



Northumberland County Council

Audit Committee - Role Description and Person Specification Independent (Co-opted) Chair

Role Description

1. To chair meetings of the Audit Committee, ensuring that:
 - Meetings are conducted in accordance with the Council's constitution and the Audit Committee's terms of reference;
 - Meetings are effectively managed; and
 - Decision making of the committee is transparent, timely and effective.
2. To engage fully in collective consideration of the issues before the Audit Committee, taking into account a full range of relevant factors, including legislation and supporting regulation (e.g. the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015, as amended), professional guidance particularly the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2017 issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), and the advice of the Council's Executive Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer).
3. To participate fully in the discharge of all Audit Committee functions, as set out in the Audit Committee's terms of reference and the constitution.
4. To promote the concept of proportionate, effective risk management and internal control throughout the organisation; and to champion the work of Internal Audit, External Audit and Risk Management.
5. To participate in periodic review of the overall effectiveness of the Audit Committee, and of its terms of reference.
6. To determine whether or not any late items of business are sufficiently urgent to justify being added to the agenda for committee meetings in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.

Skills and Competencies

Effective Management of Meetings –

Understands and executes the role of an effective chair.

Indicators:

1. Demonstrates up to date knowledge, skill and a depth of experience in the fields of audit, accounting, risk management and performance management.
2. Provides effective leadership concerning the roles and responsibilities of the Committee, and how it operates.
3. Chairs meetings effectively; follows protocol and keeps process on track.
4. Operates consistently and without bias, manages time effectively, and ensures that decisions made are transparent.
5. Is an effective role model; supports appropriate behaviours and challenges opinions and advice where appropriate, separating major issues from minor ones.
6. Encourages proactive, proportionate and independent thought, and also collaboration with officers to temper the opinions of Committee members.
7. Works sensitively with people inside and outside committee, clarifying understanding of other members' perspectives and obtaining consensus.
8. Explains decisions clearly, listens to and balances advice, and has the ability to communicate "unpopular" decisions, withstanding pressure.
9. Encourages and develops 'new to committee' and newly elected councillors.

Person Specification

Experience	Knowledge / experience in matters of an audit nature.	Essential
	Knowledge / experience of risk management, performance management and financial governance.	Essential
	Working to high behavioural standards, demonstrating honesty, probity and the highest level of integrity in conduct.	Essential
	Experience gained working in a large, or public sector, organisation.	Desirable
	Experience gained in serving on a committee.	Desirable
Skills	Ability to weigh / sort complex evidence and reach rational conclusions, incorporating appropriate advice.	Essential
	Ability to be objective, independent and impartial.	Essential
	Ability to work in a group, and chair meetings.	Essential
	Ability to make reasoned decisions.	Essential
	Strong strategic awareness and ability to identify emerging external factors that may impact on strategy, implementation of plans, or reputation with key stakeholders.	Essential
	A good communicator with excellent interpersonal skills, able to both empower and challenge supportively.	Essential
Knowledge	Knowledge of the locality of Northumberland, and knowledge of its communities.	Desirable
	Knowledge of the County Council's strategic aims and objectives as set out in its Plans.	Desirable
	Understanding of the complexity of issues surrounding audit and risk management in local government.	Desirable
	Understanding of committee procedures.	Desirable
Other	Must not be a serving Northumberland County Council officer or elected member or who has discharged such a role in the last 5 years.	Essential
	Must not be a serving Director or employee of organisations within the County Council's accounting group boundary, or have discharged such a role in the last 5 years.	Essential
	Must not be aware of any potential conflict of interest which could arise in this role.	Essential
	Must be able and willing to devote the necessary time to the role.	Essential

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