred back to the council in a seamless manner.

This will involve co-working with Lancashire Constabulary, West Lancashire Borough council, schools and others to be successful. The Chief Digital Officer will be guiding this contract to its conclusion in a safe managed way so that the services, staff, and customers are looked after and the opportunities that 'in house' services bring are realised to the maximum.

Core Systems & Data

The Digital Delivery Plan will be a living document and will therefore be subject to regular change; it will always reflect the current set of in-flight projects we are working on and projects we have identified on the horizon that will need delivering in order to ramp up Lancashire's digital maturity, all in keeping with the council's Digital Strategy.

Core Systems working with Business intelligence and BTLS (our ICT providers) also completed a review of reporting across the authority. This will help shape our Business Intelligence and Reporting Strategy. The development of an architectural vision for the digital strategy is underway, working closely with BTLS. This includes a landscape review of existing technologies.

A Performance and Finance Management subgroup of CMT has been established to enable more focussed management of performance. Interactive dashboards are being developed by Business Intelligence to facilitate this group.

Managing Major Projects

There are now control measures in place for projects and as we move towards recovery key economic development projects will make a major contribution in helping the Lancashire economy bounce back from the crisis. Each project will be developed in line with the processes established in the Major Projects Review and the Capital Board will continue to monitor progress.

Financial Leadership Challenges in Health & Social Care

To reduce the risk that system leadership is unable to address the financial health and care challenges of our population to improve outcomes for children and adults, during 20/21 we will focus on:

- Working with partners to review the Health & Wellbeing Board to improve oversight and challenge
- Delivering against the project plans and activity agreed through children and adults Individual Placement Agreement Boards
- Continued engagement with the health system to ensure we understand the expected impact of the proposed move to a single Clinical Commissioning Group
- Completing the review of Health and Wellbeing Boards
- Ensuring effective linkages between different levels of representation on Integrated Care System groups
- Ensuring the county council is clear about priorities for integration through the internal Health Integration Board

Combined Authority for Lancashire with an Elected Mayor

We have agreed to support work on the development of a combined authority with an elected mayor. The establishment of a combined authority for Lancashire is an opportunity to create a single, clear and influential voice for Lancashire. It is a mechanism to gain powers and funding from Government.

Monitoring Implementation

The key governance challenges facing the council in 2020/21 will be monitored by the Corporate Management Team and are identified risks in the council's Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register. This document is the 'action plan' for each issue identified.

The governance arrangements relating to the Register involve its review by the Corporate Management Team which is then reported in turn to the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement and then the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee.

The Register identifies risks, the current controls that apply and the mitigating actions to be taken, producing a "risk score" and a residual score after mitigating actions have been applied.

Conclusion

Overall, the county council has the appropriate systems and processes in place to ensure good governance is maintained. Whist these work generally well, the council has identified a number of areas where further improvements can be made to strengthen its governance framework. The governance of the county council will continue to be monitored by the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee, Cabinet and Corporate Management Team.

Responding to the Coronavirus Crisis

There has been a tremendous amount of work done by staff and with our partners to ensure that our emergency response has been effective. During this crisis we have had two goals:

- To protect the most vulnerable
- Make sure our most vital services continue to be delivered

We have completely transformed the way in which we do our businesses which is a testament to our preparedness to face emergencies. We could not have predicted the scale and scope of the challenges that this emergency has presented, but because we have exceptionally good business continuity plans, we have been able to rise to those challenges at speed. We recognised that partnership working is the key to an effective response, and have been central to the ramping up of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to become the central hub for all activity.

We aligned our response to the LRF structures to ensure clarity and continuity between our internal work and the wider partnership activity. This means that we have a clear understanding of our essential role and can move and adapt to changing circumstances. More recently we have reviewed our structures and established a Covid-19 Corporate Recovery Group.

Impact on Business as Usual in the Delivery of Services

Our extraordinary response to this emergency means we have been able to continue to delivery vital services to the people of Lancashire. That is not to say that it has all been plain sailing. The rapidly-developing situation has meant that we have had to make decisions that we have had to change, and have sometimes made mistakes, but these have all been quickly dealt

with to ensure that we remain on course and we have managed to:

- Keep more than 500 schools open throughout the lockdown period to support the children of key workers and our most vulnerable families. Families who receive free school meals were supported with a meals service and we have sent a daily bulletin out to schools, as well as continually updating our schools portal so that they have the most up-to-date information and advice. Schools remained open over the Easter period and we expected more than 900 pupils to be attending school across the county.
- There are more than 400 care homes across Lancashire and to ensure that they have the most up-to-date information, we have created a new portal on our website where we have been posting all the latest advice and regularly updating the most common questions and queries from those homes. We have also hosted online care provider conferences that have been attended by hundreds of providers. We launched a campaign to recruit social care staff for Lancashire to meet the extra demand that the coronavirus crisis was creating. We received expressions of interest from hundreds of people from across the county.
- We have supported district councils in setting up their community hubs which are now in place in all 12 of our districts. We are also responsible for providing a significant amount of support to the most vulnerable and have ensured there are clear lines of communication with our district colleagues.
- School appeals will be heard over the summer months. Due to social distancing measures these will be heard remotely.
- Internally we have moved from being an organisation which is primarily location-based to one that is primarily remotely-based. We have had record numbers of people using our systems remotely with thousands of laptops being distributed to staff in the space of days.

Many staff who were not in roles which were critical to the emergency response have been shifted to new duties to support the response. As the crisis progressed and the demands on our services and colleagues changed, we placed our resources where they had the most benefit. A new Internal Resource Pool was established. The pool comprised over 1000 staff and the critical functions that have received staff from the pool included:

- CAPACITY TRACKER - to contact community and residential care providers regarding CV-19. The role is to make telephone calls to care providers in Lancashire on a daily basis to understand their current operating position, staffing and any issues related to the current CV-19 situation.
- PROVIDER ASSISTANCE - a contacts list of 'go to people' quickly if a care home falls over and we need to keep it running.
- HOSPITAL DISCHARGES - in Care Navigation, staff needed to ring around care homes to identify places and so help with hospital discharges. This freed up beds for critical care patients.
- PROVIDER QUERIES - Contract Management responding to social care provider queries.
- INFECTION CONTROL RECORDING - Business support staff recorded details of infection notifications.
- INFECTION CONTROL ADVICE - ex nurses or social workers helping to provide infection prevention advice to care homes who are reporting outbreaks and concerns with CV-19.
- PROVIDER ESCALATION TEAM - a provider escalation team was set up that established teleconferences for multi-disciplinary teams in relation to care homes.
- PUBLIC HEALTH –a pathway for staff and their family who display symptoms to access testing was set up.
- EXCESS DEATHS -the Coroners CV-19 project involved taking calls from GPs regarding CV-19. It is a service needed around the clock so people would be on call on an 8 hour shift system.

- REGISTRATION SUPPORT - a hub has been created in Preston. A strict social distancing regime is in place at the hub. Business support staff worked at the hub to carry out the pre-registration 'screening' process for death registrations.
- PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) - there was a need for members of staff to help with a range of activities associated with PPE. These include operating the phone line, taking deliveries, updating stock records, packing PPE packages for internal services and non-council care providers.
- ASSET MANAGEMENT - needed more resources on the Lancashire Volunteer Partnership to work on the helpdesk taking calls and signposting to the appropriate volunteer officer.
- WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES - members of staff were needed to help direct traffic and engage with customer (at a safe distance) when the Centre's reopened
- HIGHWAYS - maintaining safety critical works

Decision Making Arrangements

All formal meetings of the council including cabinet and committees were cancelled in response to the coronavirus situation.

Only business critical decisions were taken, and these have been taken under the relevant urgency procedures. Initially, we deferred all decisions currently listed on the forward plans for Cabinet and committees.

For regulatory-type processes and decisions, we considered the appropriate mechanisms with officers responsible to ensure we meet our obligations.

To ensure that the council is able to make essential decisions quickly to respond in the current circumstances, the Leader agreed for officers to take all Executive (i.e. Cabinet) decisions should the need arise. However, the intention remained that Cabinet decisions were made by elected representatives wherever possible in line with the urgent business procedures and as such this new delegation was for genuinely emergency situations. All decisions made by officers under this specific delegation have been properly recorded.

With the agreement of the Chairman, the Full Council AGM in May was cancelled. All appointments made at the AGM last year, including the Chairman of the council and committee appointments, continued until the meeting of Full Council on 16 July 2020. Any questions or Notice of Motions already submitted were carried forward.

We hosted our first virtual Cabinet meeting in May and Development Control Committee in June with all participants dialling in. We are keeping this under review in line with any future changes to the wider guidance on social distancing / isolation.

Given that councillors have not been able to attend meetings for some time the "6 month rule" that requires them to attend at least one meeting in that time, was extended until October 2020.

Opposition groups have been regularly briefed by the Chief Executive and Director of Resources and Scrutiny committees have been discussing their future work programme in the context of the pandemic.

Managing Risk
Our quarterly risk register was suspended and replaced by a twice weekly situation report that fed into both the Corporate Emergency Response Team (CERT) and CMT. The reports set out:

- Impacts on current service delivery
- Mitigation actions to minimise impacts
- Resource issues – staffing and equipment shortfalls

The reports informed decision making in terms of resource allocation to help minimise the impact within Lancashire communities. The reports also set out actions taken to date and proposed actions. They also provided a forward view highlighting other issues. The reports are shared with multi-agency partners. The reports are now produced weekly. We have also carried out stress testing of our response and scenario planning setting out how we would operate with reduced staffing levels of 20%, 40% and 50%.

To provide flexibility to changing circumstances a number of our human resource policies and procedures have been either temporarily amended or suspended. We have maintained constructive dialogue with the trade unions throughout the crisis.

All staff working from home have been asked to complete a home working risk assessment to ensure they have the correct set-up to work safely at home.

Health & Wellbeing

Many staff are working so hard to look after others through this emergency, but it is also really important that they look after their own health and wellbeing. Keeping physically and mentally well is a challenge for us all. We have ensured that we have lots of useful information on the intranet about the help that we can offer, and guides to how people can help themselves. For colleagues not able to access the intranet, this information is also available on the staff section of our website, which anyone can access. All of our wellbeing information is updated regularly.

New Areas of Activity as part of the National Response to Coronavirus and any Governance Issues Arising

There have also been challenges outside of our control, such as changing government advice which has had a knock-on effect to our response. One issue has been the availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to frontline staff, which has caused concerns. This was our top priority and we continue to do all we can to provide the relevant equipment to the frontline. We linked in to central government via numerous routes to lobby for quick deployment of necessary equipment to Lancashire.

Working on behalf of the Local Resilience Forum, we have bought significant supplies of PPE, taking delivery of several plane-loads of PPE from other countries. This has provided vital help to our care sector as the following statistics show:
- We have issued more than **1.8m** individual PPE items to our care sector and we received and fulfilled more than **1,500** individual requests for PPE.
- At least **429** different Lancashire county council providers have requested and received PPE.
- Requests have come from both residential/nursing homes (60%) and domiciliary/community services (40%).

44

Excess Deaths - Temporary Body Storage Facility

Like many other places in the country, we had to prepare for all contingencies as part of our response to the coronavirus pandemic. This meant we had to be prepared for the anticipated increase in deaths.

Therefore we built a temporary facility on BAE Systems' site at Warton with capacity to house 1,000 deceased to prepare for a potential increase in demand from the Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool areas. The facility was built at pace over a week, and was ready for use in April. The administration and operation of the facility were comprehensively stress-tested before opening. Staff working at the facility were fully trained, and funeral directors have been fully briefed. At all times our aim is to treat the deceased with dignity and respect.

The temporary facility has not been used and has now been put into standby mode. The facility will remain at the site, but will not be operational unless it is needed in the event of a second peak.

Schools

The majority of schools (590) have stayed open to accept our vulnerable children and those of key workers, with thousands of pupils attending each day. All schools have maintained close contact with all parents and pupils. We have been in daily contact with schools and have been supporting them with issues that have arisen, as well as sharing all the latest guidance.

The government's ambition was to have schools accepting more pupils from 1 June in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, with a goal of having all primary school children back in classes for a month before the summer break. Secondary schools will remain closed, although the government says it expects some one-to-one contact between teachers and pupils in Years 10 and 12.

45

These aspirations caused significant concern both nationally and locally, given the stringent requirements that would be needed to ensure social distancing and the unique challenges this would create in a classroom environment. We have had productive and detailed discussions with our schools and representatives from the teaching unions. The ultimate decision (based on legal advice to date) about how many pupils it is safe to have in a school depends on context and geography and is therefore one for individual headteachers to make, in consultation with their governing body. However, on 27 May 2020 following careful consideration by our Director of Public Health, we advised schools not to reopen to more pupils from 1 June. This advice was issued because we did not believe that all of the five government tests were being met in the county. Following review, our Director of Public Health revised his guidance to schools about reopening to more pupils and encouraged them to take the decision to reopen to more pupils from 22 June, if they were ready to do so.

Some schools have also requested advice from the Director of Public Health regarding the use of PPE and potential criteria for needing to close in the future if cases re-emerge. Guidance on the use of PPE in schools has been published. PPE packs have been delivered to all primary schools and a plan is in place to do the same for all secondary schools. This is a one-off delivery at no charge. If further supplies are required, this will be chargeable.

Testing
Testing for coronavirus has been a hot national topic and there have been issues with people accessing tests and waiting for results. We have a clear guide on the intranet about who is eligible for testing and how they can be tested. This guide is updated regularly with the latest advice and information, and we remain committed to working with the Local Resilience Forum to lobby government to ensure that Lancashire has enough tests and that the results are timely.

Outbreak management plans are being developed in-line with the national move to Testing, Tracking & Tracing. Arrangements will include the setting up of local health boards and addressing issues around staffing, training and capacity. Work is ongoing to produce a case management system similar that of Public Health England. Testing in care homes continues with support from St. John Ambulance and the military.

Care Home Support Package
At the outset of the CV-19 Coronavirus Pandemic in mid-March 2020 officers and members of the county council identified that support for the providers of adult social care services was an absolute key priority in securing the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes for our most vulnerable residents. A social care cell was introduced as part of Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) which the Executive Director of Adult Services, Health and Wellbeing chaired and we submitted a response to the Care Home support package that was developed in conjunction with NHS.

Senior Officers in Adult Services immediately established a Human Aspects Cell (HAC) for Adults Services, which met twice weekly and reported daily into CMT meetings and the Corporate Emergency Response Teams (CERT). This enabled us to maintain a close oversight on the support being given to the care market and also to provide regular briefings to the county council's cabinet and leader of the opposition group. We were assured that the key focus on the care market was receiving laser-like attention.

In addition, senior officers from Adult Services immediately established working groups and cells with key partners including health, district and unitary councils, which often met, and still meet, on a daily basis, in order to manage the vitally important hospital discharge process, provision of PPE for the sector, infection prevention control, data collection, testing and tracing and workforce support.

Provider/Market Engagement

We recognised at the outset of the Covid 19 outbreak that effective engagement and communication with the care market in Lancashire was key to supporting them in their crucial role of securing the best health and wellbeing outcomes for our most vulnerable residents.

We immediately established a Provider Engagement Portal on the county council's website and set up weekly zoom webinars which all Lancashire providers are invited to attend to receive up to date guidance and information. Providers can submit questions which we answer via FAQs on the portal, which we update daily. We also send a weekly newsletter to all providers. We regularly attract around 250 providers on the webinar.

We have received a considerable amount of positive feedback from our valued providers in Lancashire. The questions and comments that we have received have ensured that, through ongoing dialogue, we have provided the clarity or support required to maintain a strong and stable care market during the current crisis and for the future. For example, we have developed a Financial Assistance Scheme to support the current and future financial viability of our care market. It sets out the pathway that providers can follow to secure a speedy response from us in relation to financial issues that they may be facing. This includes accessing additional funding, for example, in relation to additional staffing and PPE.

Data and Intelligence

Similarly, we recognised that 'live' information regarding a number of key aspects of our care market would be vital to enable us to support our valuable providers in Lancashire. Our LRF colleagues supported that view and identified one of their first tasks would be to support us in developing a reliable method of capturing data and intelligence from all providers in Lancashire, and care home providers in particular.

We also recognised from the feedback that we were receiving from providers, that they were being overwhelmed with requests for data and intelligence at a time when they needed to focus their efforts on caring for their residents and service users.

With that in mind a team of people set about developing a CV-19 tracker, with the main purpose of capturing daily intelligence in relation to the outbreak, and also with a mind to how that system could be rolled out to other Lancashire and South Cumbria authorities as part of an integrated way of working to support 'business as usual'.

The LRF supported the tracker and wrote to all Lancashire providers and asked them to take a daily call from county council staff in order to provide information to support the ongoing management of the crisis. There is a tracker for residential services and another for community based services. The North West Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (NWADASS) are looking at the system with a view to rolling it out wider.

The trackers are now up and running with a daily return rate exceeding 80%. The tracker can now be uploaded automatically on a daily basis to the NHS North of England Commissioning Support (NECS) tracker. This has enabled Lancashire to provide a high daily return rate to NECS. The tracker dashboards are available to our health and other partners.

We have enabled Blackburn with Darwen council to provide information into our trackers and we are currently in the advanced stages of enabling Blackpool to provide input. South Cumbria and Sefton councils have also expressed interest. We can amend and adapt our tracker to capture and upload data into NECS as part of the NHS ongoing development of national data requirements.

We have produced a product manual that sets out the flow of information through the tracker and how it is then turned into management information for county council and health colleagues to action. The pathways are clearly set out in the manual which has been signed off by the LRF. Our NHS colleagues have greatly welcomed and supported the success of our CV-19 tracker for both local and national reporting purposes.

One of the main consequences of the intelligence that we can now collate on a daily basis from our providers, is the ability for us to be able to respond at pace to any emerging crisis in one or more care settings. The LRF have supported the development of our Provider Failure Plan which sets out how we and our partners will respond in an emergency situation. This is then subsequently followed up by our newly formed Recovery Team who have developed a plan to support providers to return more quickly to 'business as usual' following a crisis situation.

Infection Prevention and Control
Our Infection Prevention and Control team have played a key role in supporting providers to maintain safe and healthy care services for Lancashire residents. The team have published regular guidance and advice to all providers including guidance documents and video training for the correct use of PPE.

The team is now playing a key role in gathering daily information in relation to outbreaks in homes and supporting care providers in minimising and preventing the further spread of the disease. Their work supports the Care Homes Admissions Policy statement that has recently been signed off by the LRF Social Care Cell. The statement sets out how we will best maintain the status of 'cold' homes (ie those with no cases) and reduce the spread of the infection in 'hot' homes (those with cases). The policy is aimed at ensuring effective and safe hospital discharge and movement of residents between settings.

The next step for the LRF to support this policy will be to establish 'step down' facilities to support effective infection prevention control in our care homes.

Testing in Adult Social Care
The LRF Adult Social Care cell has focused on testing for residents and staff in our care homes. We understand the vital importance of testing everyone who lives or works in a care home setting in managing the spread of the infection and reducing the death rate.

The LRF has recently written to all care homes setting out the testing policy and procedure for care homes to follow for all of their staff and residents. The LRF have also approved the testing policy for care homes. The policy is aligned to the Care Homes Admissions Policy.

To support the testing policy, the LRF military planners have provided training to 70+ volunteers from St Johns Ambulance and army veterans who will attend care homes who need support in carrying out the test swabs.

In the event of significant numbers of care home staff needing to self-isolate as a consequence of a positive test result, the county council has secured an auxiliary workforce who can immediately step in to any care home needing additional staff.

Personal Protective Equipment and Supply
The county council's procurement team have been at the forefront of working alongside the LRF to secure sufficient quantities of compliant PPE to support both the county council's care service staff and the wider market. A PPE pathway has been established which encourages care providers to secure their own PPE equipment via the national route, and to contact the county council in the event that other routes have failed.

The county council has continued to secure sufficient quantities and quality of the full range of PPE which meets national guidance (as it changes). We have received positive feedback from providers as the availability of PPE has been paramount in their continued efforts to contain the virus.

We have approximately four weeks supply of PPE and will continue to order and supply PPE to the market as required. We have also linked the supply of PPE to the financial support offer for providers.

Workforce Support
We recognised that maintaining the supply of a workforce for the care market in Lancashire was another key component to ensuring the stability of the market and saving lives. We quickly established a team of people to develop an auxiliary workforce who we have quickly trained using a variety of online and care setting based methods.

We have used a variety of advertising and recruitment methods to attract a care workforce, including local, regional and national campaigns. The availability is linked to our ability to quickly respond to one or more provider failures (see above).

Clinical Support
One of the pathways that we have established is in relation to nursing support and clinical/medical interventions that may be required in a care setting. We have worked with health colleagues to establish a pathway to access such support from any of the five Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs) in Lancashire. The pathways are in the final stages of sign off in the NHS and will be included in the Tracker Manual in due course.

52

Accommodation for Key Workers
We secured more than 2,500 rooms available at hotels and other facilities across the county for key workers where it is impractical or not possible for them to stay at home. This is a remarkable feat which we have led on which is for NHS staff and also our own key workers.

Safe Discharge from the NHS to Social Care Settings
Our adult social care teams work closely with the NHS and other partners to support timely patient discharge and respond to care needs. We have amended discharge pathways to meet the guidance requirements following agreement with our partners. All of our adult social care staff can access the new Hospital Discharge Service Requirements and our senior managers conducted a webinar to support their implementation. Any PPE requirements (and resulting provision and support, including information and advice) are discussed with providers at the point of discharge. We have established a number of pathways to allow for safe and effective discharge.

Returning Professionals Coming to Work in Social Care
The county council is working with various professional bodies, including Social Work England and the Health and Care Professionals Council, to identify returning social work professionals who have worked in the sector within the last few years. Despite issues with the quality of some of the information provided we are working with human resource professionals and looking at other options to get a clearer picture of how many social workers may potentially be recruited from this group.

53

Test & Trace System

The government has launched its Test and Trace system, which carries with it significant responsibilities for local government. Although formally launched, it is not yet fully operational and we await detail from central Government on what their requirements of us will be for this important part of the country's ongoing plans to be able to live safely with the virus for the foreseeable future.

As an upper tier authority, we will have responsibility for the operational management of localised outbreaks and will be setting up an incident management hub working alongside the NHS and Public Health England. We are also working closely with our district colleagues, who have a key role to play, in helping to understand high risk settings in their areas, supporting people isolating through hubs, and to engage with local business to ensure Covid-secure workplaces and settings.

We will be working collaboratively with our partners through the Local Resilience Forum to establish a consistent framework in Lancashire for testing, sharing data and intelligence, as well as disseminating Lancashire-wide messages to the public and key stakeholders.

An Incident Management Hub (IMH) has been established to support the Test, Track and Trace programme. It is up and running 7 days a week between 0800 and 2000, with a mailbox to triage cases. They will lead on L1 (more complex) cases, such as outbreaks in schools, care homes, homeless.

Community Safety & Domestic Abuse

Through the Community Safety Partnership we are working closely with our partners in the police, housing and health services and wider domestic abuse sector, to reassure people at risk and provide support and guidance.

Active Travel

As Lancashire's businesses prepare to reopen, work is taking place across the county to ensure this can happen as safely as possible.
We have been working closely with our colleagues in the districts and business to help our residents take advantage of the easing of the lockdown, whilst still maintaining social distancing to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

One way we are doing this is through the creation of pop-up cycle lanes to encourage people to walk and cycle for regular journeys. The lanes in Lancaster and Preston city centres will make it easier for people to cycle in these busy areas, and avoid using public transport if they can, to help prevent the spread of coronavirus and of course, protect themselves.

By making it easier for people to walk and cycle more, it also has the added benefit of assisting our physical and mental health.

We are also asking people to highlight public places where social distancing may currently be difficult and road space could temporarily be reallocated to give people more room.

Lancashire Outbreak Control Plan

In June 2020, Cabinet agreed to develop an Outbreak Control Plan. This work will be led by the Director of Public Health with NHS and district partners. The plan will address prevention, protection and response. There is a requirement for a Local Outbreak Engagement Board. Cabinet supported the proposal that the Health and Wellbeing Board be empowered to make the necessary arrangements.

The Funding and Logistical Consequences of Delivering the Local Government Response

Pooled Fund Agreement

A pooled funding arrangement between the upper tier authorities in Lancashire to support key expenditure in response to the CV-19 pandemic was established. The Lancashire Resilience Forum identified a need for such an arrangement but, as the forum itself has no legal status, the proposed arrangements were considered to be an appropriate vehicle through which decisions on urgent key expenditure can be taken.

The councils are category 1 responders in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (the Act) and therefore are subject to the full range of duties conferred on them in relation to making arrangements for civil protection in an emergency. The councils are required under section 2(1) of the Act to cooperate with each other in connection with their duties in the local resilience area.

The Agreement will run until 31 August 2020 with an option to extend for up to a further 6 months. The Agreement does not prevent the councils incurring expenditure of their own outside of this arrangement. The county council is acting as accountable body for the pooled fund and made an initial contribution of £380,000. However, to date the total expenditure incurred by the LRF is in excess of £10m with county council contributing £6.6m. We have also established an agreement with the NHS in response to the funding flowing via the NHS to support hospital discharge.

Impact on our Revenue Budget

To date, we have received an additional £56m from central Government to help us meet the costs of responding to the pandemic. However, the current estimated cost to the council is in the region of £100m. These costs are not all attributable to direct expenditure on CV-19 related activity but include the savings we have not been able to deliver this year as a consequence of responding to the crisis and the estimated loss of income. This will leave a forecast gap of £44m.

Whist we anticipate that we will be able to deliver within our available funds this year, the ongoing uncertainties in relation to CV-19 related expenditure, future funding settlements and business rate retention means that it is increasingly difficult to forecast our income and expenditure in the short to medium term.

Care Provider Support

We have been providing significant support to our care sector throughout this emergency and as part of that support we have also been providing financial assistance to care providers, including care homes. Out of around 760 care providers in our area, we have been providing direct financial assistance to around 370 of them valued at £7.2m, however, some elements of this support has now been overtaken by the new Infection Control Fund from central Government.

Community Fund

Through the LRF, we help set up a Lancashire community fund, to help those most in need across the county. We have contributed £170,000 on behalf of ourselves and our district councils to the fund. The overall fund stands at £510,000 with a target of £1m.

Working in partnership with the National Emergencies Trust and Lancashire Resilience Forum, the Community Foundation for Lancashire is managing all donations received and will be ramping up their activity in the coming days.

The fund is awarding grants to support community organisations providing vital services like foodbanks, delivery of food and care packages, telephone and online services offering friendship and support to help reduce isolation, emotional and mental health support and financial inclusion, support to access benefits and debt advice.

Assessment of the Longer Term Disruption and Consequences Arising from the Coronavirus Pandemic

It is very clear that this emergency is unlike any other we have ever faced, and as such the move towards recovery will be a different path to any we have seen before. But what we do know is that it will be complex and phased. Some of this will be led by central Government, but we have to ensure that our voice is heard as we understand our people best.

As part of our preparations, the CMT is currently considering three key areas:
- What do we want to achieve and what will a full recovery look like? How can we balance the varying needs of our residents, businesses and communities to ensure we are supporting their financial, physical and mental wellbeing?
- What are the positives we have gained in this emergency that we want to secure? We have made significant changes to how we go about our business, and there has been some excellent innovation and practice that we need to capture and build on as we move back to whatever normality will look like in the future.
- What are the triggers for transition and recovery? How will we identify when to move into different phases of this journey? What will different services need to look at to indicate a change is needed? What warning signs will we need to be aware of to ensure we remain on track?

We have a key role to play in the coming months as we really begin to understand the implications of coronavirus and how it will affect the day-to-day lives of our citizens. We will be at the heart of building a stronger, healthier and more prosperous Lancashire for our residents and businesses.

Senior officers are already working on the implications and logistics associated with moving from crisis to recovery within their respective service areas. We have established CV-19 Corporate Recovery Group and a senior working group to examine all of the issues around safety in the workplace as we move towards opening our buildings and reopening our services. The group has produced guidance and risk assessments in consultation with staff and trade unions to ensure social distancing in the workplace and that we maintain a safe work environment. The group is looking at wider issues than just having workplaces reopened and is considering all aspects of safe working as we start to move towards the new normal. This includes support for routinely working remotely from home and other locations.

More recently, the Chief Executive & Director of Resources has become chair of the LRF as we have move out of crisis to recovery.

Conclusion

Overall, the county council has the systems and processes in place to ensure it is responding appropriately to the coronavirus crisis and that good governance has been and continues to be maintained.

Glossary

Audit, Risk & Governance Committee - The committee provides independent oversight of the adequacy of the council's governance, risk management and internal control framework, and oversees the financial reporting process.

Better Care Fund - is a programme spanning both the NHS and local government which seeks to join-up health and care services, so that people can manage their own health and wellbeing, and live independently in their communities for as long as possible.

Capital Programme - identifies agreed capital schemes, showing the total cost of schemes and the projected phasing of those schemes over current and future financial years.

Care Quality Commission – is the independent regulator of all health and social care services in England.

Constitution - sets out how the council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that decision-making is efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

Corporate Management Team (CMT) – is the strategic officer leadership body within the council that advise and support the elected members of the council and its key post holders and bodies, including the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny.

Corporate Risk Register – is a formal record of the major risks facing the county council and the mitigating actions to reduce the risk.

60

Directors' Assurance Statements - provide an assurance on the internal control framework operating within their service(s).

Equality Impact Assessment - is a process designed to ensure that a policy, project or scheme does not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people.

External Audit - external auditors review financial statements to ensure they are a 'true and fair' account of past financial performance and current financial position.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) – is a regulation in European Union (EU) law on data protection and privacy for all individuals within the EU and the European Economic Area (EEA).

Intermediate Care – services that provide support for a short time to help individuals recover and increase their independence.

Internal Audit - an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve the county councils operations.

LRF (Local Resilience Forum) - are multi-agency partnerships made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency and others.

Medium Term Financial Strategy - is the council's key financial planning document. It aims to provide the council with an assurance that the council's spending plans are affordable over the medium term.

Monitoring Officer - has the specific duty to ensure that the council, its officers, and its Elected councillors, maintain the highest standards of conduct in all they do.

61

Ofsted - is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They inspect services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

Passport to Independence - its aim is to help people stay healthy and self-sufficient (independent) for longer.

Performance Management – is the activity and set of processes that aim to maintain and improve performance in line with an organisation's objectives.

Reserves – liquid assets in order to meet expected future payments and/or emergency needs.

Risk Management - is an important part of both corporate governance and performance management. It allows the council to avoid problems and failures, rather than just reacting to them when they arise. It helps the council to identify where it needs to focus its efforts and resources, to exploit more opportunities and suffer fewer failures.

S151 Officer - an officer appointed under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 which requires every local authority to appoint a suitably qualified officer responsible for the proper administration of its affairs

Scheme of delegation - sets out how the Cabinet and full council have delegated their executive and non-executive powers.