
PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR AUDIT COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS 2024/25

Report by the Chief Officer Audit & Risk

AUDIT COMMITTEE

20 May 2024

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Audit Committee with the proposed schedule for Audit Committee Development Sessions 2024/25. These are designed to enhance the members' core knowledge and skills to enable the Committee to fulfil its remit effectively.**
- 1.2 It is important that the Audit Committee, as a foundation for sound corporate governance, is able to demonstrate its effectiveness as a scrutiny body to the Council.
- 1.3 This report outlines the proposed schedule for Audit Committee Development Sessions 2024/25. These are designed to enhance the Members' core knowledge and skills to enable the Committee to fulfil its remit effectively.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Audit Committee:

- a) Approves the schedule for Development Sessions 2024/25 for the Members, that is set out in paragraph 4.1; and**
- b) Notes that feedback on the development sessions will be obtained to re-assess the Members' core knowledge and skills and to evaluate the effectiveness of the Audit Committee annually.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 It is important that the Audit Committee, as a foundation for sound corporate governance, is able to demonstrate its effectiveness as a scrutiny body to the Council.
- 3.2 All members of the Audit Committee have carried out a self-assessment during 2022 of their individual core knowledge and skills relating to the Council, Audit Committee, Governance and Audit using the Audit Committee Members' Knowledge and Skills Framework within the CIPFA Audit Committees Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police 2022 Edition (CIPFA Audit Committees Guidance).
- 3.3 In March each year the members of the Audit Committee undertake an annual evaluation of compliance with good practice and of the effectiveness of the Committee, using the checklist and toolkit respectively from the CIPFA Audit Committees Guidance.
- 3.4 The proposed schedule of topics for Development Sessions during 2023/24 was approved by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 10 May 2023.
- 3.5 In accordance with the approved schedule, the following topics have been delivered remotely using MS Teams within Audit Committee Development Sessions (or presentation within formal meeting*) during 2023/24:
 - 'Statutory Accounts 2022/23' including accounts format and content by Director of Finance & Procurement (27 June 2023*).
 - 'Role of External Audit in the Public Sector' by External Auditors, Audit Scotland (29 August 2023).
 - 'Overview of Role of Internal Audit specific to local government in Scotland' by Chief Officer Audit & Risk (30 October 2023).
 - 'Capital Strategy and Treasury Management' (with a focus on Debt Management) by Link Group, Scottish Borders Council's treasury advisors (6 November 2023).
 - 'Overview of the Council's Procurement framework' to outline control environment and arrangements for value for money by Procurement Business Partner (5 February 2024).
- 3.6 At the Audit Committee annual self-evaluation session on 5 March 2024 the Committee members reflected on the above learning and development sessions, as well as the cycle of business considered during the year 2023/24, to re-assess their individual core knowledge and skills and to evaluate the effectiveness of the Audit Committee as a whole. During the self-evaluation, the Committee members suggested a number of topics for their learning and development including some as a refresh, in recognition of the ongoing requirement to develop their core knowledge and skills as an Audit Committee member.

4 AUDIT COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS 2024/25

- 4.1 The individual core knowledge and skills self-assessments by Audit Committee members during 2022, and their re-assessment and their suggested topics for their learning and development identified during the Audit Committee annual self-evaluation on 5 March 2024 have been used to inform the content of the Development Sessions for 2024/25.
- 4.2 The proposed schedule for Audit Committee Development Sessions during 2024/25, set out below, is designed to enhance Members' core knowledge and skills to enable the Audit Committee to fulfil its remit effectively:

Proposed Date	Proposed Topic
13 June 2024	High level technical update to outline the difference between IFRS 16 and UK GAAP (Link Group).
25 June 2024	Financial management and accounting principles and practice, including accounts format and content (Director of Finance).
17 September 2024	Refresh on External Audit role and to gain understanding of the best value area of focus (Audit Scotland).
22 October 2024	Refresh on role of Internal Audit and process with a corporate audit example (Chief Officer Audit & Risk).
14 November 2024	Refresh on Capital Strategy and Treasury Management (Link Group, SBC's treasury advisors).
03 December 2024	Role of Capital Programme Management Office (Director of Infrastructure & Environment).
06 February 2025	Ethical standards in public life – relevant to Audit Committee remit (Monitoring Officer)
05 March 2025	Annual self-evaluation of Audit Committee (Chief Officer Audit & Risk).

- 4.3 As previously agreed by the Audit Committee, the Development Sessions will be scheduled separate from the formal meetings to enable dedicated time for Members' development though in alignment with the Audit Cycle to ensure their relevance and timeliness. The Audit Committee Development Sessions will continue to be delivered using a virtual platform MS Teams, and invites will be extended to all elected members for relevant topics.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

There is a risk that the Audit Committee does not fulfil its remit. This will be mitigated by carrying out self-assessments on core knowledge and skills and putting in place development sessions to enhance core knowledge and skills on specific topics relevant to the remit of the Audit Committee.

5.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment**

This is a routine good governance report for assurance purposes, not a new or revised policy or strategy for decision and, as a result, completion of an integrated impact assessment is not an applicable consideration.

5.4 **Sustainable Development Goals**

The recommendations in this report will not directly impact any of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

5.5 **Climate Change**

This report does not relate to any proposal, plan or project and as a result the checklist on Climate Change is not an applicable consideration. The Audit Committee Development Sessions will continue to be delivered using a virtual platform MS Teams during 2024/25 to minimise the need for business travel and reduce potential climate impact.

5.6 **Rural Proofing**

This report does not relate to new or amended policy or strategy and as a result rural proofing is not an applicable consideration.

5.7 **Data Protection Impact Statement**

There are no personal data implications arising from content of this report.

5.8 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

No changes are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the content in this report.

6 **CONSULTATION**

6.1 The members of the Audit Committee were engaged in the core knowledge and skills self-assessment process during 2022 and the annual self-evaluation of the Audit Committee as a whole on 5 March 2024.

6.2 The Council Management Team has been consulted on this report on 8 May 2024 to acknowledge its content and proposals therein.

6.3 The Director of Finance, Director of Corporate Governance (and Monitoring Officer), Director of People Performance and Change, and Communications team have been consulted on this report as required practice.

Approved by
Jill Stacey, Chief Officer Audit & Risk

Author(s)

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Background Papers: CIPFA Audit Committees Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police 2022 Edition

Previous Minute Reference: Audit Committee 10 May 2023

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