

Audit and Standards Committee - Self-Assessment of Good Practice 2023-24

Audit committee purpose and governance		Does not comply	Partially complies and extent of improvement needed			Fully complies	Comments
		Major Improvement	Significant Improvement	Moderate Improvement	Minor Improvement	No Further Improvement	
Weightings		0	1	2	3	5	
1	Does the authority have a dedicated audit committee that is not combined with other functions (e.g. standards, ethics, scrutiny)?				3		Merged with Standards Committee reported to Cabinet 13 May 2014
2	Does the audit committee report directly to full council?					5	Annual Report to Cabinet 19 September 2023 and Council 21 September 2023
3	Has the committee maintained its advisory role by not taking on any decision-making powers?					5	yes
4	Do the terms of reference clearly set out the purpose of the committee in accordance with CIPFA's 2022 Position Statement?			2			Requires review and amendments to ensure compliance with the 2022 Position Statement, including the addition of a Statement of Purpose
5	Do all those charged with governance and in leadership roles have a good understanding of the role and purpose of the committee?					5	
6	Does the audit committee escalate issues and concerns promptly to those in governance and leadership roles?					5	
7	Does the governing body hold the audit committee to account for its performance at least annually?					5	Annual Report to Cabinet 19 September 2023 and Council 21 September 2023
8	Does the committee publish an annual report in accordance with the 2022 guidance, including:						
	- compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement 2022			2			Some development in the report's content required to ensure compliance.
	- results of the annual evaluation, development work undertaken and planned improvements				3		Development work and planned improvements need to be added to the annual report
	- how it has fulfilled its terms of reference and the key issues escalated in the year?				3		Explicit reference where applicable to be added to the annual report
Functions of the committee		Major Improvement	Significant Improvement	Moderate Improvement	Minor Improvement	No Further Improvement	
9	Do the committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement as follows?						
	- governance arrangements					5	
	- risk management arrangements					5	
	- internal control arrangements, including:						Officers will review Committee Terms of Reference to ensure compliance with the Revised Code and report back to the Committee for review to ensure specific reference to FM, VFM, ethics and standards
	• financial management				3		
	• value for money				3		
	• ethics and standards				3		
	• counter fraud and corruption					5	
	- annual governance statement					5	
	- financial reporting					5	Statement of Accounts reviewed by the Audit & Standards Committee prior to the Accounts Committee
- assurance framework					5		
- internal audit					5		
- external audit					5		
10	Over the last year, has adequate consideration been given to all core areas?					5	Evidenced by this self assessment and the Annual Report to Cabinet. The Annual evaluation to assess this document is also an annual item on the Committee Agenda.
11	Over the last year, has the committee only considered agenda items that align with its core functions or selected wider functions, as set out in the 2022 guidance?					5	Now merged with Standards Committee. Treasury Management Strategy, quarterly progress and year end performance reported.
12	Has the committee met privately with the external auditors and head of internal audit in the last year?					5	This has not been requested during the past year, but the opportunity is available.
Membership and support		Major Improvement	Significant Improvement	Moderate Improvement	Minor Improvement	No Further Improvement	

13	Has the committee been established in accordance with the 2022 guidance as follows?						
	- separation from the executive					5	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
	- a size that is not unwieldy and avoids use of substitutes					5	
	- inclusion of lay/co-opted independent members in accordance with legislation or CIPFA's recommendation					5	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	Have all committee members been appointed or selected to ensure a committee membership that is knowledgeable and skilled?					5	
15	Has an evaluation of knowledge, skills and the training needs of the chair and committee members been carried out within the last two years?			2			A framework for Audit Committee Knowledge and Skills Assessment and a Development Plan was reported of endorsement to the April 2019 Committee following consultation with Committee members, and used to inform the member development programme. This is currently being revisited, including an evaluation of the knowledge, skills and training needs of members to undertake their Committee duties consistent with the requirements of the 2022 Guidance.
16	Have regular training and support arrangements been put in place covering the areas set out in the 2022 guidance?			2			
17	Across the committee membership, is there a satisfactory level of knowledge, as set out in the 2022 guidance?			2			Skills self assessment was circulated in April 2019, will be revisited to inform the revised Development Plan.
18	Is adequate secretariat and administrative support provided to the committee?					5	
19	Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit and the CFO?					5	Chief Internal Auditor and Strategic Director, Resources & Digital attend all Committee pre meetings and Committees. External Audit attend all Committees.
Effectiveness of the committee		Major Improvement	Significant Improvement	Moderate Improvement	Minor Improvement	No Further Improvement	
20	Has the committee obtained positive feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?					5	Not proactively sought but mechanism exists through the Annual Report to Cabinet.
21	Are meetings well chaired, ensuring key agenda items are addressed with a focus on improvement?					5	
22	Are meetings effective with a good level of discussion and engagement from all the members?					5	
23	Has the committee maintained a non-political approach to discussions throughout?					5	
24	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?					5	The Committee Terms of Reference provide for this facility.
25	Does the committee make recommendations for the improvement of governance, risk and control arrangements?					5	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.
26	Do audit committee recommendations have traction with those in leadership roles?					5	
27	Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?					5	Not proactively sought but mechanism exists through the Annual Report to Cabinet.
28	Does the committee have an action plan to improve any areas of weakness?			2			Action Plan to address the necessary improvements identified from this Assessment will be drafted and circulated to the members of the Committee for comment.
29	Has this assessment been undertaken collaboratively with the audit committee members?				3		Drafted by the Chair and Vice Chair and reported to the Committee for endorsement as part of the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit as part of the Annual Governance Review Framework.
		0	0	12	21	150	
						Total score (Max 200) =	183