

Audit and Standards Committee - Self-Assessment of Good Practice 2021-22

Audit committee purpose and governance	YES	PARTLY	NO	Comments
1. Does the authority have a dedicated audit committee?	YES			Merged with Standards Committee reported to Cabinet 13 May 2014
2. Does the audit committee report directly to full council?	YES			Annual Report to Cabinet 14 September 2021 and Council 16 September 2021
3. Do the terms of reference clearly set out the purpose of the committee in accordance with CIPFA’s Position Statement?	YES			Set out in the Constitution
4. Is the role and purpose of the audit committee understood and accepted across the authority?	YES			
5. Does the audit committee provide support to the authority in meeting the requirements of good governance?	YES			
6. Are the arrangements to hold the committee to account for its performance operating satisfactorily?	YES			Annual report to Cabinet 14 September 2021 and Council 16 September 2021 outlining activity during previous year
Functions of the committee	YES	PARTLY	NO	
7. Do the committee’s terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA’s Position Statement?				
- good governance	YES			
- assurance framework, including partnership and collaboration arrangements	YES			
- internal audit	YES			
- external audit	YES			
- financial reporting	YES			Statement of Accounts reviewed by the Audit & Standards Committee prior to the Accounts Committee
- risk management	YES			
- value for money or best value	YES			
- counter-fraud and corruption.	YES			

- supporting the ethical framework	YES			The Committee receives update reports on local government ethical standards and Committee Terms of Reference include promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by co-opted members and councillors.
8. Is an annual evaluation undertaken to assess whether the committee is fulfilling its terms of reference and that adequate consideration has been given to all core areas?	YES			Evidenced by this self-assessment and annual report to Cabinet. Annual evaluation to assess this will also be an annual item on the Committee Agenda.
9. Has the audit committee considered the wider areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement and whether it would be appropriate for the committee to undertake them?	YES			Now merged with Standards Committee. Treasury Management Strategy, six-month progress and year end performance reported. Wider areas to be considered at a future agenda.
10. Where coverage of core areas has been found to be limited, are plans in place to address this?	YES			
11. Has the committee maintained its non-advisory role by not taking on any decision-making powers that are not in line with its core purpose?	YES			
Membership and support	YES	PARTLY	NO	
12. Has an effective audit committee structure and composition of the committee been selected? This should include:				
- separation from the executive	YES			Chair and Vice Chair non-Cabinet members. Two Cabinet members serve on the Audit & Standards Committee but the Council welcomes this as a balance between separation and the inclusion and awareness of the Committee's activities by the Executive
- an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills among the membership	YES			Member development programme agreed by the Committee in October 2019 following which a planned series of training seminars commenced. This was suspended in light of the remote working position during COVID 19 as it was felt training seminars would be most beneficial if held in person, so will be revisited in 2022/23.
- a size of committee that is not unwieldy	YES			
- consideration has been given to the inclusion of at least one	YES			The Committee has three independent members

independent member (where it is not a mandatory requirement)	YES			The Committee has three independent members
13. Have independent members appointed to the committee been recruited in an open and transparent way and approved by the full council?	YES			The last independent vacancy was advertised in the local press and on the Council's website as well as circulated to the Council's partners. The interview panel consisted of the Chair and Vice Chair, together with the Deputy Monitoring Officer and Service Director Financial Management. A report to full Council 27/1/22 set out the reappointment of one existing independent for a further period of four years, and the appointment of two new independent members for the same period.
14. Does the chair of the committee have appropriate knowledge and skills?	YES			
15. Are arrangements in place to support the committee with briefings and training?	YES			A framework for Audit Committee Knowledge and Skills Assessment and a Development Plan was reported for endorsement to the April 2019 Committee following consultation with Committee members. This was used to inform the member development programme.
16. Has the membership of the committee been assessed against the core knowledge and skills framework and found to be satisfactory?	YES			Member skills self assessment circulated to inform the Skills Assessment and Development Plan was circulated to member of the Committee for completion April 2019. This will be revisited in 2022/23 now that physical meetings can take place.
17. Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit and the chief financial officer?	YES			Chief Internal Auditor and Strategic Director, Resource and Digital attend Committee pre meetings and Committees, External Audit attend all Committees.
18. Is adequate secretariat and administrative support to the committee provided?	YES			
Effectiveness of the committee	YES	PARTLY	NO	
19. Has the committee obtained feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?	YES			Not proactively sought but mechanism exists through annual report to Cabinet
20. Are meetings effective with a good level of discussion and engagement from all the members?	YES			
21. Does the committee engage with a wide range of leaders and				

managers, including discussion of audit findings, risks and action plans with the responsible officers?	YES			The Committee Terms of Reference provide for this facility
22. Does the committee make recommendations for the improvement of governance, risk and control and are these acted on?	YES			The Committee Terms of Reference set out that the Committee consider reports on audit activity and the Council's arrangements for Corporate Governance and raise the profile of audit, risk management and the internal control environment.
23. Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?	YES			Not proactively sought but mechanism exists through annual report to Cabinet
24. Does the committee have an action plan to improve any areas of weakness?	YES			A framework for Audit Committee Knowledge and Skills Assessment and a Development Plan was reported for endorsement to the April 2019 Committee following consultation with Committee members. This was used to inform the member development programme reported to the 28 October 2019 Committee. To be revisited in 2022/23 now that physical meetings can take place.
25. Does the committee publish an annual report to account for its performance and explain its work?	YES			Annual Report to Cabinet 14 September 2021 and Council 16 September 2021