

### Issues Identified by the Audit & Governance Committee's Effectiveness Task Group

The following areas / issues were identified by the task group. Suggested actions and timescales are shown to address each issue.

Ref	Issue	Proposed Action(s)	Target Date
1	The Audit and Governance Committee's existing terms of reference need to be revised in order to comply with CIPFA recommended best practice. Revised terms of reference were considered by the Committee at their meeting on 2 April 2012 but they were not approved.	The Committee should give further consideration to adopting revised terms of reference.	April 2013
2	The Council has approved the Audit and Governance Committee's terms of reference. However, the terms of reference are not formally reviewed and updated on a regular basis.	The Committee's terms of reference should be reviewed at least every 3 years. Any changes to be submitted to Full Council for approval.	April 2013 and ongoing.
3	The Audit and Governance Committee could benefit by extending its membership to include co-opted Members with relevant technical expertise and/or a thorough knowledge of corporate governance. This has been a longstanding recommendation of the committee.	The Committee should appoint one or two independent co-opted Members.	April 2013
		The requirement for members of the Committee to act independently should also be included in the training that is delivered to the Committee.	Ongoing

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	Some concerns were expressed regarding the need to ensure that Members are free to act independently and that influence is not placed on them to adopt a party line. The appointment of independent co-opted Member(s) may help to address this issue.		
4	<p>The role and work of the Audit and Governance Committee is not given sufficient priority and recognition by Full Council.</p> <p>The Audit and Governance Committee should work more closely with the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Joint Standards Committee.</p>	The Committee should consider ways of making its work more prominent and of developing links with CSMC and the Joint Standards Committee - one possible option would be for the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of these committees to meet.	April 2013
5	Some concerns were expressed as to the committee's responsibilities for ensuring that the council's scrutiny arrangements are working effectively. It was noted that, if the committee identified any weaknesses in this area, they should report this in the Annual Governance Statement.	That an item be included on the agenda for a meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee to consider the effectiveness of scrutiny arrangements and governance around scrutiny.	April 2013

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6	It is over a year ago since the Audit and Governance Committee reported on its work and performance to Full Council.	The Committee should prepare an annual report on its work. It is suggested that the April meeting would be an opportune time to approve the report to enable its contents to reflect the work that had taken place during the municipal year.	April 2013
7	New Committee members are provided with training but more could be done to ensure that Members have the appropriate skills and knowledge to discharge their responsibilities effectively.	Induction training and an annual training update should be made compulsory for all members of the Committee (including substitutes).	Immediate
		A training needs assessment should be carried out to identify any gaps in knowledge.	December 2012
		A programme of ongoing training for Members of the Committee should be prepared.	December 2012

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8	<p>The Council's S151 officer regularly attends meetings of the Committee. The Committee also receives ongoing support from other officers. The Committee previously had a named officer who provided dedicated support and attended all meetings and Chair's briefings. This provided continuity. However, the post was deleted earlier in 2012 as part of the council's restructure.</p>	<p>Officers should consider how further more dedicated support for the Audit and Governance Committee can be provided in the future.</p>	December 2012
9	<p>The Audit and Governance Committee now considers the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS) in June. The AGS is then presented again as part of the accounts in July and September. In previous years, there has occasionally been a debate around particular sentences within the AGS. When this has occurred, there has then been insufficient time to consider and make the necessary changes. The Committee therefore recognises that there is a need to raise any issues with the wording and contents of the AGS at an early stage. The new reporting</p>	<p>The Committee should be reminded to raise issues with the wording and content of the AGS at the earliest opportunity.</p>	June 2013

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	timetable for the annual statement of accounts should reduce the likelihood of these problems occurring in the future.		
10	<p>Risk management reports are presented regularly to the Audit and Governance Committee but they focus on specific service areas and/or projects. Whilst it is acknowledged that the full risk report is e-mailed to Members separately from the agenda papers, it was felt that more could be done to ensure that Members are made aware of the council's strategic risks and the overall risk management arrangements.</p> <p>The Chair also gave an update on the recommendation by external audit that risk might be approached in a different way. This could include a specific member-led session to identify and review key risks.</p>	<p>The Committee should give further consideration as to how to develop its awareness of risk management, including the possibility of holding sessions for Members to identify and comment on key corporate risks.</p>	February 2013
		<p>Members should be given more information about scoring systems and how the council's risks are identified and evaluated.</p>	February 2013
11	<p>The Audit and Governance Committee considers the council's annual statement of accounts. As part of the new reporting arrangements, the accounts are presented to the Committee in July</p>	<p>That officers undertake a final proof read prior to the final accounts being presented to the Committee in September.</p>	September 2013

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	<p>for consideration prior to audit. The accounts are then presented again for approval in September.</p> <p>However, Members noted that errors in wording and grammar are not necessarily identified during proof reading prior to the accounts being presented.</p>		
12	<p>CIPFA briefing papers are circulated on an occasional basis. Members would however benefit from more regular technical updates.</p>	<p>Copies of CIPFA and other technical guidance should be circulated to Members of the Audit and Governance Committee on a more regular basis.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>
13	<p>Opportunities currently exist for Members of the Committee to meet with the Head of Internal Audit and the External Auditor in private. However, it would be helpful for a private meeting with both to be scheduled into the Committee's calendar of meetings.</p>	<p>To include private meetings with both the External Auditor and the Head of Internal Audit in the calendar of meetings.</p>	<p>February 2013</p>