

Areas where the Audit Committee can add value by supporting improvement	Examples of how the audit committee can add value and provide evidence of effectiveness	Self-evaluation, examples, areas of strength and weakness	Overall assessment 5-1 See key below
1. Promoting the principles of good governance and their application to decision making	Supporting the development of a local code of governance. Providing robust review of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and the assurances underpinning it. Working with key members/governors to improve their understanding of the AGS and their contribution to it. Supporting reviews/audits of governance arrangements. Participating in self-assessments of governance arrangements. Working with partner audit committees to review governance arrangements in partnerships.	Committee scrutinised Local Code of Corporate Governance, and recommended it for Council approval in March 2021, and scrutinised AGS within Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21. Pre-Meet with independent Chair prior to each Committee meeting to provide wider context. Committee supports the role of audit in improving internal control and governance. Committee considers national reports and self-assessment toolkits. Reliance on previous years' informal liaison with other Audit Committees e.g. MIJB.	5 (2020/21 4)
2. Contributing to the development of an effective control environment.	Actively monitoring the implementation of recommendations from auditors. Encouraging ownership of the internal control framework by appropriate managers. Raising significant concerns over controls with appropriate senior managers.	Committee received periodic progress reports from Auditors e.g. follow-up activity. Directors attended Committee meetings to discuss progress with Audit actions. Action Log used to monitor completion of Committee recommendations.	5 (2020/21 4)
3. Supporting the establishment of arrangements for the governance of risk and for effective arrangements to manage risks.	Reviewing risk management arrangements and their effectiveness, e.g. risk management benchmarking. Monitoring improvements. Holding risk owners to account for major/strategic risks.	The report requested in June 2020 on the review and scrutiny of the Risk Management Policy and Strategy is still awaited (twice delayed from original December 2020 target) and monitored on the Action Log; to enable Audit Committee oversight of Risk Management Framework. Committee received quarterly reports from Chief Officer Place on strategic risks and mitigations, with Directors in attendance.	4 (2020/21 3)

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4. Advising on the adequacy of the assurance framework and considering whether assurance is deployed efficiently and effectively.	Specifying its assurance needs, identifying gaps or overlaps in assurance. Seeking to streamline assurance gathering and reporting. Reviewing the effectiveness of assurance providers, e.g. internal audit, risk management, external audit.	Annual Strategies and Plans and periodic progress Reports received from Auditors which outline Governance and Assurance Framework, in alignment with Audit Cycle. Regular assurance reports provided on internal control, governance & risk management.	4 (2020/21 4)
5. Supporting the quality of the internal audit activity, particularly by underpinning its organisational independence.	Reviewing the audit charter and functional reporting arrangements. Assessing the effectiveness of internal audit arrangements, providing constructive challenge and supporting improvements. Actively supporting the quality assurance and improvement programme (QAIP) of internal audit.	Committee considered and approved the Internal Audit Charter. Committee considered and approved the Internal Audit Strategy and Plan, and regular Internal Audit reports with recommendations. Committee received Internal Audit QAIP and PSIAS conformance within mid-term performance and annual assurance reports.	5 (2020/21 4)
6. Aiding the achievement of the authority's goals and objectives through helping to ensure appropriate governance, risk, control and assurance arrangements	Reviewing how the governance arrangements support the achievement of sustainable outcomes. Reviewing major projects and programmes to ensure that governance and assurance arrangements are in place. Reviewing the effectiveness of performance management arrangements.	Auditors provided assurance reports on governance arrangements for transformation, and financial sustainability. Reliance on other Committees fulfilling their remits (Business Transformation Steering Group; Performance, Review and Scrutiny); knowledge from members appointed on those Committees used to evaluate their effectiveness.	4 (2020/21 4)
7. Supporting the development of robust arrangements for ensuring value for money.	Ensuring that assurance on value for money arrangements is included in the assurances received by the audit committee. Considering how performance in value for money is evaluated in Annual Governance Statement (AGS).	Auditors provided assurance on value for money arrangements e.g. transformation, sustainability, and performance management. AGS sets out the Governance Framework including arrangements for best value.	4 (2020/21 4)

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8. Helping the authority to implement the values of good governance, including effective arrangements for countering fraud and corruption risks.	<p>Reviewing arrangements against the standards set out in the Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption (CIPFA, 2014).</p> <p>Reviewing fraud risks and the effectiveness of the organisation's strategy to address those risks.</p> <p>Assessing the effectiveness of ethical governance arrangements for both staff and governors.</p>	<p>Committee received Counter Fraud Annual Report associated with refreshed Counter Fraud Policy and Strategy approved in 2020.</p> <p>Committee has requested self-assessment of fraud risks and counter fraud controls associated with national reports, and received assurance reports from Integrity Group.</p>	5 (2020/21 4)
9. Promoting effective public reporting to the authority's stakeholders and local community and measures to improve transparency and accountability.	<p>Improving how the authority discharges its responsibilities for public reporting; for example, better targeting at the audience, plain English.</p> <p>Reviewing whether decision making through partnership organisations remains transparent and publicly accessible and encourages greater transparency.</p> <p>Publishing an annual report from the committee.</p>	<p>Committee scrutinised Annual Report and Accounts 2020/21 including the enhanced Management Commentary for stakeholders.</p> <p>Reliance on health and social care governance arrangements (Integration Joint Board; IJB Audit and Risk Committee).</p> <p>Audit Committee Annual Report presented to Council in public.</p>	4 (2020/21 3)

Assessment key	
5	Clear evidence is available from a number of sources that the committee is actively supporting improvements across all aspects of this area. The improvements made are clearly identifiable.
4	Clear evidence from some sources that the committee is actively and effectively supporting improvement across some aspects of this area.
3	The committee has had mixed experience in supporting improvement in this area. There is some evidence that demonstrates their impact but there are also significant gaps.
2	There is some evidence that the committee has supported improvements, but the impact of this support is limited.
1	No evidence can be found that the audit committee has supported improvements in this area.