

Appendix 3a – Audit Recommendation Status Summary October 2022

Grant Thornton Recommendation for Audit	Summary
<p>Key Recommendation 7: Members in key statutory roles, in particular in relation to Cabinet, scrutiny, standards and audit, need to be provided with effective development training and support. The Member Development Programme should be reviewed to ensure corporate governance forms part of the training for members with governance roles</p>	<p>Within the organisational culture theme of the Improvement Plan, the workstream on Member Learning and Development incorporates the Member Development Programme (MDP) which is addressing training needs for Members.</p> <p>A revised MDP was agreed at the start of the Municipal Year and is kept under regular review by the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee.</p> <p>As part of the corporate governance offer for all Members that commenced in Autumn 2022, the following sessions have been offered to all Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An introduction to Local Government Finance - to sessions were conducted in June 2022. The main focus of these sessions were to give Members greater awareness and understanding of the basics of local government finance and develop better knowledge of the financial implications of forthcoming changes by the government. An introduction session was aimed at new Members of the Council, and another session was aimed at all Members as a refresher. • An introduction to Internal Audit, Counter Fraud and Risk Management -June 2022. 40% of Councillors attended. This training covered a background to internal audit and internal control; what internal audit is and is not; a brief guide to the role of an Audit Committee; fraud prevention and detection within the local authority sector and the legal framework it operates within; an update on money laundering and housing related fraud; existing and emerging fraud risks; and risk management – key risk the Council faces.

- Sessions on Effective Member and Officer Relationships took place in September 2022. Two sessions were conducted and a turnout of 76% Members attended. This was delivered by the LGA.

All Members have been invited to training around the Corporate Governance Framework in November 2022. This session will be delivered by CIPFA. It includes exploring the standards of governance that are expected of the Council and the principles in practice and will explain the purpose of key elements, including the local code and the annual governance statements. It will also identify the key points Members should look out for.

Specific training for ARAC Members is planned on the following areas:

- The role of External Audit
- The annual statement of accounts
- Audit committees – January & February 2023

ARAC Members also receive a copy of the regular CIPFA Updates produced for audit committee members in the public sector.

Elected Members have Personal Development Plans in place identifying individual learning needs. Officers have created a key skills checklist for any aspiring members wishing to become a member of ARAC, as well as current Independent Members, and, following the publication of updated CIPFA guidance for audit committees, will be incorporating CIPFA's Knowledge and Skills framework to measure members knowledge and skills against what is required

ARAC Members' learning needs remain under review by the Chair of ARAC together with supporting Officers. In addition, the regular survey to Audit and Scrutiny Members includes

	<p>questions around Learning and Development received and any new needs arising to help ensure that the Member Development Programme is flexible to meet emerging needs.</p>
<p>Improvement Recommendation 12: Officer and Member Relationships – There is a need to ensure that members of scrutiny and audit committees are aware of their governance roles including how to interrogate reports and the right questions</p>	<p>As above.</p> <p>Informal feedback in relation to ARAC indicates that the committee is working more effectively and that Members are interrogating reports well and asking appropriate questions.</p> <p>The Chair has also recently introduced pre meetings for all members of A&RAC to ensure that key lines of questioning are discussed in advance of the committee meeting.</p> <p>Views from the follow-up reviews conducted by Grant Thornton and the LGA in Autumn 2022 will provide an external perspective on the effectiveness of A&RAC. The regular survey of Officers and Members attending A&RAC will continue to provide insight into the Committee’s development.</p>
<p>Improvement Recommendation I4: Officer and Member Relationships – the forward plan of the Cabinet should be shared with the Audit Committee and Scrutiny Board to help structure their agenda planning .</p>	<p>The forward plan is shared with Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at every meeting to assist with the Committee’s work planning.</p>

<p>Improvement Recommendation I34: Audit Committee – now that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee has agreed the action to bring this long-standing matter to resolution [review into the Wragge Report], it will be important that – as the Audit and Governance Panel recognised – the Council manages its position so that the matter does not resurface, so that it can move on and focus on its corporate objectives</p>	<p>ARAC agreed their work programme at the start of the Municipal Year and this is refreshed and reviewed regularly. The issue referred to has been resolved so is not required to feature in the work programme.</p> <p>Regular agenda planning meetings are in place between the Chair of ARAC and Officers which serve as a point to discuss the approach to any emerging or historic issues should they arise.</p>
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