

Agenda Item No: 14
Report To: Audit Audit Committee
Date: 5 March 2013
Report Title: Audit Committee – Future Work Programme
Report Author: Brian Parsons - Head of Audit Partnership



Summary:	The Audit Committee is asked to consider a number of potential development areas for inclusion in the Future Work Programme.
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Key Decision: NO

Affected Wards: N/A

Recommendations: **The Audit Committee is asked to:-**

Agree which, if any, of the issues which are set out in the body of the report should be prioritised, scheduled and added to the Future Meetings Programme for reports or actions over the period of the programme

Policy Overview: Not applicable

Financial Implications: None directly

Risk Assessment Yes

Equalities Impact Assessment No

Other Material Implications: None

Background Papers: None

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1. The Audit Committee Chairman attended a CIPFA Better Governance Forum workshop/seminar on 'The Influential Audit Committee' on 16th January 2013.
2. The workshop provided briefings on current developments relevant to the role of audit committees within public sector organisations. A summary of some of the areas covered is set out below. Members may wish to discuss and consider whether any of these subject areas should be prioritised, scheduled and added to the Future Meetings Programme.
 - **Public Sector Internal Audit Standards** – A report on the new standards is included as an agenda item for this evenings meeting.
 - **Assurance** – the Audit Committee needs to receive assurance on risks and various aspects of governance. Who should provide the assurance and how much reliance can be placed on it? Is the Committee satisfied with the assurance that it receives or is there a need to develop a more comprehensive assurance framework?
 - **Where should the audit committee have influence?** – it was suggested that audit committees should give further thought to whether the committee is working effectively and whether it is able to support the improvement of the organisation in a number of different ways. This could involve a self assessment, consideration of the scope of the audit committee's role and reviewing the existing terms of reference. Does the Committee wish to give consideration to this issue, possibly through the use of a self assessment process?
 - **Keeping up to date with risk and governance issues** – the workshop highlighted a number of relatively recent key issues, including the implications of the Local Government Finance Act, Information Commission sanctions, and Fraud developments. The Committee may wish to give consideration to how it can best be made aware of the relevant issues?
 - **The Annual Governance Statement** – the Audit Committee receives an annual report on the AGS. However the AGS will be changing this year. How can the Committee get assurance on behalf of the Council in relation to the various elements of the Statement?
 - **Independent Audit Committee Member** – a number of Local Authority Audit Committees have sought to appoint an independent, non voting member to provide additional technical skills to the Committee, for example in terms of the annual approval of the Council's accounts. The Committee has already been given the ability to appoint one or more Co-opted Non-Voting Independent Members if it so wishes. (Minute No. 477/5/11 refers). Does the now wish to take action to recruit an Independent Member and if so, what skills are sought to enhance the effectiveness of the Committee.

3. Member's views in relation to the topics shown above and any other areas that may increase the influence and effectiveness the Audit Committee are sought. However, in doing so the Committee needs to consider the impacts on officer time of reporting back on these issues and may therefore wish to prioritise the areas of interest and spread any requirements for reports over the period of the Future Meetings Programme.

Recommendation

That the Committee agree which, if any, of the issues set out in the body of the report should be prioritised, scheduled and added to the Future Meetings Programme for reports or actions over the period of the programme.

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