

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

<b>Title/Subject Matter:</b>	Skills, Knowledge and Effectiveness Review
<b>Meeting/Date:</b>	Corporate Governance Committee – 12 July 2017
<b>Executive Portfolio:</b>	Strategic Resources: Councillor J A Gray
<b>Report by:</b>	Internal Audit & Risk Manager
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All Wards

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**Executive Summary:**

It is proposed that a training day be held at which a number of the shortfalls in skills and knowledge identified from the Member self-assessment forms are addressed.

Previously completed self-assessment forms have identified a shortfall in knowledge in the following areas:

- Governance – including the Code of Corporate Governance and requirements of the annual governance statement.
- Internal audit
- External audit
- Values of good governance - including the Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan)

Three external 'expert' organisations have agreed to attend a training day and lead on the following areas:

- RSM – the Nolan principles;
- EY – the Council's external auditor; and
- BDO – internal audit.

It is proposed that the training be held prior to the September 2017 meeting. This will be particularly useful with regard to the Code of Corporate Governance and external audit as the September meeting will be considering both the annual governance statement and the external auditors report and 2016/17 financial statements.

Members are being asked to consider whether a training event such as this should be organised. Whilst attendance is not compulsory, attendance levels need to be high to justify the time and effort that will be spent on arranging the event.

If a training day is not supported Members are asked to decide how they wish future training to be delivered.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Decide if a training day is to be held, and if so;
  - a. Whether the proposed subject areas meet their requirements; and
  - b. Agree a date for the event.
2. If they don't wish to proceed with the training day, decide how they wish future training to be delivered.

## 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the Committee's views on options for delivering training and so address the skills and knowledge shortfalls identified from self-assessment forms completed.

## 2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY?

- 2.1 The Committee recommended that a training plan be prepared at its December 2016 meeting and also during the January 2017 self-assessment review.

## 3. SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE SELF-ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 Nine of the current 12 Members have completed self-assessment forms.
- 3.2 Not unsurprisingly, those Members who have been sitting on the Committee and its forerunner for a number of years have assessed themselves as having a good knowledge in most of the areas.
- 3.3 It is clear from the responses that the majority of Members consider that they have a good level of knowledge across the following four areas:

Values of good governance	Whistleblowing arrangements in place, arrangements to uphold ethical standards for both Members and Officers.
Risk management	Understanding of the principles of risk management and the risk management policy and risk strategy.
Organisational knowledge	Council objectives and functions, decision making and ethical standards.
Countering fraud	Understanding the main areas of fraud risk the authority is exposed to, arrangements to tackle fraud and the principles of good fraud risk management.

However, two questions within the above areas did not score particularly highly;

- Knowledge of the Seven Principles of Public Life; and
- Understanding the role of members and of the Committee with regards to risk management.

- 3.4 Within the following five areas, the majority of Members had assessed themselves as either having a basic or working knowledge. It is for that reason that the training programme covers three of the four areas.

Governance	Knowledge of the 2016 Constitution and CIPFA/SOLACE Good Governance Framework and the requirements of the annual governance statement.
Internal Audit	The arrangements for delivery of the internal audit service and how the role of the head of internal audit is fulfilled. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

Financial Management and accounting	The requirements of the role of the Chief Financial Officer, as required by the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government, awareness of financial statements and the principles that must be followed to produce them.
External audit	The key reports and assurances that external audit provide, the arrangements for their appointment and monitoring the work they undertake.

#### **4. KEY IMPACTS**

- 4.1 It is important that the Corporate Governance Committee acts effectively and is able to challenge the decisions of Officers with regard to the state of governance across the Council. Committee Members need sufficient skills and knowledge to be able to understand a wide range of issues that fall within their remit.

#### **5. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN**

- 5.1 The Corporate Governance Committee provides oversight to the Council by evaluating the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes. These three areas need to be working as efficiently, effectively and economically as possible, which in themselves are a key strand of the Corporate Plan.

#### **6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no direct resource implications arising from this report. The three organisations have volunteered to attend and no fees will be paid.

#### **7. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 7.1 The Committee are being asked to consider how they wish training identified from the skills and knowledge self-assessment to be delivered and how they wish to undertake their own effectiveness review.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Self-assessment skill and knowledge forms

#### **CONTACT OFFICER**

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