

Governance & Audit Committee Effectiveness Checklist
(based on Appendix D Self-Assessment of Good Practice from CIPFA Audit Committees Practical Guidance 2018)

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	Purpose & Governance	Yes	No	Partly	Comment
1	Does the authority have a dedicated audit committee?	✓			BCBC has the Governance & Audit Committee.
2	Does the audit committee report directly to full council? (applicable to local government only)			✓	<p>Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) in the Council's Constitution states the Governance & Audit Committee can bring concerns arising from financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.</p> <p>The Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Accounts and Corporate Risk Management Policy are all examples of matters considered by the Committee before reporting to Council and this is acknowledged in the covering reports that go to Full Council.</p> <p>Democratic Services advised that Audit Committee minutes do not go to Council but are available and accessible online to all members.</p>

3	Do the terms of reference clearly set out the purpose of the committee in accordance with CIPFA's Position Statement?			✓	<p>Terms of Reference in Council Constitution says purpose is: <i>'To provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, independent scrutiny of the Authority's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process.'</i></p> <p>Compared to CIPFA's Position Statement in CIPFA Audit Committees Practical Guidance 2018 and BCBC does not mention governance</p> <p>CIPFA's is <i>'to provide to those charged with governance independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and governance processes. By overseeing both internal and external audit it makes an important contribution to ensuring that effective assurance arrangements are in place'</i></p>
4	Is the role and purpose of the audit committee understood and accepted across the authority?	✓			Terms of Reference in Council Constitution states the purpose in 8.02 and the function in Part 3. The Council's Constitution applies to all staff and Members.
5	Does the audit committee provide support to the authority in meeting the requirements of good governance?	✓			Part 3 of the Council's Constitution states reviewing and scrutinising governance as a function of Governance and Audit Committee. Governance and Audit Committee approved the draft Annual Governance Statement 2019-20 on 16/07/20. Audit Committee also has a Forward Work Programme in place which keeps them updated on their functions.
6	Are the arrangements to hold the committee to account for its performance operating satisfactorily?	✓			All meeting agendas and minutes are available for all on the Council's website allowing for transparency.

	Functions	Yes	No	Partly	Comment
7	<p>Do the committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> good governance</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> assurance framework, including partnerships and collaboration arrangements</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> internal audit</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> external audit</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> financial reporting</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> risk management</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> value for money or best value</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> counter fraud and corruption</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> supporting the ethical framework</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>		<p>Terms of Reference in Council Constitution.</p> <p>Assurance framework and collaboration arrangements not covered.</p> <p>Ethical framework not covered.</p>
8	<p>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?</p>	<p>✓</p>			<p>Core areas evaluated Jan 2021 and will be reviewed annually as part of this self assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>good governance</i> – Yes. Annual Governance Statement and governance forms part of some audits. • <i>assurance framework, including partnerships and collaboration arrangements.</i> • <i>internal audit</i> – Yes, reports received and representatives from Internal Audit attend meetings to allow challenge. • <i>external audit</i> - Yes, reports received and representatives from External Audit attend meetings to allow challenge. • <i>financial reporting</i> – Yes, Statement of Accounts presented 10/9/20 • <i>risk management</i> – Yes Corporate Risk Assessments presented 10/9/20. • <i>value for money or best value</i> – Yes, within audits. • <i>counter fraud and corruption</i> – Yes, Annual Corporate Fraud Report presented on 10/9/20 • supporting the ethical framework – raised above

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 Committee considers the wider areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement of Treasury Management monitoring with Annual Treasury Management Outturn reports presented.
10	Where coverage of core areas has been found to be limited, are plans in place to address this?	✓			Via the draft internal audit report
11	Has the committee maintained its advisory role by not taking on any decision-making powers that are not in line with its core purpose?	✓			Committee does not have any decision making powers.
Membership and Support		Yes	No	Partly	Comment
12	Has an effective audit committee structure and composition of the committee been selected? This should include: <input type="checkbox"/> separation from the executive <input type="checkbox"/> an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills among the membership <input type="checkbox"/> a size of committee that is not unwieldy <input type="checkbox"/> consideration has been given to the inclusion of at least one independent member (where it is not already a mandatory requirement)	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓			Council's constitution clearly states composition as 12 County Borough Councillors and Lay Members. With one member having to be a lay member. 12 members in place and 1 lay member.
13	Have independent members appointed to the committee been recruited in an open and transparent way and approved by the full council or the PCC and chief constable as appropriate for the organisation?	✓			Lay Member reappointed 17/5/17 at Council meeting for 2 nd term. Reappointment was transparent taking place in Council meeting.
14	Does the chair of the committee have appropriate knowledge and skills?	✓			Democratic Services advised the Audit Committee members would have had general training. Current Chair of BCBC has appropriate knowledge and skills for role.
15	Are arrangements in place to support the committee with briefings and training?			✓	Democratic Services advised the Audit Committee members would have had general training in their first year of current electoral term. Some specific training has been provided by departments but nothing formal in place. Questionnaire has been developed to assess needs/gaps and issued.

					Feedback fed into the Audit Report.
16	Has the membership of the committee been assessed against the core knowledge and skills framework and found to be satisfactory?	✓			Questionnaire developed to assess needs/gaps and issued. Feedback fed into the Audit Report.
17	Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit and the CFO?	✓			Yes. External and Internal Audit and CFO representatives present at meetings and can discuss and challenge items on agenda. Regular pre meetings held with Chair.
18	Is adequate secretariat and administrative support to the committee provided?	✓			Support is provided by Democratic Services who send out agendas and compile minutes.
Effectiveness of the Committee		Yes	No	Partly	Comment
19	Has the committee obtained feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?		✓		CIPFA Audit Committee Guidance 2018 states <i>'Seeking feedback on the operation of the committee may be helpful to supplement a self-assessment. Those interacting regularly with the committee or relying on its output would be the principal sources of feedback. Where the committee is struggling, an external assessment may be an appropriate way to evaluate the committee and to develop an action plan for improvement'</i> . Could results be in an Audit Committee Annual report?
20	Are meetings effective with a good level of discussion and engagement from all the members?	✓			Meeting minutes from 10/09/20 show Members engaging on various agenda items.
21	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?	✓			Council's Constitution allows Members and Officers to be called to attend meetings who must then attend. A report was presented at the committee meeting on 12 November 2020 on the progress of DFGs and the appropriate Senior Officer was in attendance.
22	Does the committee make recommendations for the improvement of governance, risk and control and are these acted on?	✓			Members challenge Officers and approve recommendations.

23	Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?		✓		Does it complete any self-assessment? No annual report completed by Committee.
24	Does the committee have an action plan to improve any areas of weakness?	✓			There is an action tracker log which records identified issues and logs relevant actions until they are addressed. Action developed as part of the Self-Assessment report.
25	Does the committee publish an annual report to account for its performance and explain its work?		✓		No annual report from the Committee.

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