

Audit Committee Skills Stocktake 2019

For Audit Committee members and their substitutes

Why this is important

The CIPFA guidance for Audit Committees says that committees should identify the skills they need having regard to CIPFA's Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (2018) that sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for effective governance. This skills stocktake is a useful way of assessing the needs of the Audit Committee to inform appointment, succession planning and the training that Committee Members require.

Format and structure of the skills stocktake

This skills stocktake is based on the features of effective governance that are referred to CIPFA's guidance and additional skills and competences required that enable a positive contribution to the committee. It does not attempt to replicate all potential competencies that could be relevant.

The skills stocktake is based on the principle that Audit Committees are best placed themselves to individually assess which areas outlined in the framework are most important for them. Therefore it combines the core aspects of the guidance with the experience and feedback of senior members and officers to inform the skills, experiences and knowledge included.

The skills stocktake does not ask potential or serving committee members to rate their commitment to the Council, its ethos, vision and to improving the circumstances and welfare for all citizens and stakeholders. Nor does it ask them to evaluate their willingness to devote time and enthusiasm to the role. It is assumed that this has been established from the outset.

How to use it

Each area should be rated on a scale of 1-5, with 1 indicating no experience or knowledge in this area, and 5 indicating strong expertise.

The skills and knowledge sought are those that enable committee members and their substitutes to ask the right questions, analyse data and have focussed discussions, which create robust accountability for Council leaders.

No individual is going to have all the skills listed in the assessment. The Audit Committee is a team, and the purpose of the stocktake is to determine whether each skill below is covered by at least one of the Committee members around the table. Where this stocktake identifies that there are gaps in the skills and knowledge of the Committee as a team, we will be seeking to fill that gap through training and other support – so please answer honestly! The answers provided will be aggregated for the team and no individual responses will be shared.

Once you have completed the form please return to me at: andrewbarnes@southend.gov.uk

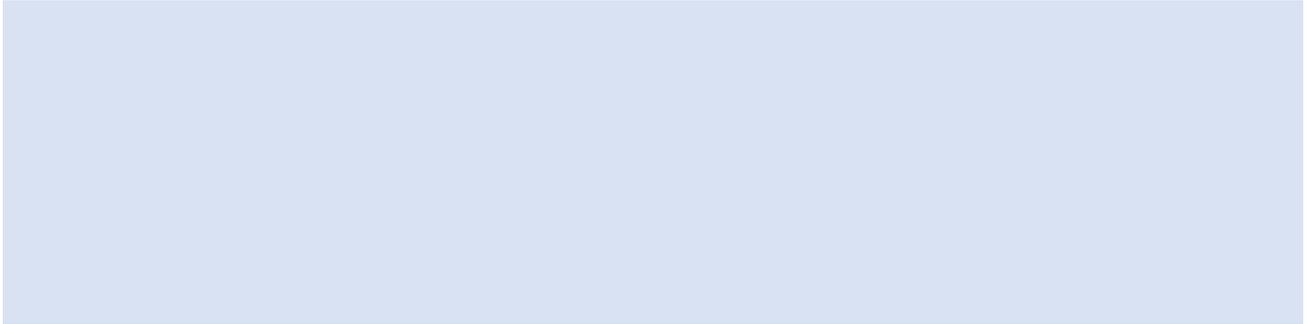
Audit Committee members Knowledge, experience, skills and behaviours	Level of knowledge or skills/behaviour, rate on scale of:				
	Low	→	→	→	High
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Organisational knowledge					
An overview of the governance structures of the Council and decision-making processes					
Knowledge of the Council's 2050 Ambition and 2023 Roadmap objectives					
Knowledge of the major functions of the Council					
2. Audit Committee roles and functions					
An understanding of the Audit Committee's role and place within the governance structures					
Knowledge of the purpose and role of the Audit Committee within the Council's constitution					
Familiarity with the Audit Committee's terms of reference and accountability arrangements					
3. Governance and values of good governance					
Knowledge of the seven principles of the CIPFA / Solace Framework and the requirements of the Annual Governance Statement					
Knowledge of the local code of governance					
Knowledge of the Seven Principles of Public Life					
Knowledge of the authority's key arrangements to uphold ethical standards for both members and staff					
Knowledge of the whistleblowing arrangements in the authority					
4. Internal Audit					
An awareness of the key principles of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the Local Government Application Note					
Knowledge of the arrangements for delivery of the internal audit service in the Council and how the role of the Head of Internal Audit is fulfilled					
5. Financial management and accounting					
Awareness of the financial statements that a local authority must produce and the principles it must follow to produce them					
Understanding of good financial management principles					
Knowledge of how the organisation meets the requirements of the role of the Chief Financial Officer, as required by The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (CIPFA, 2016)					
6. External Audit					
Knowledge of the role and functions of the external auditor and who currently undertakes this role					
Knowledge of the key reports and assurances that external audit will provide					
Knowledge about arrangements for the appointment of auditors and quality monitoring undertaken					

7. Risk Management					
Understanding of the principles of risk management, including linkage to good governance and decision making					
Knowledge of the risk management policy and strategy of the organisation					
Understanding of risk governance arrangements, including the role of members and of the audit committee					
8. Counter fraud					
An understanding of the main areas of fraud and corruption risk to which the Council is exposed					
Knowledge of the principles of good fraud risk management practice in accordance with the Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption (CIPFA, 2014)					
Knowledge of the organisation's arrangements for tackling fraud					
9. Treasury management					
Knowledge of treasury management regulatory requirements					
Knowledge of treasury management risks					
Knowledge of the organisation's treasury management strategy					
Knowledge of the organisation's policies and procedures in relation to treasury management					
10. Strategic Leadership					
Experience of being a Committee member / governor / trustee in another organisation or being a board member in another sector					
Experience of chairing a board / governing board or committee					
Awareness of the key aspects of national policy impacting on local government e.g. funding, responsibilities, functions					
Knowledge and or experience of the communities served by the Council that can be useful to the Audit Committee					
Experience of strategic planning and translating a vision into clear objectives					
Experience of engaging and working with stakeholders (e.g. residents, community groups, local business etc.)					
Experience and or involvement in change management activities e.g. planning a re-structure or reorganisation					

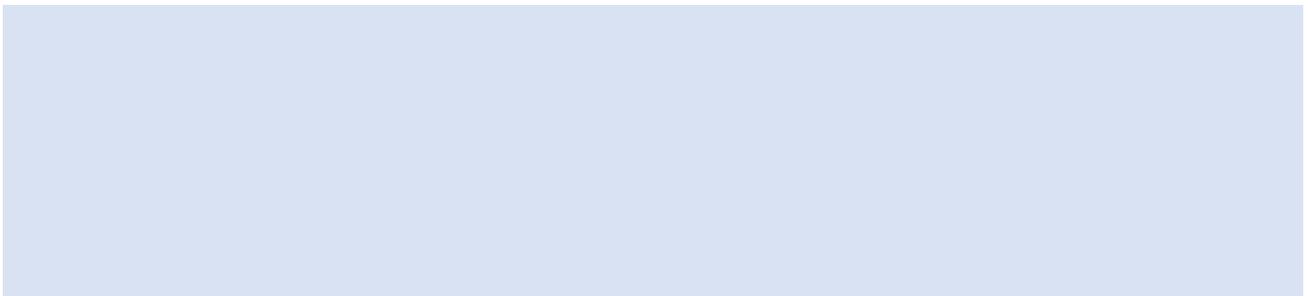
11. Accountability					
Experience of working with leaders to establish expectations for improvement, outcomes and of how progress is to be reported					
Ability to interpret data and statistics presented in a range of formats relating to the progress and outcomes achieved and using it to identify strengths, weaknesses and areas for development					
Ability and confidence to ask questions and challenge leaders in an appropriate way on matters relating to the outcomes, behaviour, welfare and wellbeing of residents and staff					
General experience of financial planning, monitoring, decision making, compliance and control					
Experience of financial planning, monitoring, decision making, compliance and control within the local government sector					
General experience of human resource (HR) policy and processes outside of the local government sector					
Experience of human resource (HR) policy and processes within the local government sector					
General experience of preparing for and responding to inspection and oversight					
Experience of inspection and oversight within the local government sector					
12. People					
Ability to listen, reflect and learn from a range of viewpoints and consider impartial advice before reaching your own view					
Capable of working alongside and of building strong, collaborative relationships with a range of personalities					
The skills, tact and diplomacy required when discussing issues that are of a sensitive nature and are used to bring people together in adversarial situations					
13. Structures					
Clear and practical understanding of what the strategic role of a Councillor is and how it is different from the management responsibilities that are carried out by the Chief Executive and senior officers in the Council					
Experience of reviewing governance structures					
14. Compliance					
Experience of complying with legal, regulatory and financial frameworks and statutory guidance					
Working knowledge of the legal duties and responsibilities of a Councillor					
Understand the importance of adhering to organisation policies e.g. on complaints or staff-discipline issues					
15. Evaluation					
Have experienced the process of evaluating the working practices of a team and of applying the learning to make improvements					
16. Positive contribution					
Aware of my strengths, weaknesses and am committed to personal development					
Able to work as part of a team and build positive working relationships with different personality types					
Honest, transparent and act with integrity					
The ability and confidence to speak up when I have concerns e.g. about non-compliance					

Do you have any other specialist knowledge that adds value to the Audit Committee?

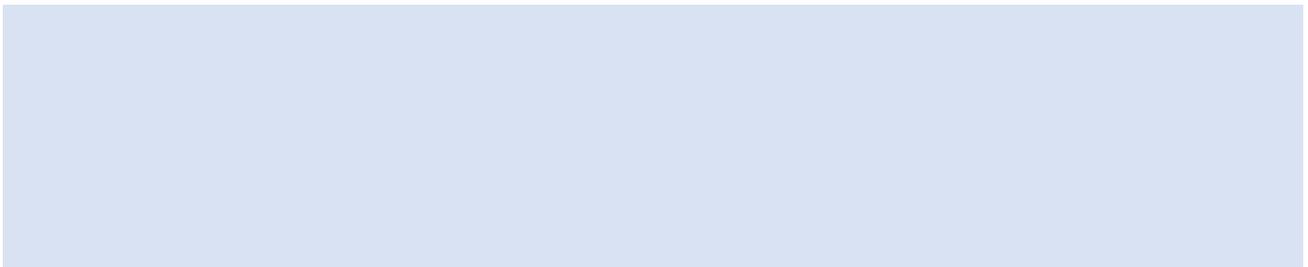
Eg. Professional qualification and / or experience in accountancy, audit, risk management, legal services, IT systems, project management, managing a service etc.



Please give brief details of courses you have undertaken in the past year - include Councillor / governor / trustee training, work based training / development and / or any other development / training activities.



Are there any additional areas of the Audit Committee's responsibilities to which you would like to contribute in the future?



Existing Audit Committee members only

What contribution do you feel you have made to the Audit Committee over the past year?

