

Audit Committee – 7 December 2010

Audit Committee Training Needs Assessment & Plan

Summary of report:

To provide Audit Committee with their training needs assessment and plan. This has arisen as a result of an action within Grant Thornton's report entitled 'Review of Audit Committee effectiveness at Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council', the action plan of which was agreed at 25 October 2010 meeting.

Background papers:

Grant Thornton's report entitled 'Review of Audit Committee effectiveness at Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council'.

The Roles and Responsibilities of the Audit Committee as approved at 14 June 2010 Audit Committee.

Recommendations:

1. To agree and approve the training needs assessment and plan.



James Walsh – Assistant Director Finance

25 November 2010

Background

Grant Thornton agreed with Walsall Council that they would undertake a review of the effectiveness of the council's Audit Committee as part of their annual external audit for 2009/10. The report, which was considered at Audit Committee of 28 September 2010, recommended that the council should:

'Identify any training needs required by the Audit Committee, focusing on skills directly required to conduct the role and supporting this with knowledge gathering by other means such as briefings by specialists in particular areas where the need arises, for example European Grant Funding'.

It was agreed at 25 October 2010 Committee that the head of internal audit and head of corporate finance would undertake a training needs assessment and present this to the next meeting of the Audit Committee for approval. The suggested format of training was '20 minute bite size sessions' which could be delivered prior to the commencement of

each Audit Committee meeting on a topic relevant to that agenda. The relevant extract from the action plan is detailed at **Appendix 1**.

This report details the training needs assessment and training plan for members' agreement and approval.

Training Needs Assessment & Plan

A key requirement of an effective Audit Committee is a well informed membership who has some knowledge and experience of the key areas to be considered by the Committee. Appropriate and timely training for members is an important way of ensuring members are well prepared and gain the knowledge and experience needed to carry out their role effectively.

In line with best practice, a training needs assessment and plan has been undertaken based on needs identified either via the remit of the committee itself or via the revised Audit Committee work programme and timetable 2010/11. The training needs assessment and plan is detailed at **Appendix 2** for agreement and approval.

As members have expressed a preference for 20 minute sessions to be held prior to the start of each Audit Committee, it is proposed that two subjects are covered each session comprising of 10 minute presentations each. Suggested timings are included in the plan to ensure the training on a relevant subject is undertaken in advance of the item appearing on the agenda.

As there are a number of areas to cover and only 3 sessions of Audit Committee remaining, some items are marked in the plan as 'included in presentation'. For these items a brief summary of the subject will be presented by officers as part of their agenda item. Training items such as IFRS and treasury management have already been delivered.

While a training plan is approved, this will not prevent any additional items being added during the year if these are felt to be of value.

It is envisaged that the training will be delivered from a variety of in-house resources along with colleagues from the Grant Thornton.

Resource and legal considerations:

None directly related to this report.

Performance and risk management issues:

Suitably trained Members serving on Audit Committees will bring specialist knowledge and insight to the workings and deliberations of the Committee which will ultimately enhance the performance of the Committee.

Equality Implications:

None directly arising.

Consultation:

Consultation has taken place with officers involved in presenting agenda items to Audit Committee.

Authors:

Rebecca Neill

Head of Internal Audit

☎ 01922 652831

✉ neillr@walsall.gov.uk

Vicky Buckley

Head of Corporate Finance

☎ 01922 652349

✉ buckleyv@walsall.gov.uk

Extract from the Approved Action Plan
Review of Audit Committee Effectiveness at Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Ref	Recommendation	Priority	Council Comment	Responsibility	Timescale
Skills and Knowledge of the Audit Committee					
R4	Identify any training needs required by the Audit Committee, focusing on skills directly required to conduct the role and supporting this with knowledge gathering by other means such as briefings by specialists in particular areas where the need arises, for example European Grant Funding.	H	<p>A training needs assessment will be undertaken and presented to the next meeting of the Audit Committee for approval.</p> <p>The suggested format of which will be '20 minute bite size sessions' which will be delivered prior to the commencement of each Audit Committee meeting on a topic relevant to that agenda.</p>	Head of Internal Audit & Head of Corporate Finance	7 December 2010

Audit Committee Draft Training Needs Assessment & Plan 2010/11

Training Need Assessment:	Source of Need:	18 January 2011	28 February 2011	12 April 2011	Provided by
Anti Fraud & Corruption	Remit*	*** included in presentation			
Risk Management & Insurance	Remit*	✓			Corporate Risk & Insurance Manager
Governance: Including Annual Governance Statement	Remit*			✓	Head of Corporate Finance / Head of Internal Audit
Role of Internal Audit	Remit*		✓		Head of Internal Audit
Role of External Audit	Remit*			✓	Grant Thornton
Financial Statements & Financial Performance	Remit*		✓		Head of Corporate Finance Assistant Director - Finance
Statutory Responsibilities & Functions Delegated to Officers	Remit*	*** included in presentation			
Financial Regulations and Contract Rules	Remit*	✓			Head of Corporate Finance / Audit Manager
Partnership arrangements	Work Programme**	*** included in presentation			
Working smarter	Work Programme**	*** included in presentation			
RIPA	Work Programme**	*** included in presentation			
IFRS	Work Programme**	*** included in presentation		*** included in presentation	
Scrutiny	Work Programme**		*** included in presentation		
Health & Safety	Work Programme**		*** included in presentation		
Effectiveness of Audit Committee	Work			*** included in	

Training Need Assessment:	Source of Need:	18 January 2011	28 February 2011	12 April 2011	Provided by
	Programme**			presentation	

*remit refers to the remit of audit committee

** work programme refers to audit committee work programme and timetable 2010/11

** presentation - training on these points will be undertaken as part of officers presentation of reports on these areas already included within the audit committee work programme and timetable 2010/11