

Audit & Standards Committee

7 March 2019

Self-Assessment

Recommendation(s)

That the Committee:

1. considers and comments on the outcomes of its self - assessment exercise
2. supports the inclusion of future agenda items in those areas in most need of addressing as set out in paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4.

1.0 Key Issues

- 1.1 In November 2018 this Committee revisited its self-assessment of effectiveness against the Cipfa evaluation framework contained in the latest Cipfa guidance on audit committees. The original assessment was conducted in 2016 against the 2013 Cipfa guidance and the updated assessment was undertaken against the framework contained in the updated 2018 guidance which is not substantially different to the previous document. The results of the two exercises are summarised in the Appendix.

2.0 Effectiveness of Audit Committees

- 2.1 As a result of the original assessment a number of actions were agreed and the new assessment reflects those actions including, for example, the introduction of an annual report to Council on the work of the Committee and strengthened arrangements for monitoring the implementation of internal audit recommendations.
- 2.2 The self-assessment is based on members perception rather than hard evidence and the Committee were mindful of the risk that a self-assessment will not be rigorous and took great care when coming to a conclusion on scoring and on one factor reduced the original score. The resulting assessment is therefore considered to be a fair reflection of performance with the following themes continuing to be highly rated or where scores have increased:
 - Promoting the principles of good governance and their application to decision making
 - Contributing to the development of an effective control environment
 - Supporting the quality of the internal audit activity

- Supporting the development of robust arrangements for ensuring value for money
- Helping the authority to implement the values of good governance

2.3 The theme identified as most needing improvement and which scored lowest related to:

- Aiding the achievement of the authority's goals and objectives

The lower score for this area was largely driven by a view from members that more consideration should be given to assurance in relation to major projects. In order to address this, in the first instance it is proposed that an update on the new change management framework be brought to a future committee meeting to enable the assurance and control framework to be considered.

2.4 It was noted that future agenda items would include reviewing changes to Contract Standing Orders and the outcome of an external health-check on risk management processes. These will address further points raised in the workshop and influence scores at the next self-assessment.

2.5 The specific way in which the Committee felt it could strengthen its own effectiveness was to reduce the time spent on considering the outcome of external audits to free up time to consider wider governance matters.

2.6 It is proposed that the Committee carry out a further self-assessment in November 2020.

Background papers

None.

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): N/A

Other members: N/A