

Effectiveness Review - Annual Progress Update

Action plan from the Audit Governance and Standards Committee.

No.	Action	Progress Update	Status
1	Introduce a pre-meeting session immediately prior to the start of the AG&S Committee to take the form of a briefing session and a pre-meeting	Meetings now start at 10.30, with a pre-meet and briefing session at 9.30am Members have received briefings on matters such as Financial Statements and Risk Management.	Complete
2	Review the work programme for the committee and plan when reports are due to be presented to avoid 'heavy' agendas. Consider increasing the frequency of AG&S committees to spread the workload and reduce the size of the agenda packs.	Committee review the work plan at every meeting and additional meetings are added where necessary.	Complete
3	Ask officers to try to reduce the size of the agenda packs if possible – consider receiving executive summary reports instead of more detailed reports	Contributing Officers now work to reduce the length of documents and covering reports contain summaries of the main issues.	Complete
4	Undertake an annual skills and knowledge self-assessment to determine where skills and knowledge need to be enhanced on an annual basis	Due to the impending election it is proposed that this would add more value if carried out after the election to account for the training needs of any new committee members.	In Progress

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5	Look to co-opt at least one independent member to the AG&S committee to provide expertise and steer the members to ask the challenging questions	Independent member now appointed.	Complete
6	Produce a standalone annual report on the work of the AG&S committee for full council	The first such report was presented to full council in December 2020.	Complete
7	Increase the AG&S committee's visibility with officers and members by include a presence on the Essex CC intranet.	Page now live on intranet: https://intranet.essex.gov.uk/Pages/Audit_governance_and_standards_committee.aspx	Complete
8	AGS committee are considering requiring Directors or Heads of Service to attend the committee to do a joint presentation for all internal audit reports that have a limited or no assurance opinion. They want to get the service's view on the root cause of the issues identified in the audit, what action they are taking to remedy the situation, and how can the AGS committee help them	This now happens on a regular basis. Committee have received presentations from Tech Services, Finance and ASC in recent meetings.	Complete
9	AGS are considering using working groups (similar to those used at Basildon) to do in-depth look at issues outside of the committee, and report	Committee received a report on this in September 2020 and are moving forward with an issue of interest.	Complete

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	back to the committee on what they found		
10	The Committee have visibility of full strategic risk register at least once a year	Committee reviewed the Strategic Risk Register in September alongside a briefing session on the ECC approach to Risk Management This will be repeated annually.	Complete
11	The Committee to undertake an annual review of its effectiveness and to consider how best to do it.	Committee completed a full review of its effectiveness with support and guidance from CIPFA in March 2020. A review of progress and consideration of effectiveness will be undertaken annually.	Complete
12	Changes to the audit and counterfraud plan to be referred to committee in future for approval rather than for information as at present.	Changes in the plan are now approved by the Committee when considering the progress report.	Complete
	Training and Knowledge Enhancements		
	AGS committee identified areas where they were keen to have more training and briefing sessions. Topics requested initially by members detailed below.		
13	Briefing on corporate risk register and risk maturity to be provided.		Complete
14	Training session on understanding the financial statements, what they should be looking for, and what sort of questions they should be asking, prior to receiving the financial statements in		Complete

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	June.		
15	Briefing session on CIPFA/ALARM risk management benchmarking club	Not actioned as no relevant benchmarking undertaken in 2020	On hold - pending activity to report
16	Briefing on contract risks.	This was covered in Strategic Risk Session.	Complete
17	Briefing on about Investment Risks faced by ECC.	Session to take place March 2021	Complete