

Audit, Standards & Governance Committee

15th October 2026

Report: Audit, Standards and Governance Committee Self Assessment

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Simon Nock
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Assistant Director		Debra Goodall
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Wards Affected		ALL
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		No
Relevant Council Priority		
Key Decision: NO – Information only		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee is asked to:

- 1.1. Agree that all members and co-opted members of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee undertake the knowledge and skills self-assessment attached at Appendix 1, in accordance with the timetable set out in this report
- 1.2. Note that the collective results will be used to identify the Committee's priority development needs and inform a proposed training and development plan, to be reported to the next meeting of the Committee in January 2027.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's guidance, Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police, recommends that audit committee members possess an appropriate collective balance of knowledge and skills. The guidance identifies core knowledge across governance, risk management, internal control, financial management and reporting, value for money, counter-fraud, assurance, internal audit, external audit and, where applicable, treasury

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management. It also identifies the practical skills needed to provide effective, objective and constructive challenge

- 2.2. CIPFA recommends that an analysis of members' training needs is undertaken to identify priority areas for training and support. It recognises that some areas within an audit committee's remit are technical and complex and will require regular attention to maintain the Committee's effectiveness.
- 2.3. The Committee's proposed Procedure Rules similarly require the Committee periodically to assess the collective knowledge, skills and training needs of its members and to agree an appropriate programme of development and support.
- 2.4. The self-assessment at Appendix 1 has therefore been aligned with the CIPFA knowledge and skills framework while also reflecting the Committee's local responsibilities and the principal issues affecting the Council from an audit perspective.

Completion of the Assessment

- 2.5. All members and co-opted members of the Committee will be asked to complete the assessment individually. It is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. The purpose is to establish the Committee's collective strengths and identify areas in which further training, briefing or other support would be beneficial.
- 2.6. For each area, members should assess their current level of confidence based on their ability to:
 - understand the reports and information presented to the Committee
 - participate effectively in the Committee's discussions
 - ask relevant and constructive questions
 - challenge officers and auditors appropriately
 - contribute to the Committee's conclusions and recommendations
- 2.7. Members should select the response that most accurately reflects their present level of confidence and indicate whether training or further support is required. Where members identify additional topics or particular development needs, these should be recorded in the free-text section provided.

Timetable

Stage	Date
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Self-assessment presented to the Committee	Audit, Standards and Governance Committee 15 October 2026
Link to self-assessments sent out to Members	16 October 2026
Completed self-assessments returned by Members, providing four weeks for completion	16 November 2026
Responses collated and collective knowledge and training needs assessed	November to December 2026
Priority training needs and proposed training and development plan reported to the Committee	Audit, Standards and Governance Committee 14 January 2027
Training and development programme implemented	During 2027, in accordance with the agreed plan

Use of the Results

- 2.8. The completed assessments will be collated to provide an overall view of the Committee's collective knowledge, confidence and development needs. The assessment will help identify:
- areas in which members already demonstrate a strong collective level of knowledge and confidence
 - subjects where further briefing or refresher training would be beneficial
 - technical or specialist matters requiring more detailed development
 - differences in the support required by new and more experienced Committee members
 - priorities for the Committee's future training and development programme
- 2.9. The results will inform a proportionate training plan, which may include formal training sessions, shorter briefings linked to the Committee's work programme, written guidance, officer or auditor updates, and access to relevant external development opportunities.

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- 2.10. A summary of the collective results and the proposed training and development plan will be presented to the Committee in January 2027. Individual responses will not be reported.

Importance of the Assessment

- 2.11. The Committee has a broad and increasingly technical remit. Members must be able to understand the assurances presented, recognise significant gaps or weaknesses, focus on matters of risk and materiality, and provide constructive and evidence-based challenge.
- 2.12. A structured assessment will help ensure that training is targeted at identified needs rather than provided on an ad hoc basis. It will also support the Committee in demonstrating that it has the collective knowledge and skills required to discharge its responsibilities effectively and to contribute to continuous improvement in the Council's governance, risk management, internal control and assurance arrangements.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the completion and analysis of this self-assessment.
- 3.2. If the assessment identifies a need for specialist or externally provided training, a budget requirement may arise. Any such requirement will be identified through the proposed training and development plan and considered through the Council's normal financial approval arrangements.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from the self-assessment

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

- 5.1. There are no direct implications arising from Local Government Reorganisation.

Relevant Council Priority

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- 5.2. At a time of continuing financial pressures, increasing regulatory expectations and significant organisational change across local government, it is important that the Committee maintains the knowledge and skills necessary to discharge its responsibilities effectively. A well-informed and confident Audit, Standards and Governance Committee strengthens assurance over governance, risk, financial resilience, audit and internal control arrangements, helping to ensure the Council is well placed to deliver its priorities, respond to emerging challenges and demonstrate accountability to residents, members and other stakeholders

Climate Change Implications

- 5.3. There are no direct climate change implications arising from the proposed amendments.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.4. No adverse equalities or diversity implications have been identified.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1. The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee plays a key role within the Council's overall risk management framework. The proposed self-assessment and training approach will strengthen the Committee's oversight of:
- Corporate governance arrangements;
 - Risk management arrangements;
 - Internal control effectiveness;
 - Financial management;
 - Counter-fraud and whistleblowing arrangements;
 - Internal and external audit;
 - Annual Governance Statement processes; and
 - Management responses to significant audit findings and recommendations.

7. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1. Appendix 1 – Audit Committee Knowledge and Skills Self Assessment.