

TITLE	Audit Committee Training & Development Programme
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Audit Committee on 28 July 2021
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Supports the development of the effectiveness of the Audit Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee is asked to consider and agree the proposed training programme.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Members of the Audit Committee should be provided with support in their training and development – this is set out in the Council's Constitution.

The Committee has previously agreed to undertake a self-assessment of its effectiveness which will be conducted in time for consideration at its September meeting. In the meantime, this report proposes a draft programme of training for the year for agreement by the Committee which can be shaped further following consideration of the self-assessment.

In addition, Members will be provided with a copy of CIPFA's periodic topical briefings for Audit Committees as part of a more structured and comprehensive approach to training and development.

Background

1. Below is an outline of the areas relevant to the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference:
 - Statement of Accounts including Financial Reporting Standards;
 - Treasury Management;
 - The role of the Audit Committee in Local Government;
 - The role of Internal and External Auditors
 - Risk Management and Internal Control;
 - Corporate Governance including the Annual Governance Statement;
 - Internal Fraud and Corruption risks including Bribery Act and Money Laundering;
 - External Fraud risks; and
 - Confidential Reporting (Whistle Blowing).
2. The Council's Constitution sets out the remit of the Audit Committee as follows with regard to training.

Extract from Constitution (paragraph 4.4.3.4)

To identify training opportunities for Audit Committee Members and all Members of the Council in corporate governance issues and to make recommendations as appropriate.

And also, with regards risk management.....

To have the knowledge and skills requisite to their role with regard to risk management and to undertake awareness training in respect of Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) as and when specific training needs are identified.

3. Attendance and participation will provide Members with skills to:
- Understand how to be effective when sitting on an Audit Committee.
 - Increase their understanding of risk mitigations and the control environment.
 - Develop skills to effectively gain the levels of assurance they need.
 - Understand what is meant by the term governance and why this is important in local government.

PROPOSED PROGRAMME

4. To continue to develop the skills and knowledge of Committee Members the following training programme is proposed for 2021/2022 with sessions to run at the start of each scheduled meeting of the Committee, or alternatively at a separately scheduled date if Members would prefer:

Date	Topic	Presenter
September 2021	Audit Committee terms of reference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that Members understand the role of the Audit Committee. • An opportunity to review the terms of reference and identify any potential changes. • To consider the results of a self- assessment 	Assistant Director Governance
November 2021	Statement of Accounts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the Committee has the information it needs to effectively scrutinise the Statement of Accounts and ISA260. 	Assistant Director Finance
January 2022	The role of External Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the Committee understand the role of external audit. - To enable the Committee to understand how to interpret and ask questions about the report of the external auditor. 	EY

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explain some of the key 'jargon' used in external audit reports. 	
March 2022	Strategic Risk Management	To be confirmed

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None.

Cross-Council Implications
The Audit Committee plays a key part in ensuring good governance which helps the Council ensure its key priorities and objectives will be achieved.

Public Sector Equality Duty
This is a report to note. An equalities impact assessment is not therefore required.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
Not applicable

List of Background Papers
CIPA briefings for Audit Committees

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