

## MINUTES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING - THURSDAY, 29 APRIL 2021

### Present:

Councillor Galley (in the Chair)

Councillors

Burdess	Cox	Hugo	R Scott
Collett	Critchley	Mitchell	

Ms Brown, Independent member

### In Attendance:

Mr Neil Jack, Chief Executive

Ms Kate Aldridge, Head of Delivery and Performance (Item 4 only)

Mr Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration (Items 1-4 only)

Mrs Tracy Greenhalgh, Head of Audit and Risk

Mr Peter Legg, Head of Economic and Cultural Services (Items 1-3 only)

Ms Liz Petch, Consultant in Public Health

Mr David Slater, Business Growth Manager (Items 1-3 only)

Mr Steve Thompson, Director of Resources

Mr Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships

Mrs Elaine Ireland, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser

Mr Nick Rayner, Deloitte

Ms Nicola Wright, Deloitte

Councillor Mrs Callow JP, Chair of the Scrutiny Leadership Board

### 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

### 2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 25 MARCH 2021

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2021 be signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

### 3 AUDIT FOLLOW UP - BUSINESS SUPPORT

Mr Peter Legg, Head of Economic and Cultural Services presented a progress report on the recommendations made in the internal audit report of Business Support which had been issued in October 2019. Mr Legg noted that the audit had taken place in late 2019 and as such a number of changes had been implemented within the service since that time, not least as a result of the ongoing pandemic. He provided a summary of the work undertaken by Mr David Slater, Business Growth Manager and his team, particularly in relation to the administration of discretionary COVID business grants over the last year. Mr Legg explained

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that the Council's online business communication channels, centred around 'Blackpool Unlimited.com', had proven key in promoting government grant availability as well as providing wider support to new and growing businesses. He reported that the website had recently been improved and relaunched. The considerable impact on the level of work undertaken by the Business Support team as a result of the pandemic was highlighted by Mr Legg, as well as digital efficiencies and changes to the way in which the team operated and connected with businesses as a result of the lockdown restrictions.

Mr Legg identified that whilst a number of the recommendations resulting from the audit had been completed, others had been put on hold and would need to be revisited to address the changes in the type of business support being offered to include new methods being used to interact with customers. In relation to recommendation R4 'A full business case should be developed for any future investment in additional managed workspace facilities,' Mr Legg reported that an advanced project proposal for an enterprise facility called 'The Edge' was in development, one of seven key projects within Blackpool's Towns Fund programme. A pre-condition of approval of the £6.3m project (£4.5m capital grant, and match funding of £1.8m) was a Treasury Green Book Business Case which would be subject to an in-depth appraisal. He advised of an anticipated completion date for the case and submission to government of November 2021.

With regards to recommendation R1 'Formal aims and objectives for Business Support should be determined, including identifying any future prioritisation on support to businesses with greater perceived growth potential, any development plans for the service and links to wider strategies and Growth and Prosperity aims and objectives,' the Committee questioned how those sectors with the most growth potential would be identified. Mr Slater advised that the work recently undertaken as part of the Green Book Business Case for The Edge included an independent assessment of the start-up market in Blackpool and this had identified the sectors which had been growing within the town. Mr Slater noted the importance of striking the correct balance between providing support to those businesses who were striving for growth and creating employment opportunities as well as continuing to provide a service to those wishing to become self-employed and he noted that both these areas needed to be supported.

The Committee sought clarification around how recommendation R2 'Research should be undertaken to identify the particular reasons for the comparatively low level of start-ups and self-employment in Blackpool and where and why business advice is sought, in order to inform any future approach by the Council to supporting business start-ups,' would seek to incorporate the large informal sector existing in Blackpool. Mr Slater reported that the aim would be to include all aspects of business within the support programme and that the informal economy would be contained within a number of external consultations being undertaken on The Edge.

In relation to the recommendations which had been delayed as a result of the pandemic, the Committee asked how and when these would be amended to include lessons learnt whilst still addressing the original recommendations and questioned whether there had been any identified barriers to delivering the service, for example the resilience of staff. Mr Legg reported that a lack of capacity within the team had been felt at times but that staff

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had worked well with other departments to enable key work areas to be delivered, especially around financial assistance to local businesses. Mr Legg advised that this more integrated approach to service delivery would be beneficial going forward. The Committee sought clarification around how the issue of staffing capacity would be addressed. Mr Legg reported that further development of capacity would be necessary to service The Edge if the business case was approved later in the year, with revenue streams being required to cover needs. He informed the Committee that the staffing structure would be reviewed in the light of some changes in the team, in addition to the pursuit of external funding opportunities such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (successor to European Regional Development Funds).

The Committee asked which of the recommendations the service would be taking forward and whether there had been any innovative ways of working implemented in response to the pandemic. Mr Legg advised that a key area of learning had been around the necessity for businesses to have access to advice and support to help them navigate through the process of accessing financial assistance and the associated advice and guidance. The pandemic had reinforced the need to have a centralised team to assist businesses in need. A more unified approach across Council departments had developed as a result, which Mr Legg identified as being a definite positive of the pandemic. He reported that the shift towards a more digital way of working had proved beneficial to the service, although he acknowledged that face to face meetings would still be necessary for certain events and that a combination of both formats would be utilised in the future. Mr Slater noted that a number of the original recommendations were linked and as such several could be responded to simultaneously. In response to a question around what lessons had been learnt, Mr Slater reported that the in-house production of short online videos via the Blackpool Unlimited YouTube channel had been introduced during the pandemic and had proved to be a cost-effective way to present information.

Following discussion of the changed business landscape due to the pandemic since the time of the audit in 2019, Mrs Tracy Greenhalgh, Head of Audit and Risk agreed to meet with Mr Legg in order to revisit the findings and to refocus the recommendations accordingly.

The Committee extended its thanks to the Business Support team for the work undertaken over the past 12 months in supporting local businesses across the town.

[Mr Legg and Mr Slater left the meeting on conclusion of this item.]

### **4 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER - PANDEMIC RESPONSE**

[Ms Kate Aldridge, Head of Delivery and Performance joined the meeting during consideration of this item.]

The Committee considered a progress report outlining the individual risks identified within the Strategic Risk – Pandemic Infection. Consideration was given to the sub-risk ‘Impacts on the Council's ability to deliver critical services and wider impacts on the town,’ with Ms Liz Petch, Consultant in Public Health providing an update. Ms Petch informed the Committee that Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health attended weekly Covid-19 regional meetings

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with Public Health England and other national and regional stakeholders. In addition, Dr Rajpura attended weekly meetings with the Chief Medical Officer in order to receive updates on Covid-19 risks and national action. Ms Petch outlined numerous regular meetings and decision-making forums in place across Lancashire which were attended by Blackpool representatives and highlighted the co-ordinated and proactive testing regime in place across the region which was sensitive to the emergence of new variants. She reported that Blackpool had increased testing as soon as this had become available and noted that Blackpool was one of the first local authority areas to pilot community testing, as well as the introduction of the 'Local Zero' contact tracing, which had both assisted in providing essential data in quickly identifying any outbreaks of the virus. She noted that whilst Blackpool reported low levels of infection currently, areas of concern still remained such as the emergence of new variants and international travel and as such partnership working continued on a local, regional and national level.

The Committee asked Ms Petch to identify the biggest challenge currently faced by the Public Health team as well as asking what the impact of the pandemic had been on the wellbeing of the team. Ms Petch reported that the provision of timely and accurate data was currently proving to be a challenge in terms of the results of self-administered tests carried out by individuals in their own homes. She informed the Committee that the initial pressures experienced by Public Health at the start of the pandemic had eased, aided by the provision of additional capacity in the form of health protection expertise and support from the wider Council community as a whole.

The Committee questioned whether plans were in place to deal with data collection as the summer season approached, noting that as a seasonal resort holiday-makers would be attracted to the area and as such an increased capacity for testing would presumably be required. Ms Petch advised that the Council's Communications team had been utilised to broadcast key messages to the community to encourage the continuation of testing and the importance of maintaining social distancing to limit the spread of infection. She reported that partnership working had also been utilised, for example via holding regular meetings with headteachers to receive feedback on any current issues within schools and to provide current data on infection rates.

With regards to seasonal variations, the Committee sought information on the plans in place for autumn, with the anticipated increase in testing that would be needed at that time, as well as questioning whether the tests currently in use would need to change to keep pace with new virus variants. Ms Petch reported that current advice confirmed that the tests presently in use would be suitable to detect new variants of the virus. In respect of testing beyond the end of June 2021, Ms Petch informed the Committee that further guidance was awaited from the government, with confirmation not yet received as to the continuation of the supply of free testing kits beyond that date.

The Committee asked whether any learning from the pandemic had been identified and if any resulting examples of best practice would be shared between local authorities. Ms Petch informed Committee Members that conversations identifying examples of good practice and lessons to be learnt from the pandemic were already ongoing and that a Public Health Annual Report for 2020/2021 was planned in order to collate all the learning and

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impact across Blackpool. Mrs Tracy Greenhalgh, Head of Audit and Risk advised that a lessons learned exercise would be undertaken to determine how the response to the pandemic could inform how the Council responded to future medium and long term incidents and which would be drawing on the expertise of the Lancashire Resilience Forum as well as other local authorities and partners, with lessons learned to be factored into the Council's emergency planning and business continuity arrangements.

The lack of reporting around the management of the mental and physical wellbeing of Council employees within the Strategic Risk Register was queried. With regards to the Public Health directorate, Ms Petch advised that support and advice were available across the team and that employees were regularly contacted to check on their wellbeing. Referrals to occupational health for cases of long Covid were also in place. Mr Neil Jack, Chief Executive noted that employee wellbeing had been included within the Strategic Risk Register under the responsibility of the Head of Organisational and Workforce Development and as such comprehensive sickness support and monitoring was in place across the Council. The Committee sought further clarification, asking what support was specifically in place for employees who were medically well and not suffering from Covid but who had been placed under pressure as a result of an increased workload. Mr Jack confirmed that the offer of support via the Employment Assistance Programme was open to all employees and their families and staff could be self referred without seeking approval from their manager. In addition, to ensure resilience, staff had been redeployed to other areas to provide support where needed.

The Committee sought assurance that due to the increased demand on Adult Services, sufficient capacity within the directorate remained to horizon scan for non-Covid issues. Mr Jack reported that additional staff had been recruited to Adult Services to deal with the pandemic, thereby releasing employees to focus on other issues such as the recovery plan and the delivery of climate change targets. He reported that partnership working had improved, for example with colleagues at the NHS and with neighbouring local authorities and care providers, particularly as part of the implementation of the vaccination programme.

With regards to the provision of Covid testing sites by the Council, the Committee questioned whether these would be adequately publicised to tourists visiting the area during the summer season and whether transport companies would be contacted to distribute relevant information to passengers traveling to the town. Ms Petch reported that engagement was underway with local hoteliers to provide advice around the testing of their staff and visitors, as well as the availability of community testing within the Houndshell shopping centre which would continue to be advertised via social media and the Council website. Discussions were underway with coach companies to emphasise the importance of ensuring vehicles were covid-secure and to encourage passenger testing prior to boarding. In response to the Committee's concerns regarding the possible ending of the provision of test kits after the end of June 2021, Mr Jack advised that whilst the decision would ultimately be taken by the government, further guidance was anticipated as to the details of the roadmap as the June date approached.

[Mr Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration left the meeting during

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consideration of this item.]

[Ms Kate Aldridge, Head of Delivery and Performance left the meeting on conclusion of this item.]

### 5 RISK SERVICES QUARTER FOUR REPORT

Mrs Tracy Greenhalgh, Head of Audit and Risk presented a report summarising the work of Risk Services, including the overall assurance statements for all audit reviews completed in quarter four. Mrs Greenhalgh noted the ongoing support of the verification of business grants undertaken by her team. Details of the national risk register were provided, with Mrs Greenhalgh reporting that the Lancashire Resilience Forum had reviewed the national risks via the Risk Assessment Working Group and its various supporting sub-groups to assess pan-Lancashire impact.

The Committee was informed that the Health and Safety team continued to play a key role in providing advice, support and guidance to all Council services and schools with regards to safe working practices during the Covid-19 pandemic. This involved reviewing government and Health and Safety Executive guidance in relation to working safely during the pandemic and implementing any necessary changes or systems to ensure that the Council continued to be compliant. The team had been undertaking unannounced workplace inspections at some Council buildings to continue to ensure compliance with Covid-secure arrangements.

Mrs Greenhalgh provided an overview of the year-end position of the Risk Services performance indicators, reporting that she was pleased with the overall level of performance across Council departments. She noted that 80 per cent of the audit plan had been completed against a target of 90 per cent but that due to the increased demand on the internal audit team because of the pandemic this was a pleasing result and reflected a higher level of completion in comparison to other local authorities. Mrs Greenhalgh highlighted the disappointing percentage of risk registers which had been revised and updated, with 74 per cent having been completed by the end of the financial year. As a result, she advised that compliance would be managed via the Risk Management Group going forward.

In response to the question of whether the eight Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) reportable employee accidents had highlighted any trends, Mrs Greenhalgh confirmed that whilst a full accident investigation report had been completed on each incident, no trends had been identified.

Mrs Greenhalgh summarised the internal audit reports completed during quarter four, reporting an overall positive picture with only one area of concern highlighted as being that of the household waste recycling centre. She assured the Committee that a new service manager was now in place who would be addressing the resulting recommendations. The Committee noted that the identified Priority One recommendations would be addressed, but questioned whether the eight Priority Two and six Priority Three recommendations would also be followed up. Mrs Greenhalgh agreed to add follow-up of the Priority Two and Three recommendations to the Audit Committee's plan. The Committee questioned the

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specific amount of income lost as a result of the identified lack of invoice generation for waste streams, which Mrs Greenhalgh agreed to circulate to Committee Members following the meeting.

In response to the reported completion of fraud awareness training for 2020/2021, the Committee questioned why Children's Services and Communications and Regeneration had reported significantly less compliance than other directorates and how this was going to be addressed in order to reach 100 per cent completion for all directorates. Mrs Greenhalgh reported that whilst the two cited directorates continued to report lower completion rates, she noted a significant improvement on previously reported figures and advised that both directorates were working towards improving compliance.

In relation to the internal audit review of school meals, the Committee sought further information around the findings that only schools which had retained the Council's in-house catering service were meeting the desired food standards and requested details around when the Public Health team planned to address this. Mrs Greenhalgh advised that the work had commenced pre-pandemic and it was anticipated that Public Health would resume work on the improvement of school meals in the new financial year. Mr Neil Jack, Chief Executive assured the Committee that Blackpool schools which used the in-house catering service met Public Health's food standards, including the provision of free school meal packages to pupils' homes during lockdown. He advised that private catering providers were less likely to meet the standards and informed Committee Members that Public Health was keen to raise awareness amongst school governors of the food standards, particularly when making decisions around catering provision contracts.

Further to the reported information detailing insurance claim payments, the Committee asked whether any trend had been identified with regards to the cost of sensitive claims. Mrs Greenhalgh advised that sensitive claims could be large in value and were often historical in nature. As a high risk area, such claims were monitored and reported to the Corporate Leadership Team and the Audit Committee as well as provisions being in place to ensure adequate insurance funds.

### **Resolved:**

1. That follow-up of the Priority Two and Priority Three recommendations from the internal audit review of the household waste recycling centre be added to the Audit Committee's plan;
2. That the specific amount of income lost as a result of the identified lack of invoice generation for waste streams be provided to Committee Members following the meeting.

## **6 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENTS - CONTRACT MANAGEMENT AND PROCUREMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

As previously requested by the Committee, Mr Steve Thompson, Director of Resources provided an update in respect of contract management and procurement arrangements from the Annual Governance Statements. He reported that in January 2020 a dedicated Social Value Co-ordinator post had been established on a two-year fixed term basis. A

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number of social value documents had been reviewed and updated and in April 2021 Executive approval was received for the updated Social Value Policy and the Suppliers Charter. In addition the Committee was informed that the Social Value guide issued to all suppliers at tender stage had been updated and the revised documents would be issued with all tender opportunities with immediate effect. In spite of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Social Value Co-ordinator had been in liaison with a number of key providers to ensure the continued delivery of social value.

Mr Thompson informed the Committee that a contract management iPool training course had been developed and that to date 32 members of staff had completed the training. He advised that further work would be undertaken to target areas of the Council where staff should be actively encouraged to complete the course.

With regards to procurement, Mr Thompson reported that engagement with local suppliers took place where appropriate and where circumstances permitted on specific tender opportunities. He noted that often stakeholders failed to allow sufficient time between requiring a contractor to be in place and making an initial approach to the procurement team to enable supplier engagement and that the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic had made engagement with local suppliers more challenging. The Committee was informed that a training event for Elected Members in relation to procurement had been scheduled for January 2022.

In relation to the Audit Committee's role in monitoring these areas, Mr Thompson advised that completion data of the iPool contract management training could be included within the quarterly Risk Services performance reports going forward.

The impact of the pandemic on the number of available apprenticeships was queried, with Mr Thompson reporting that within the Council the introduction of the Kickstart initiative had created apprenticeship opportunities across all services.

**Resolved:** That the Chair of the Audit Committee give further consideration as to the role of the Committee in relation to contract management and procurement arrangements, in conjunction with Mrs Tracy Greenhalgh, Head of Audit and Risk.

### 7 ANNUAL AUDIT OPINION

Mrs Tracy Greenhalgh, Head of Audit and Risk presented the Annual Audit Opinion and explained that her report detailed the individual and collective outcomes of the audit reviews undertaken in the year ended 31 March 2021. In addition, Mrs Greenhalgh provided an audit opinion on the control environment based on the audit work undertaken. She explained that the Annual Audit Opinion was one component that the Council took into account when compiling its Annual Governance Statement. The Committee was informed that the report also set out the proposed programme for Heads of Service to report progress against audit recommendations to the Audit Committee based on a random sample of audits.

Mrs Greenhalgh reported that as Head of Audit and Risk she was satisfied that sufficient assurance work had been carried out to allow the provision of a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of Blackpool Council's internal control environment. Her

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opinion was that the overall control environment of the Council was adequate. The regeneration programme being implemented by the Council had increased risk both in terms of project delivery and financial risks and the financial position of the Council's wholly owned companies also created a number of financial sustainability risks which needed to be closely monitored going forward. Mrs Greenhalgh highlighted that the Covid-19 pandemic had impacted on the control environment and that this would continue to be monitored during 2021/2022 and steps taken to manage risk as effectively as possible given the challenging circumstances, with a particular focus on recovery and the impact on the sustainability of the Council. She noted that where weaknesses had been identified through internal audit work, the team had worked with management to agree appropriate remedial actions and a timescale for improvement.

The Committee commended the work of the internal audit team during a challenging period and asked whether there were plans in place to address the number of 'Adequate' overall opinions and assurance statements with the aim of raising them to 'Good' in the future. Mrs Greenhalgh advised that whilst there was no corporate action plan specifically aimed at raising assurance levels to 'Good', recommendations for strengthening current arrangements had been included within all internal audit reports. In relation to the number of 'Adequate' assurances reported for the year, Mrs Greenhalgh suggested that this was in line with previous years and that in the challenging circumstances she was pleased that a higher number of 'Inadequate' assurances had not been given. She reported that the need to adapt to virtual auditing methods had initially proven challenging and her team had learnt that instead of aiming for perfection, it was more beneficial to ensure that risks had been adequately managed without the need to always focus on achieving best practice.

The Committee expressed its thanks to Mrs Greenhalgh and her team for all the hard work completed during a difficult year.

**Resolved:** To note the Annual Audit report for the year ended 31 March 2021.

### 8 QUALITY ASSURANCE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Mrs Tracy Greenhalgh, Head of Audit and Risk informed the Committee that a requirement of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards was that a Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP) be implemented for the internal audit team and approved by senior management and the Audit Committee.

The Committee was informed that internal audit's QAIP was designed to provide reasonable assurance to stakeholders of internal audit that the service performed its work in accordance with its Charter, which conformed to the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), it operated in an effective and efficient manner and was perceived by stakeholders as adding value and improving operations.

Mrs Greenhalgh assured the Committee that the QAIP covered all aspects of the internal audit service in accordance with the PSIAS Standard 1300 (Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme), including:

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- Monitoring of internal audit activity to ensure it operated in an effective and efficient manner;
- Ensuring compliance with the PSIAS' Definition of Internal Auditing and Code of Ethics;
- Helping the internal audit service add value and improve organisational operations;
- Undertaking both periodic and on-going internal assessments;
- Commissioning an external assessment at least once every five years, the results of which would be communicated to the Audit Committee and Corporate Leadership Team in accordance with the Standards.

With regards to the cited external assessment of the Council's internal audit service conformance to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards scheduled for June 2021, the Committee suggested that it might be beneficial for a range of Members from the Committee to be interviewed as part of the process instead of only the Chair, which Mrs Greenhalgh agreed to put forward to the assessors.

**Resolved:** To approve the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme for the internal audit service for 2021/2022.

### 9 CODE OF GOVERNANCE

Mr Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships presented a proposed Code of Governance for consideration by the Committee. He noted that the Annual Governance statement action plan, as agreed by the Audit Committee in November 2020, had identified that in terms of good practice the adoption of a local Code of Governance was recommended. The mechanics of the Code were already in place as the Council utilised the principles in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Delivering Good Governance publication (2016) when it undertook its Annual Governance Statement Self-Assessment, but Mr Towers explained that the adoption of a code with these principles at its centre would clearly evidence how governance was being monitored in Blackpool.

The Committee was informed that the governance framework at Blackpool Council comprised the systems and processes, culture and values which the Council had adopted in order to deliver on the principles of good governance as defined by CIPFA. These principles had been used in recent years to compile the Annual Governance Statement and form the heart of the proposed Code of Governance. The approach at Blackpool had taken the form of using 15 thematic strands to document its assessment against the principles. Mr Towers asserted that this had been informally recognised as the 'Blackpool Governance Framework'. In undertaking the drafting of the code, a further strand was being recommended, that of 'Ethical and Responsible Governance' to reflect the Council's focus on climate emergency and equalities and diversity.

Mr Towers reported that an interim Annual Governance Statement had to be published by 1 August 2021 to accompany the draft annual accounts. The final Annual Governance Statement and final Statement of Accounts had to be agreed by the Committee by 30 September 2021. He recommended that, as Director of Governance and Partnerships, he be delegated to authorise that an interim Annual Governance Statement be published by 1

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August 2021 following consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and Chair of the Committee.

A Partnership Governance Framework had also been recommended as part of the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan. Mr Towers explained that as this document would normally be based on the structure of the local Code of Governance, when this code was agreed by the Committee it was being recommended that a draft Partnership Governance Framework be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee questioned how the Code of Governance would be utilised to effectively improve the Annual Governance Statement. Mr Towers advised that the thematic strands were not as currently visible to the Audit Committee and stakeholders, but that once they had been included as part of the Constitution, Members would be made more aware of them and Officers would be better able to identify supporting evidence over the course of the year due to the more prominent structure being in place.

### **Resolved:**

1. That the Audit Committee recommend to Council the adoption of the Code of Governance as presented and that this forms part of the Council's Constitution;
2. That the Audit Committee be authorised to update the 'Blackpool Governance Framework' section at the end of the Code (specifically the supporting evidence for each of the thematic strands) each year when it produces the Annual Governance Statement, but any changes to the content of the Code be referred to full Council (not including changes in legislation or decisions made from time to time by or on behalf of the authority);
3. That a report be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee on a Partnership Governance Framework, building on the same principles as set out in the local Code of Governance;
4. That the Director of Governance and Partnerships be authorised to publish an interim Annual Governance Statement by 1 August 2021 following consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and Chair of the Committee.

## **10 AUDIT COMMITTEE EVALUATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMME 2021/2022**

Mrs Tracy Greenhalgh, Head of Audit and Risk presented the results of the self-evaluation checklist that Members of the Audit Committee had been invited to complete in order to help measure the effectiveness of the Committee. Also presented were the results from when the exercise had been completed in 2020, along with an indication of the direction of travel.

The Committee was informed that a number of Officers who engaged with the Audit Committee had also been asked to undertake an evaluation of the Committee based on their experiences. A number of questions had been asked, based on the CIPFA Guidance on Audit Committees and Officers were also asked to provide any comments or suggestions as to potential improvements going forward. The results from the Officer evaluation were presented for consideration by the Committee. The Committee suggested that it might be beneficial in future to include the external auditors in the completion of the evaluation.

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Mrs Greenhalgh also presented the proposed Audit Academy training programme for 2021/2022, which identified the skills which would be developed as a result of the training as well as indicating the contents and date of each proposed session. The Chair of the Committee informed Members that the high quality training provided to the Audit Committee had been rebranded as the Audit Academy and that in order to acknowledge the accomplishment of attending each session, a certificate of achievement would be presented to all Members who completed the whole course.

**Resolved:** To approve the Audit Academy training programme for 2021/2022.

### **11 AUDIT COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER**

The Committee considered the updated Action Tracker, noting that no actions were due for further consideration at this time.

### **12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting of the Committee was noted as 17 June 2021 commencing at 6pm, subject to approval at Annual Council.

### **Chairman**

(The meeting ended at 7.58pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:  
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