

# Audit Committee self-assessment of good practice

This questionnaire provides a high-level review that incorporates the key principles set out in CIPFA's 2018 Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police. Where an audit committee has a high degree of performance against the good practice principles, this is an indicator that the committee is soundly based and has in place a knowledgeable membership. These are the essential factors in developing an effective audit committee.

A regular self-assessment can be used to support planning of the audit committee work programme, training plans and can also inform an annual report.

Please answer the questions to the best of your ability, adding any comments to explain your answer where relevant, or if you are unsure about your answer.

Once complete please return the questionnaire to Andrew Barnes (Head of Internal Audit) by email to: [andrewbarnes@southend.gov.uk](mailto:andrewbarnes@southend.gov.uk) by 30 April 2019.

Good practice questions	Yes	Partly	No	Comments
<b>Audit committee purpose and governance</b>				
1 Does the authority have a dedicated audit committee?				
2 Does the audit committee report directly to full council? (applicable to local government only)				
3 Do the terms of reference clearly set out the purpose of the committee in accordance with CIPFA's Position Statement?				
4 Is the role and purpose of the audit committee understood and accepted across the authority?				
5 Does the audit committee provide support to the authority in meeting the requirements of good governance?				
6 Are the arrangements to hold the committee to account for its performance operating satisfactorily?				

Good practice questions	Yes	Partly	No	Comments
<b>Functions of the committee</b>				
<p>7 Do the committee's terms of reference explicitly address all the core areas identified in CIPFA's Position Statement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good governance</li> <li>• assurance framework, including partnerships and collaboration arrangements</li> <li>• internal audit</li> <li>• external audit</li> <li>• financial reporting</li> <li>• risk management</li> <li>• value for money or best value</li> </ul>				
<p>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?</p>				
<p>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?</p>				
<p>10 Where coverage of core areas has been found to be limited, are plans in place to address this?</p>				
<p>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?</p>				

Good practice questions	Yes	Partly	No	Comments
<b>Membership and support</b>				
<p>12 Has an effective audit committee structure and composition of the committee been selected?</p> <p>This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• separation from the executive</li> <li>• an appropriate mix of knowledge and skills among the membership</li> <li>• a size of committee that is not unwieldy</li> <li>• consideration has been given to the inclusion of at least one independent member</li> </ul>				
<p>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?</p>				
<p>14 Does the chair of the committee have appropriate knowledge and skills?</p>				
<p>15 Are arrangements in place to support the committee with briefings and training?</p>				
<p>16 Has the membership of the committee been assessed against the core knowledge and skills framework and found to be satisfactory?</p>				
<p>17 Does the committee have good working relations with key people and organisations, including external audit, internal audit and the CFO?</p>				
<p>18 Is adequate secretariat and administrative support to the committee provided?</p>				

<b>Good practice questions</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Partly</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Effectiveness of the committee</b>				
19 Has the committee obtained feedback on its performance from those interacting with the committee or relying on its work?				
20 Are meetings effective with a good level of discussion and engagement from all the members?				
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?				
22 Does the committee make recommendations for the improvement of governance, risk and control and are these acted on?				
23 Has the committee evaluated whether and how it is adding value to the organisation?				
24 Does the committee have an action plan to improve any areas of weakness?				
25 Does the committee publish an annual report to account for its performance and explain its work?				