

Self-assessment of good practice – January 2020

Good practice questions		Yes	Partly	No	Comments	Actions
Audit committee purpose and governance						
1	Does the authority have a dedicated audit committee?	✓			A dedicated Audit Committee is in place	N/A
2	Does the audit committee report directly to full council? (Applicable to local government only.)		✓		The terms of reference approved in January 2019 confirmed that a report to Council would be introduced.	Annual Report to be compiled
3	Do the terms of reference clearly set out the purpose of the committee in accordance with CIPFA's Position Statement?	✓			The Terms of Reference approved in January 2019 set out the purpose of the Audit and Standards Committee in accordance with the CIPFA Audit Committees Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police 2018	N/A
4	Is the role and purpose of the audit committee understood and accepted across the authority?	✓			The role and purpose of the Audit and Standards Committee forms part of member training. The standards element will be clearly understood arising from the Members' Code of Conduct. The Terms of Reference form part of the Council's Constitution.	N/A

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5	Does the audit committee provide support to the authority in meeting the requirements of good governance?	✓			The Audit Committee provides assurance on the adequacy of internal control, risk management and the integrity of financial reporting and the annual governance processes.	N/A
6	Are the arrangements to hold the committee to account for its performance operating satisfactorily?		✓		The last review of effectiveness was completed in September 2016. It is the intention that an annual review will be undertaken.	The self-assessment of good practice will be undertaken on an annual basis and presented to Committee each November.
Functions of the committee						
7	Do the committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA'S Position Statement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good governance • assurance framework • internal audit • external audit • financial reporting • risk management • value for money • counter-fraud and corruption • supporting the ethical framework 	✓			The Terms of Reference approved in January 2019 set out the purpose of the Audit and Standards Committee in accordance with the CIPFA Audit Committees Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police 2018	.N/A

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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?		✓		The annual self-assessment of good practice gives the Audit and Standards Committee the opportunity to assess if it is fulfilling the terms of reference.	The self-assessment of good practice will be undertaken on an annual basis and presented to Committee each November.
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.	✓			The Audit and Standards Committee has considered the wider areas and they are included within the Terms of Reference.	N/A
10	Where coverage of core areas has been found to be limited, are plans in place to address this?	N/A			There have been no instances where coverage of core areas has been found to be limited.	N/A
11	Has the committee maintained its advising role by not taking on any decision-making powers that are not in line with its core purpose?	✓			The Audit and Standards Committee does not have any decision making powers in relation to its audit functions.	N/A

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Membership and support						
12	<p>Has an effective audit committee structure and composition of the committee been selected? This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ separation from the executive ▪ an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills among the membership ▪ a size of committee that is not unwieldy ▪ consideration has been given to the inclusion of at least one independent member. 	N/A	✓		<p>Fylde Council no longer has a Cabinet structure and, therefore, no split between executive and legislative functions. Functions are vested in the council itself, and then exercised by committees of the council. However, neither the Audit Committee Chair/Vice is the Chair/Vice of another programme committee. Also no other committee members have such roles.</p> <p>It is the intention to issue the Knowledge and Skills self assessment (contained within the Guidance) in October 2019 and the results used to inform the Member Development Programme.</p> <p>The Audit and Standards Committee consists of 9 members which is broadly in line with other local authorities.</p> <p>The appointment of independent members for the audit elements of the committee's work (governance, risk and control) is not mandatory, although some councils have chosen to recruit independent members for this purpose.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>.</p> <p>CIPFA Knowledge and Skills self assessment to be issued to members of the Committee in October 2019.</p> <p>Consider the appointment of an independent member for the audit element of the Committee's work</p>
13	Have independent members appointed to the committee been recruited in an open and transparent way and approved by the full council?	N/A			Not applicable for the audit element of the Committee's work	N/A

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14	Does the chair of the committee have appropriate knowledge and skills?	✓			The Chairman of the Audit and Standards was appointed in 2007, has held office continuously since, and has knowledge and experience.	N/A
15	Are arrangements in place to support the committee with briefings and training?	✓			Members of the Committee attended a CIPFA Development Day in June 2019 which incorporated all aspects of the Terms of Reference. The CIPFA Knowledge and Skills self assessment will inform the Member Development Programme. Briefings are held for the Chair/ Vice Chair and Shadow Chair prior to each Committee meeting.	See Q12
16	Has the membership of the committee been assessed against the core knowledge and skills framework and found to be satisfactory?			✓	It is the intention to issue the Knowledge and Skills self assessment (contained within the Guidance) in October 2019 and the results used to inform the Member Development Programme.	See Q12
17	Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit and the chief financial officer?	✓			The Audit and Standards Committee has good working relationships with all key officers, including external audit, internal audit, monitoring officer and the chief financial officer.	N/A
18	Is adequate secretariat and administrative support to the committee provided?	✓			Secretariat and administrative support for the committee is good. Each meeting is attended by an officer from Democratic Services Team and the meetings are minuted and published.	N/A

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Effectiveness of the Committee						
19	Has the committee obtained feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?			✓	The Committee has not obtained feedback on its performance from those interacting with it or relying on its work.	Short survey to be issued to key stakeholders to obtain feedback
20	Are meetings effective with a good level of discussion and engagement from all the members.	✓			Majority of members routinely ask questions and have requested further information if required. This is evidenced in the minutes of the meetings.	N/A
21	Does the committee engage with a wide range of leaders and managers, including discussions of audit findings, risk and action plans with responsible officers	✓			Internal Audit provide summaries of their findings and non-implementation of action plans are reported to the Committee. The committee has the opportunity to call in Service Managers / Heads of Service to challenge them on audit findings, outstanding actions or any associated risks. Other senior officers have attended the meetings to present reports on subject matters appropriate to the committee.	N/A
22	Does the committee make recommendations for the improvement of governance, risk and control and are these acted on	✓			This is evidenced in the minutes of the meetings e.g the Committee have requested further information to be provided on audit reports issued with a limited assurance rating.	N/A
23	Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?			✓	The Committee has not evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation, however this can be included in the survey to key stakeholders.	Short survey to be issued to key stakeholders to obtain feedback

24	Does the committee have an action plan to improve any areas of weakness?	✓			This self-assessment contains actions for improvement.	N/A
25	Does the committee publish an annual report to account for its performance and explain its work				The terms of reference approved in January 2019 confirmed that a report to Council would be introduced.	Annual Report to be compiled.