

PROPOSED AUDIT COMMITTEE TRAINING WORKSHOP

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REASON FOR ITEM

The paper proposes a way forward to meet the requests of the new members of the committee for appropriate training.

OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE

Comment on the paper and propose solutions to the options suggested.
Request that Democratic Services Manager organise training for the committee and include the programme and any costs in the members training schedule.

INFORMATION

1. Background
2. The audit committee has been in operation since March 2007, during which time the membership remained largely constant. However two members have recently been replaced and will require training.
3. The Chairman has table a paper outlining suggested ways of addressing this need. This is attached.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee
CIPFA Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities
CIPFA Toolkit for Local Authority Audit Committees

AUDIT COMMITTEE WORKSHOP

Background

The London Borough of Hillingdon's Audit Committee held its first meeting in March 2007: thus it has been in existence for just over two years. It now seems appropriate to stand back and review progress. In addition, Mary O'Connor and Tony Egington have been appointed recently, and a review would help to bring them up to speed and partly address any training needs that they have.

What format shall we use?

It is proposed that this review is carried out by means of a training workshop. Committee members did receive 2 hours of initial training in December 2007 from Chris Harris of Bentley Jennison, and a workshop format will enable us to share on our own accumulated experience, as well as help us to form better as a group.

Do we need an external facilitator?

I suggest we don't, apart from inviting Linda Everhard from Southend on Sea District Council to participate. Linda has been conducting a peer review of Internal Audit. We have between us a considerable amount of experience, and we also have guidance from CIPFA and other organisations. As much as anything, we need to share this experience and build on it.

Do we want to extend the invitation to other councillors or officers?

Again, I suggest we don't, although Helen Taylor should be included and possibly Khalid Ahmed. This is not a training session where we sit back and listen to presentations, but more a focused workshop where we want to share views. During the workshop we may identify specific topics where we do require more in-depth training, and we can agree how these should be addressed.

What will the workshop do?

Suggested format is:

Consider the purpose of an audit committee, drawing on the guidance from CIPFA and others

Where are we now? i.e. how far are we fulfilling this role

Comparison with the Committee's terms of reference

Comparison with other local authorities, and with the wider world (PLCs, NHS etc.)

Discussion about where we want to take Audit Committee, and how fast

Agreement about our desired future direction, and what has to happen next

When will the workshop be held?

As soon as we find a date when we all can attend. This may not be easy as we go into the holiday season: however, it is important that we all can attend.

Conclusion

This paper is for discussion at Audit Committee, and members are requested to consider each of the above questions.

John Morley, Chairman of Audit Committee, June 2009