

Building a better community for all

*Direction of
Travel Statement
2007*

Context

Blackpool Council has proved itself to be a resilient, ambitious organisation over the last 12 months. With the well-publicised disappointment of the negative casino decision and continuing decline of the tourism industry, together with a change of Council administration in the May elections leading to a change in corporate priorities, we are proud to say we have emerged at the end with numerous important achievements under our belt and a stronger than ever vision for the future and importantly, the capacity to achieve this vision. Resilience, defined as the ability to recover readily from adversity, is a key test of organisational robustness and an opportunity to improve in a range of aspects, and hence Blackpool Council can be proud of its resilience and self-betterment.

The headline achievements of 2007 are:

- › Finalising heads of terms for the main elements of the agreement between ourselves and Muse, our chosen developer to deliver the £285 million Talbot Gateway development
- › On target and below budget on the £72 million sea defence scheme and Phase I of the tramway emergency works
- › Facilitating development of the £30 million Houndshill shopping centre extension with negotiations for Phase II underway
- › People's Playground has been short-listed for funding from the Lottery Living Landmarks Fund
- › Securing £3 million funding from Government for delivering the initial housing renewal project in collaboration with English Partnerships
- › Winning a £32 million award from Central Government to replace street lighting and traffic signals
- › Securing £10.8 million of Local Enterprise and Growth Initiative (LEGI) funding
- › Securing £3.5 million for our 'Keeping Blackpool Alive' events programme
- › Creation of Blackpool Coastal Housing, our Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)
- › Meeting our recycling targets a year early and well on the way to meeting 2010 targets
- › 50% of Blackpool school pupils achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs – our highest level ever
- › Blackpool has been granted entry into Wave 5 of the Building Schools for the Future scheme, with potentially £100+ million pending our Phase I strategy
- › Our Springboard approach to child protection was identified as national best practice, and we anticipate securing a minimum 3* rating for child protection
- › Short-listed for Beacon status for Reducing Health Inequalities
- › Blackpool was granted Respect Action Area Status in January 2007 for its pioneering work in tackling anti-social behaviour
- › Blackpool achieved a 4* excellent rating for our Cultural Services – one of only 26 nationally
- › Charter Mark awarded to our Customer First centre
- › Attained Investors in People status for the whole Council
- › Attained Investors in Volunteers status within the Adults Social Care directorate
- › Restructure of the majority of the Council's directorates
- › Our corporate Gershon efficiency targets are set to be easily reached and a Performance Efficiency Review team created
- › Stanley Park refurbishment identified by the Heritage Lottery Fund as a national exemplar of project management good practice
- › Ranked second in the country for tackling Benefit fraud by Benefit Fraud Inspectorate
- › Achieved level 2 of the Equality Standard

As we incrementally deliver the corporate vision for a New Blackpool, we have focused on what this means for the economy and visitor offer, our culture, the environment and built fabric, and the quality of life of all of Blackpool's residents. Achieving this will require us to work as efficiently and effectively as possible, and large steps have been made this year with a number of key internal improvements, not least restructuring of the majority of our directorates. Since achieving the 'improving strongly' rating in 2006, Blackpool Council has built upon the foundations previously laid to secure further awards, successful projects and bids, and internal improvements, regardless of the obstacles that impeded our path.

This report and the accompanying disk of evidence demonstrate without doubt that we have been improving strongly over the last year and have made solid provision to continue to do so into the future.

What have we achieved in the last 12 months?

New Blackpool

Headline achievements:

- › We have the biggest capital programme in the history of the authority and record levels of RDA funding
- › Negotiating heads of terms for the main elements of the agreement between ourselves and Muse, our chosen developer to deliver the £285 million Talbot Gateway development
- › Completion of St Chad's headland and sea defences and the emergency tramway works
- › On-target development of the Houndshell shopping centre with negotiations for Phase II underway
- › Completion of Layton district centre remodelling
- › Securing £3 million funding for delivering the initial housing renewal project in collaboration with English Partnerships
- › Winning a £32 million award from Central Government to replace street lighting
- › Securing £10.8 million of Local Enterprise and Growth Initiative (LEGI) funding
- › Securing £3.5 million for our 'Keeping Blackpool Alive' events programme
- › People's Playground seafront developments have been short-listed for funding from the Lottery Living Landmarks fund
- › Blackpool was confirmed as one of 40 Respect Action Areas for its pioneering and innovative work in tackling anti-social behaviour and received a visit by Government Minister Louise Casey in recognition of this
- › Creation of Blackpool Coastal Housing, our Arms Length Management Organisation
- › £5.4 million refurbishment of Stanley Park
- › Meeting our recycling targets early and set to reach 2010 targets with ease

We currently have the biggest capital programme in the history of the authority, growing from £55.2 million in 2006/07 up to £78.2 million in 2007/08 and a projected £95.1 million in 2008/09.

We have received record levels of RDA funding. Achievements towards physical regeneration include the continued on-target development of the Houndshell shopping centre; remodelling of Layton district centre; Area Action Planning for Foxhall; obtaining funding for our Regeneration by Light programme; and securing £3 million for the first wave of the Housing Intervention Strategy.

We have been granted £32 million of unconditional funding from the Department of Transport to replace street lighting throughout Blackpool. To deliver this we have established a PFI and project management has been excellent to date, with a 4ps review identifying Blackpool as the leading authority in the current tranche of funding, being ready for implementation early and adopting an innovative approach to include illuminated signage and traffic signals. The new lighting is targeted at reducing crime and perception of crime as well as improving the look of public realm.

Our successful bid for LEGI funding to the amount of £10.8 million, has been put to use in projects such as the Worklessness pilot. Following development by the Council of a new multi-agency Consortium geared to assisting local jobless people into employment, we were awarded one of 10 Northern Way Worklessness pilots to find new ways of assisting long-term incapacity benefit claimants towards employment. Additional resources were secured to ensure additional assistance could be provided to longer term unemployed in 5 high workless wards, and services offered have included one-to-one advice and guidance, confidence building, basic skills, volunteering opportunities, health condition management, jobsearch and interview preparation, and short work specific training courses. Working closely with Jobcentre Plus and local employers has yielded 560 clients registering for support with the Positive Steps team during the six month period until September 2007, of which 195 are actively completing elements of a work focused action plan.

The new Blackpool Enterprise Centre was completed and opened this year to house the business support and start-up team, the worklessness team and the social enterprise team, as well as a hot-desking area for infant small businesses, a new adult learning and skills offer, and the ReBlackpool URC staff. Two wind turbines were part of this development, adding to our overall energy savings.

Building a better community for all

To boost the visitor economy this year, we have undertaken renewal of the Illuminations including a high profile design commission of Laurence Llewellyn-Bowen, generating measurable increases in revenue for all sectors of the economy, public and private; secured £3.5m for our 'Keeping Blackpool Alive' programme of pioneering and nationally significant events; won a BRADA award for our Blackpool Tourism website; and overhauled governance of our theatres by establishing the Blackpool Theatre Management Group of managers from the six main theatres, working collaboratively for the first time to undergo joint promotion and form a joint mailing list.

The Sandcastle Waterpark continues to go from strength to strength since its redevelopment in 2004/06, when over £5.5 million was invested in energy efficiency measures, upgrading existing facilities and adding new slides and attractions, to become the UK's Largest Indoor Waterpark, with 18 slides and attractions. Since redevelopment, the attraction has increased its guest numbers by 24% and increased its admission takings by a huge 155%, compared with 2003/04 levels. The redevelopment, coupled with excellence in guest service, training and marketing initiatives, saw the Sandcastle Waterpark presented with "The World Waterpark Associations Executive Board Award 2006 for Special Accomplishment in the Water Leisure Industry", an accolade only presented to one Waterpark Attraction per year, worldwide.

The creation of the Regeneration Strategy team in April 2007 has increased capacity for regeneration, adding a new expertise particularly in the field of housing, and providing a strong strategic function for delivering corporate aims.

We received a positive visit to our Reassurance Plus neighbourhoods by Louise Casey, Head of the Home Office anti-social behaviour unit, who confirmed funding of £175,000 for Blackpool's drive to promote respect, and said "Blackpool has already made excellent progress which is why we recently recognised it as one of the government's flagship Respect Areas. The new funding includes money to fund parenting programmes and to fund a designated parenting expert to ensure we get to problems in the home before they spill out into the community." New innovative activity in these deprived neighbourhoods include creation of the Talbot and Brunwick community village with a SureStart centre, Children's play centre, all-weather pitch and on-site GP surgery. We have exceeded the LAA target

of 28% reduction in the number of people who consider Anti-Social Behaviour a problem in their community, reducing this by 31%.

Regarding social housing, Blackpool Council has successfully set up an ALMO, Blackpool Coastal Housing, which has been operation since January and is currently hoping to score a minimum 2* rating following inspection in November. In private sector housing, significant improvements have been made to corporate data sharing and communications, bringing together cross-Council enforcement activities and increasing capacity to enable a united approach to driving up standards. Blackpool Council is one of the first in the country to successfully prosecute an unlicensed HMO landlord, setting an example against licence evasion. Our Homelessness team has been named a regional champion by DCLG, with cases of homelessness prevention doubling since 2005/06 and cases of repeat homelessness declining from 5.6% to zero.

In the last year, Blackpool Council has worked with partners to finish the £5.4 million refurbishment of Stanley Park, and two of the town's parks have been awarded Green Flag status, namely Watson Road Park for the third year running and Louis Horrocks Park for the second year running.

Preserving Blackpool's heritage is a priority of the Council, as we recognise the importance of conserving the buildings that celebrate our character and historical role. Two key achievements of this year have been in working towards a bid to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and working in partnership with the V&A to relocate the National Theatre Museum in Blackpool.

Improving the street scene has included a continuing blitz on 'grot spots', and licensing powers have been extended and strengthened this year, enabling us to curtail horse dung being left on the Promenade by the Landau horses, limit the number of lap-dancing licenses given, and enforce quality standards amongst taxi services.

Recycling has been highly successful this year – 19.9% of household waste was recycled 2006/07, compared with 15.5% in 2005/06, very nearly exceeding the 2007/08 BVPI target of 20% and set to reach the 2009/10 target with ease. The monthly figures for recycling have been as high as 35% in 2007, and customer satisfaction figures for recycling were in the upper national quartile at 75%.

Children and Young People

Headline achievements:

- Positive feedback from the 2007 APA of Children's services
- 50% of Blackpool school pupils achieved 5 A*-C GCSEs – our highest level ever
- Blackpool has been granted entry into Wave 5 of the Building Schools for the Future scheme, with potentially £100+ million pending our Phase I strategy
- Our Springboard approach to child protection was identified as national best practice, and we anticipate securing a 3* rating
- We have dramatically reduced the number of arrests within Springboard families by 70.7%
- Significant reduction in teenage pregnancy rates of 20% over two years

The 2007 APA of Children's services recognised the good progress being made in improving outcomes for children and young people, and meeting the recommendations of the 2006 Joint Area Review, and consequently increased the score for the 'Staying Safe' outcome area to a 3. Excellent progress has been made in meeting the targets of the Children's Block of the LAA.

Blackpool schools' GCSE results were the highest they have ever been with 50% of pupils achieving 5 A*-Cs this year, an increase of 8.2% on 2005 results making Blackpool the 3rd most improved Local Authorities of the 149 in England. No schools fell below the national floor targets, and Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 results were also significantly better than last year.

Blackpool has been accepted into Wave 5 of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, gaining invitation to submit a Phase I strategy that could potentially secure £100 million of funding to rebuild or refurbish all eight of Blackpool's secondary schools. With development likely to begin in 2010/11, a new 'Transforming Schools' division and AD post have been created to secure funding and set up delivery of this landmark project. As a precursor to the programme, rebuilding of Devonshire Primary School following a fire was completed, with the new school based on a DfES exemplar design, maintaining the highest standards of facilities.

Building on our incredibly successful Springboard approach to child protection, the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) was established this year to review and improve multi-agency child protection procedures. The Awaken team has been mainstreamed following a successful pilot, and continued to protect children and young people from sexual exploitation. The number of sex offenders arrested has increased and the team was runner up in the Guardian Public Service awards this year. There has been a massive 70.7% reduction in the number of arrests made amongst the families involved with Springboard, from 205 arrests made before involvement to just 60 after involvement.

Of our schools, the Woodlands special school has been deemed by Ofsted inspectors as 'Outstanding', thus securing this rating for all three of Blackpool's special schools; Boundary School was removed from 'Special Measures' and Blackpool now has no schools in this Ofsted category; and the number of permanent exclusions from Blackpool schools is down from 59 in 2004/05 to just 16 in 2006/07.

Other achievements include the Access and Participation Unit established to target hard to reach groups such as young carers and looked after children; St Cuthbert's and Palatine children's centre was opened; teenage pregnancy rates have fallen by 20% over two years, with Blackpool being the most improved Authority in the North West and the 4th most improved in the UK, following a number of initiatives including opening a sexual health centre as part of an 'extended school' project at Montgomery High School; and development and integration of services for children and young people misusing substances has been hailed as an example of best practice by GONW, leading to a large increase the number of young people accessing treatment – up by 86% between 2005/06 and 2006/07.

Building a better community for all

Vulnerable Adults and Older People

Headline achievements:

- › Positive feedback from the 2007 APA of Social Care Services by the CSCI (available from November)
- › Creation of an integrated commissioning unit, collaborative with the PCT
- › Creation of the Vitaline telecare service
- › The 'Learning Blackpool' scheme has boosted enrolment into adult courses

All in-house care services have been refocused during the past year, with a strong emphasis on Assessment, Respite, Rehabilitation and Re-enablement forming the basis of this rethinking. The results of the APA of Social Care Services for 2007, by the CSCI, identified the key strengths developed, overall creating a strong drive towards service modernisation. Examples of this include working with the PCT to establish an integrated commissioning unit for the commissioning of community care and treatment services; externalising all mainstream support services – a rare practice in local authorities with good results; and capital investment of £1 million into the 'Phoenix' centre project to provide support and rehabilitation to people with mental health problems.

The LAA is on track to reach targets in the Older People section, including reducing the number of falls that result in transport to hospital by more than the target figure of 9%, with our Fall Prevention programme being named a national model service; and increasing perceptions of safety of older people in their homes as part of the Seashore project – 99.95% of respondents to the end of year user survey said they did not fear crime whilst in their home.

A key success has been the expansion and development of telecare, establishing the new Vitaline service offering a 24-hour link to a Blackpool call centre with a professional team on hand should support or advice be needed or accidents or illness occur. Since commencing in March 2006, Vitaline has benefited 86 users, a number set to increase in the future as uptake is consistently growing. Of those people who joined the scheme and were subsequently admitted to residential care, the use of enhanced telecare delayed their admission by 119 days (approximately 4 months). This shows success in helping people to stay in their homes for longer and indicates a promising future for the fledgling service.

Adult learning opportunities have been expanded through the 'Learning Blackpool' partnership, which includes the Lancashire Learning and Skills Council, Blackpool Council, Blackpool and the Fylde College, and Montgomery High School resulting in a 20% increase in adult course enrolments for September. Important life-skills courses such as financial literacy, have been recognised as national best practice in the community.

Quality Services

Headline achievements:

- Short-listed for Beacon status for Reducing Health Inequalities
- Community safety has improved with crime figures down, detection of crime rates up and a successful drugs programme meeting LAA targets
- Blackpool Cultural services awarded a 4* rating – one of only 26 nationally
- Significant sporting events held, such as the national Young People's Disabled Athletics Championships and Lancashire Youth Games
- Charter Mark awarded to our Customer First centre
- Creation of the Access and Participation Unit to target hard-to-reach groups
- Establishing the largest waste disposal PFI in the country

Blackpool Council has been short-listed for Beacon status following our immense progress in reducing health inequalities across Blackpool in recent years. Particular areas of improvement are in smoking cessation, sexual health, nutrition and physical activity awareness, alcohol harm reduction and accident prevention for the over 65s. Also, the Workers in Motion scheme has been set up internally to encourage staff exercise, sponsored by Sport England.

Community safety has improved in the past 12 months, with overall crime figures down by 6%, including criminal damage reduced by 15% in the first half of 2007/08 and acquisitive crime down 31.3% in this period. Blackpool has an excellent detection of crime rate, amongst the best in the country; at 37%, we sit well above the UK average of 26%. Following an increased level of reported domestic violence, we have grown capacity for victim support and aftercare, with a new Domestic Violence team co-funded by the Police and BSafe. The Cyclops project is being rolled out to equip police with head cameras to wear whilst handling domestic incidents, thus cutting red tape and increasing the efficiency with which prosecution can take place as video evidence enables convictions to be secured. Also, innovative metal detector gloves

are soon to be introduced in Blackpool to tackle violent crime and assault which enable officers to search for knives and concealed weapons. Talking CCTV cameras have been placed installed in the resort to combat crime and importantly, perception of crime.

Regarding drugs, the three-year LAA targets for tackling drugs have been met in Q1 of year two, and 1,400 people have successfully come through our drugs programme this year.

Our Cultural Services have been awarded a prestigious 4* rating, one of only 26 nationally to achieve this, and continues to go from strength to strength in increasing participation by broadening and deepening the Cultural offer and focusing on engaging more people from hard to reach groups. Blackpool's Libraries Service has gone from a 2* to a 4* rating in two years, with Sunday opening, refurbishment of IT facilities, increased home book deliveries and a co-funded arrangement with the PCT and RNIB to provide spoken word tapes, all being advances made in the last year. Additionally, a Local and Family History Centre opened at Central Library, bringing together records from different locations into one repository. The Grundy Art Gallery has housed art exhibitions by Matisse, Picasso and Rembrandt this year, as well as numerous local and nationally recognised artists.

Our sports and leisure offer has also been very successful in engaging more young people this year, including attracting 35,000 visits to the 2007 children's summer activity programme which includes over 9,000 free swims taken up by children and young people. Significant events held in Blackpool this year have been the national Young People's Disabled Athletics Championships, Lancashire Youth Games and the UK Indoor Climbing Championships, all of national significance, as well as Blackpool Cycling Festival, Hockey Festival, and the Volleyball Championships. All of Blackpool's Leisure Facilities have now been achieved accreditation and been awarded the quality award for Leisure Management Quest.

Building a better community for all

Our Customer First centre received a Charter Mark this year, and we are currently in the process of improving the quality of the service further by ensuring it is a truly 'one-stop shop', with all enquiries being dealt with straight away, in one place without referral elsewhere. This is increasing efficiency by being quicker, increasing customer satisfaction and having less room for error. IT services have been improved, with new online services established for people to pay their Council Tax and other invoices online and by direct debit. We have also recently launched our new-look, improved Blackpool Council website.

Corporate communications have grown capacity over the last year, including appointment of an Internal Communications Manager, a new Head of Communications post and several additional staff at assistant level. In the last year, we have also taken on the Public Relations function for Fylde Borough Council, which has been running successfully to date. Similarly, our Adult Social Care and Housing directorate handles the internal communications of the PCT and the ALMO as well as running a joint system for registering complaints, compliments and comments.

Building on our award in 2005/06 as Council of the Year for involvement of young people in decision-making, we continue to achieve high levels of engagement through the jointly funded Access and Participation Unit, especially targeting hard-to-reach groups such as young carers and looked after children. Engagement with the community has been extensive during the development and formation of the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

This year we have secured the largest waste PFI in the country, adopting innovative methods to maximise conversion of household refuse into compost, with an 8% increase in conversion rates on last year and set to rise further as the partnership continues.

Organisational Change

Headline achievements:

- › Attained Investors in People status
- › Attained Investors in Volunteers status within the Adult Social Care directorate
- › Restructure of the majority of the Council's directorates
- › Our corporate Gershon efficiency targets are set to be easily reached and a Performance Efficiency Review team created
- › Exemplary partnership working with local children and young people, the PCT, and sub-regionally with Fylde and Wyre Councils
- › Capacity increases through creation of key posts and teams in priority areas
- › Stanley Park refurbishment identified by the HLF as a national exemplar of project management good practice
- › Blackpool came second in the country for tackling Benefit fraud
- › Achieved level 2 of the Equality Standard

We are consistently achieving our LAA targets and moving progressively towards the intended high level outcomes. Feedback from GONW following the LAA end of year review, stated "Blackpool LAA - progressing well against targets and heading in the right direction. Aware of weaknesses and plans are in place to address them. Overall, pleased with performance." Our own self-assessment found overall progress had been made and a positive direction of travel has been maintained in the last year.

Blackpool Council is proud to have been awarded Investors in People status, and our Adult Social Care and Housing directorate was also awarded Investors in Volunteers status this year, making us one of the first Councils in the country to achieve this accolade.

To ensure that the Council's component functions and teams are organised in a way that makes logical sense and efficiently yields the greatest outcomes, an holistic Council restructure has taken place, largely in force since the beginning of the new financial year. This has seen the movement of some teams into different parts of the Council where they can work and collaborate more effectively, and the creation of teams where necessary to give capacity to corporate priorities.

Of our three-year £11.97 million Gershon efficiency savings target, we have already made £10.88 million savings by the second year, and are therefore on course to reach and exceed the target by 2007/08. Central to this has been the creation of the Performance Efficiency Review team. Our HR department are currently proceeding with the Pay Review and moving towards a pay framework based on job families rather than rigid segregation of duties, and will benefit both work efficiency and staff skills. Also, we have secured over £200,000 of contracts in the last year, to handle the services of other organisations, including handling of benefits and revenues, PR and health and safety for Fylde Council.

ICT resilience and business continuity have been improved by setting up two major server farms to reduce the number of servers needed by sharing data and software, and hence reduce the amount of 'down' time experienced.

Strong partnership working is central to delivering corporate plans, and numerous robust examples are evidence of our ongoing good record in this area. The Children's Trust has been established as an influential multi-agency board of public and voluntary sector bodies as well as Councillors and MPs, and was commended in the recent APA of Children's Services. Also, the Children and Young People directorate has been named a DfES exemplar of market management commissioning, adopting a multi-agency, sub-regional approach that has saved £400k in the last year. Partnerships between Adult Social Care and Housing and the PCT continue to thrive, as exemplified by schemes such as the community matrons scheme and implementation of the Department of Health retail model for equipment provision for people with disabilities.

Blackpool Council appreciates the importance of having sufficient capacity available to deliver plans and a number of different service areas have received funding and support for increased capacity, such as creating the posts of Assistant Directors for Children's Health and Transforming Schools (BSF), and Heads of Capital Projects, Asset Management, Transport, Policy and Research, Communications, Directorate Development and Regeneration Strategy.

Building a better community for all

Following feedback from the Audit Commission after last years Direction of Travel statement, an aspect of working that we have focused on improving is project management. The refurbishment of Stanley Park was named by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) as a national exemplar of good practice in project management on the basis of providing quality heritage masonry and skilled restorative work, and is now mentoring other such projects. A new Projects and Programmes team has been created, with a project management regime and accompanying toolkit being developed and finalised.

Regarding Benefits and revenue, the highly effective Pericles system has been implemented and live since January to handle data and processing of Benefits, Council Tax and non-domestic rates, and we have also secured a contract from Fylde Council to handle their Benefits. We have received praise from the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate for our monitoring of Housing Benefits and tackling fraud – Blackpool Council came second in the country for issuing sanctions, with 104 prosecutions, 41 administrative penalties and 195 cautions in the financial year 2006/07, identifying over £1.5 million in overpaid benefits in a year.

It has been an outstanding year for our corporate Faith, Equality and Diversity unit, who have played a vital role in engaging people from a range of minority groups. We have achieved a level 2 of the Equality Standard, establishing staff equality focus groups, a disabled people's group, an older people's group and launching Blackpool LGBT Community forum. Also, a Polish community centre has been opened, the Equalities Forum relaunched, an Interfaith Development Plan produced with the Faith Forum. Equalities have remained high on the corporate agenda in the last year, with each of the six strands of equalities – age, gender, disability, race, religion, and sexual orientation – being assigned a lead Council Member, and the Joint Comprehensive Equality Policy and Delivery plan produced in partnership with Blackpool PCT.

The future

Blackpool Council has made tremendous progress and achievements in the last 12 months, both at a broad level that reflects our resilience and vision, and within many of our individual service areas that are now performing better than ever in delivery of 'bread and butter' services. To consolidate this good work and continue to improve strongly over the next 12 months and beyond, the following projects, strategies and schemes are being developed for future implementation:

- › Continue lobbying of Government to fund the Task Force projects, including such developments as a new conference centre, the People's Playground, Talbot Gateway, Blackpool and the Fylde College growth and campus relocation, and Tramway renewal
- › Develop a new Regeneration Framework before March 2008, laying out the unified vision for delivering a New Blackpool
- › Publish the Sustainable Communities Strategy in January 2008, following extensive public consultation
- › Continue lobbying of Government for additional support for Coastal towns
- › Develop a Fylde Coast Multi-Area Agreement with Fylde and Wyre Councils
- › Establish a radical Housing Intervention Strategy for inner Blackpool, reshaping and rebuilding large swathes of inner Blackpool over the next 10-15 years
- › Develop a joint Fylde Coast Housing Strategy
- › Make a joint bid with Preston, Chorley and South Ribble to become one of the Government's New Growth Points for housing
- › Implement a sub-regional choice-based lettings initiative
- › Hold a cross-Council housing enforcement workshop in November
- › Prepare for implementation of the Building Schools for the Future programme
- › Close the gap with national averages of GCSE results and teenage pregnancy
- › Work towards a locality-based, multi-agency approach to working with children and their families, based within the communities of North, Central and South Blackpool
- › Develop an integrated electronic citizen and social care record using our customer database
- › Continue delivery of LEGI-funded projects and programmes, reducing worklessness and Benefit claims
- › Develop a Skills Strategy to address serious shortage of skills and qualifications
- › Develop a joint Fylde Coast Cultural Strategy
- › Attain World Heritage Site status
- › Undertake Phase II of the Houndshill development
- › Promote and facilitate additional forthcoming investment of £1.3 million into Blackpool Zoo to fund new enclosures, new animals, and car park improvements
- › Light the Lower Promenade walkway to reduce crime along this stretch
- › Begin formalised racial incident reporting; finalise the currently draft policy on hate crime; overhaul reporting and policy for homophobic incidents
- › Develop a new Alcohol Strategy, to be implemented from summer 2008
- › Implement a new office recycling scheme across the Council, saving two-thirds of recycling costs at an estimated £40,000
- › Improve technological capacity for home and mobile working

The coming year is set to mark a turning point for Blackpool, not least with the impending Task Force decision but also the range of other provisions we have or will put into place for the benefit of Blackpool's economy, environment and the quality of life of the people who live here. Although a degree of this is out of our hands while we await key decisions from Government, by improving our service delivery and future strategy, Blackpool Council is constantly ensuring we perform our roles to the best of our ability and act with the utmost effectiveness by continual self-improvement.

Building a better community for all

To ensure our services are accessible to all, documents prepared by Blackpool Council are available in large print, Braille, on audio-cassette or computer disk upon request.

We can also provide help for British Sign Language users and provide information in other languages.

Please ask for details or telephone 477477.