

Audit and Governance Committee Self Assessment – 2025/26

This appendix provides a high-level review that incorporates the key principles set out in CIPFA's Position Statement and this publication (Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police, CIPFA, 218). Where an audit committee has a high degree of performance against the good practice principles, then it is an indicator that the committee is soundly based and has in place a knowledgeable membership. These are the essential factors in developing an effective audit committee.

A regular self-assessment can be used to support the planning of the audit committee work programme and training plans. It can also inform an annual report.

Section 1 – Self Assessment of Good Practice

Good practice question		Yes	Partly	No	Comments/Actions
Audit committee purpose and governance					
1	Does the authority have a dedicated audit committee that is not combined with other functions (e.g. standards, ethics, scrutiny)?		x		<i>Committee has responsibility for Standards matters in addition to his core functions</i>
2	Does the audit committee report directly to full council?	x			<i>Annual Report to Full Council</i>
3	Has the committee maintained its advisory role by not taking on any decision-making powers?	x			<i>Small number of delegations in relation to meeting the terms of reference</i>
4	Do the terms of reference clearly set out the purpose of the committee in accordance with CIPFA's 2022 Position Statement?				<i>TOR were updated following the external review of the Committee by CIPFA and were based on the model TOR</i>
5	Do all those charged with governance and in leadership roles have a good understanding of the role and purpose of the committee?	x			ACTION: <i>Consider repeating survey of understanding across all members</i>
6	Does the audit committee escalate issues and concerns promptly to those in governance and leadership roles?	x			<i>This was demonstrated though audit action implementation concerns and additional briefings in relation to the S106 audit</i>

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Good practice question		Yes	Partly	No	Comments/Actions
7	Does the governing body hold the audit committee to account for its performance at least annually?	x			<i>Annual Report of the Committee was considered by Council in December 2024</i>
8	Does the Committee publish an annual report in accordance with the 2022 guidance, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement 2022 • results of the annual evaluation, development work undertaken and planned improvements • how it has fulfilled its terms of reference and the key issues escalated in the year? 		x		<i>No self-assessment was carried out due to CIPFA review action plan being implemented</i>
Functions of the Committee					
9	Do the committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement as follows?	x			
	Governance arrangements				
	Risk management arrangements				
	Internal control arrangements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • financial management • value for money • ethics and standards • counter fraud and corruption 				
	Annual Governance Statement				
	Financial reporting				
	Assurance framework				
	Internal Audit				
	External Audit				
10	Over the last year, has adequate consideration been given to all core areas?	x			

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Good practice question		Yes	Partly	No	Comments/Actions
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?	x			<i>Advice has been provided to the Committee during meetings when considering whether requests for reports meets the scope of the TOR</i>
12	Has the committee met privately with the external auditors and head of internal audit in the last year?	x			<i>Chair and Vice Chair have these meetings before every Committee</i>
Membership and support					
13	Has the committee been established in accordance with the 2022 guidance as follows?	x			<i>Covered in the CIPFA review and action plan</i>
	■ separation from the executive				
	■ A size that is not unwieldy and avoids use of substitutes				
	■ a size of committee that is not unwieldy				
	■ Inclusion of lay/co-opted independent members in accordance with legislation or CIPFA's recommendation				
14	Have all committee members been appointed or selected to ensure a committee membership that is knowledgeable and skilled?	x			
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?			x	<i>No skills assessment was completed due to the CIPFA review of the effectiveness of the Committee. ACTION: Undertake a knowledge and skills assessment of Committee members during 2025/26</i>

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Good practice question		Yes	Partly	No	Comments/Actions
16	Have regular training and support arrangements been put in place covering the areas set out in the 2022 guidance?		X		<i>The CIPFA review included an action plan to ensure that the requirements of the 2022 guidance were met. The action plan was implemented.</i>
17	Across the committee membership, is there a satisfactory level of knowledge, as set out in the 2022 guidance?	X			ACTION: see above action re undertaking a skills assessment of Committee members
18	Is adequate secretariat and administrative support provided to the committee?	X			
19	Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit and the CFO?	X			
Effectiveness of the Committee					
20	Has the committee obtained positive feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?	X			
21	Are meetings well chaired, ensuring key agenda items are addressed with a focus on improvement?	X			
22	Are meetings effective with a good level of discussion and engagement from all the members?	X			
23	Has the committee maintained a non-political approach to discussions throughout?	X			
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?	X			<i>Various officers have attended Committee meetings and private briefings throughout the year</i>
25	Does the committee make recommendations for the improvement of governance, risk and control arrangements?	X			<i>Demonstrated in challenges applied to reports and by not agreeing to the removal of AGS items</i>

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26	Do audit committee recommendations have traction with those in leadership roles?	x			
27	Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?		x		<i>Not in a specific discussion but in considering the work programme this is taken into account</i>
28	Does the committee have an action plan to improve any areas of weakness?		x		<i>Implementation of the CIPFA review action plan and actions will be taken forward from this self-assessment.</i>
29	Has this assessment been undertaken collaboratively with the audit committee members?	x			<i>Shared with all Committee members for comments prior to publication and discussion at Committee</i>
		22	6	1	

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Section 2: Evaluating the effectiveness of the Audit Committee

Assessment Key

- 5 Clear evidence is available from a number of sources that the committee is actively supporting improvements across all aspects of this area. The improvements made are clearly identifiable.
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- 4 Clear evidence from some sources that the committee is actively and effectively supporting improvement across some aspects of this area.
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- 3 The committee has had mixed experience in supporting improvement in this area. There is some evidence that demonstrates their impact but there are also significant gaps.
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- 2 There is some evidence that the committee has supported improvements, but the impact of this support is limited.
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- 1 No evidence can be found that the audit committee has supported improvements in this area.

Areas where the audit committee can add value by supporting improvement	Examples of how the audit committee can add value and provide evidence of effectiveness	Self evaluation examples, areas of strength and weakness	Overall assessment: 5-1 See key above
Promoting the principles of good governance and their application to decision making	Supporting the development of a local code of governance	The Audit and Governance Committee were involved in the development of the current Code of Corporate Governance and will also be involved in future iterations.	4
	Providing robust review of the AGS and the assurances underpinning it	The AGS is provided to the Committee and a training session	4

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	Working with key members to improve their understanding of the AGS and their contribution to it	held for Members, prior to the Committee approving it in.	4
	Supporting reviews/audits of governance arrangements	The Committee have received additional briefings on audit findings in key areas	4
	Participating in self- assessments of governance arrangements	Self assessments of governance arrangements have previously been included in the Annual Governance Statement process.	4
	Working with partner audit committees to review governance arrangements in partnerships	Action: For the Committee to consider opportunities for working with partner audit committees.	1
Contributing to the development of an effective control environment	Actively monitoring the implementation of recommendations from auditors	Audit and Governance Committee receives regular updates on the implementation of audit recommendations	4
	Encouraging ownership of the internal control framework by appropriate managers	The Committee continues to monitor the implementation of actions raised by the External Auditors and the AGS Action Plan. Internal Audit Interim and Annual reports include	4

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		information relating to implementation of audit actions and provide details of all limited or no assurance reports issued.	
	Raising significant concerns over controls with appropriate senior managers	Senior Managers attend Committee to discuss lessons learned – for example in response to LGO findings, and in relation to significant audit findings	4
Supporting the establishment of arrangements for the governance of risk and for effective arrangements to manage risks	Reviewing risk management arrangements and their effectiveness, e.g. risk management benchmarking	The Committee receive regular updates on risk management and have received briefings from risk owners when requested.	4
	Monitoring improvements		4
	Raising significant concerns over controls with appropriate senior managers		4
Advising on the adequacy of the assurance framework and considering whether assurance is deployed efficiently and effectively.	Specifying its assurance needs, identifying gaps or overlaps in assurance	The Work Plan presented to Committee demonstrates how the assurance reports enable the Committee to meet its terms of reference. The Work Plan is a standing item on each agenda and the Committee are proactive in	4
	Seeking to streamline assurance gathering and reporting		4
	Reviewing the effectiveness of assurance providers, e.g. internal		4

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	audit, risk management, external audit	requesting reports and assurances from the Council. The Committee receive annual reports on the effectiveness of Internal Audit as part of the AGS process and also receive an annual Monitoring Officer report.	
Supporting the quality of the internal audit activity particularly by underpinning its organisational independence	Reviewing the audit charter and functional reporting arrangements	The Committee approves the Internal Audit Plan and Charter, and receives interim updates on progress against the Annual Plan, which include updates on the Quality Assurance Improvement Plan and self assessment of effectiveness.	5
	Assessing the effectiveness of internal audit arrangements, providing constructive challenge and supporting improvements		5
	Actively supporting the quality assurance and improvement programme of internal audit.		5
Aiding the achievement of the authority's goals and objectives through helping to ensure appropriate governance, risk, control and assurance arrangements	Reviewing how the governance arrangements support the achievement of sustainable outcomes	The Committee receives update reports on the work of Internal Audit including key findings, issues of concern, and action in response to the findings and recommendations. The reports include relevant information regarding Internal	4
	Reviewing major projects and programmes to ensure that governance and assurance arrangements are in place		4

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	Reviewing the effectiveness of performance management arrangements	Audit reviews of projects and programmes. The Committee has also received briefings in relation to matters such as Unit4 implementation and DSG Management Plan	4
Supporting the development of robust arrangements for ensuring value for money	Ensuring that assurance on value for money arrangements is included in the assurances received by the audit committee	The Committee considers the annual external audit opinion on value for money. The Committee receives regular reports on progress against the Internal Audit Plan and implementation of actions These reports inform the Annual Governance Statement.	4
	Considering how performance in value for money is evaluated as part of the AGS		4
Helping the authority to implement the values of good governance, including effective arrangements for countering fraud and corruption risks	Reviewing arrangements against the standards set out in the Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption (CIPFA, 2014)	The Committee receive regular updates on counter fraud matters in the Internal Audit update reports. The Council receive the annual report of the Monitoring Officer and an update on the Council's Whistleblowing Policy during the year.	3
	Reviewing fraud risks and the effectiveness of the organisation's strategy to address those risks		3
	Assessing the effectiveness of ethical governance		3

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	arrangements for both staff and governors		
Promoting effective public reporting to the authority's stakeholders and local community and measures to improve transparency and accountability	Improving how the authority discharges its responsibilities for public reporting; for example, better targeting at the audience, plain English	The Committee approves a number of public facing documents and reports, and as part of producing these documents considers any changes needed to improve transparency. The Council's Monitoring Officer report includes information on the Council's performance under the Data Protection Act (2018), the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and the Environmental Information Regulations.	4
	Reviewing whether decision making through partnership organisations remains transparent and publicly accessible and encourages greater transparency	Action: The Committee will consider what reports they wish to receive in this area.	3
	Publishing an annual report from the committee	Council received the annual report of the Committee in December 2024.	5