

Report to:	AUDIT COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Tracy Greenhalgh – Head of Audit and Risk
Date of Meeting	16 June 2022

ANNUAL AUDIT OPINION 2021/22

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 This report sets out the individual and collective outcomes of the audit reviews undertaken in the year ended 31 March 2022. It also provides an audit opinion on the control environment based on this audit work.

The Head of Audit and Risk's Annual Audit Opinion is one component that the Council takes into account when compiling its Annual Governance Statement.

The report also sets out the proposed programme for Heads of Service to report progress against audit recommendations to Audit Committee based on a sample of audits where a number of priority two recommendations have been made.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the Annual Audit Opinion for the year ended 31 March 2022.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The completion of an Annual Audit Opinion is a requirement of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and a key component when formulating the Annual Governance Statement.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The work of the internal audit team contributes to the achievement of all of the Council's priorities.

6.0 Background information

6.1 Blackpool Council's Head of Audit and Risk is responsible for the delivery of an annual audit opinion and report that can be used by the Council to inform its Annual Governance Statement. The annual opinion concludes on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's framework of governance, risk management and control. In giving this opinion assurance can never be absolute and therefore only reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in the processes reviewed can be provided. In assessing the level of assurance to be given the opinion has been given based on:

- Internal audit assurance statements issued throughout the year as part of the annual audit plan.
- Reports provided as a result of advice / consultancy work undertaken by the internal audit team.
- The implementation of recommendations made by internal audit linked to high risks throughout the year.
- The extent of resources available to deliver the annual internal audit plan.
- The quality and performance of the internal audit service and the extent to which it complies with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
- Whether the target for delivery of the internal audit plan has been achieved.
- The opinions of other review bodies where appropriate.

It is intended that the Audit Committee continues to receive a sample of audit reports listed in the Annual Audit Opinion to gain assurance that all audit recommendations are implemented. The following is the timetable which will be proposed to the Audit Committee for inclusion on their work programme:

Audit Committee Date	Audit Report	Head of Service / Service Manager
July 2022	Management of the Investment Portfolio	Nick Gerrard / Paul Jones
September 2022	Care at Home Service (Internal Provision)	Nick Henson
October 2022	Management of Leisure Centres	Lisa Arnold
December 2022	Governance of Wholly Owned Companies	Lorraine Hurst
January 2023	Climate Change	Scott Butterfield
March 2023	Communications	Philip Welsh

6.2 Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 5(a) – Annual Audit Opinion 2021/22.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 All work has been delivered within the agreed budget for the Audit and Risk Service.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 All work undertaken by Risk Services is in line with relevant legislation and professional standards.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 The primary role of the Audit and Risk Service is to provide assurance that the Council is effectively managing its risks and provide support to all services in relation to risk and control. Where high risk areas have been identified as part of audit reviews these are subject to a follow-up process to ensure that effective controls are implemented.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 This is considered, as appropriate, as part of audit assurance work undertaken.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 This is considered, as appropriate, as part of audit assurance work undertaken.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 The report was considered by Corporate Leadership Team on the 17 May 2022.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 N/a