



Audit and Governance Committee		Agenda Item
08 September 2023		11
Title:	Review of Mayoral Combined Authority Audit & Governance Committee Arrangements	
Report of:	Nick Bell, Executive Director (Resources & Performance)	
Lead Member:	Edna Murphy (Lead Member for Governance)	
Public Report:	Yes	
Key Decision:	No	
Voting Arrangements:	N/A	

Recommendations:

A	To note and discuss the different arrangements for Audit & Governance Committees amongst Mayoral Combined Authorities and decide which, if any, should be considered for adoption by this Audit & Governance Committee.
B	To commission further work from Officers to understand the impact of adoption of any changes stemming from Recommendation (A) prior to making any recommendations for change to the Board.

Strategic Objective(s):

The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective:

	Achieving Best Value and High Performance
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1. Purpose

1.1	This paper provides the committee with an overview of some of the arrangements for Audit & Governance Committees by the other eight existing Mayoral Combined Authorities (excluding the Greater London Authority which is not considered a good comparator given its different scale and remit) and seeks views from the Committee as to what, if any, changes should be considered for this Committee.
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2. Proposal

2.1	At its meeting in June 2023 the Committee requested that a review of Audit & Governance arrangements in other Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) was undertaken to provide the Committee with a basis to discuss whether there were arrangements being used by Audit and Governance Committees in the other MCAs that might be useful to be incorporated in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough.
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2.2	Officers requested information from eight MCAs (all other MCAs excluding the Greater London Authority, whose remit and scale is significantly different to other MCAs). Five of the MCAs responded directly and information was sought from the websites of the remaining three. The information has been collated and is attached as Appendix A to the report.
2.3	The information raises a number of potential areas for discussion by the Committee, as noted in the paragraphs below, although these questions are not meant to be exhaustive and the Committee may wish to consider other points as well.
2.4	In total the membership of the Audit Committees ranges from 6-12 members, with five of the eight committees having nine or more members. CPCA's Audit Committee currently has 8 members (one from each constituent council plus an independent Chair). This suggests that there is scope for a larger committee should the members consider that it would be beneficial to co-opt other members onto the committee. (The decision to co-opt an Independent Councillor, and the potential decision on the Agenda to co-opt another Independent Person, would raise the number of members of the Committee to 10. <i>Does the Committee have a view about the ideal size of the Committee?</i>
2.5	All the Audit Committees have at least one Independent Person as a member. Two (Greater Manchester and Tees Valley) have more than two Independent Persons. <i>There is a report on the Agenda proposing the co-option of one more Independent Person, but what are the views of the Committee about increasing this number further?</i>
2.6	One Audit Committee (West Midlands) includes a co-opted member from the LEP. Some other CPCA Committees (including the Board and thematic committees) include co-opted members from the Business Board. <i>Does the Committee have a view about whether the co-option of a Business Board member should be considered?</i>
2.7	All other MCA Audit Committees have three or four scheduled meetings a year (albeit that some hold additional meetings where required). CPCA has six meetings of the Audit & Governance Committee scheduled for this Municipal Year. <i>Subject to the Best Value Notice being lifted, do members have a view about the ideal number of scheduled meetings in the next Municipal Year?</i>
2.8	Two of the other MCA Audit Committees (Greater Manchester and South Yorkshire) hold regular deep dives on key risks. Greater Manchester considers a range of strategic risks at full Audit committee whilst South Yorkshire focuses on transport related risks through a separate sub-committee. This committee has agreed to test out deep dives of specific risks, starting with key financial risks on this Agenda. <i>If it is considered that the deep dives are taking too much time out of the main agenda, what are members' views about asking a smaller sub-committee of Audit & Governance to undertake the deep dives and report back to the full committee?</i>
2.9	A number of the other Audit Committees have different names, including the words 'Risk', 'Standards' and/or 'Assurance'. Feedback from some of the MCAs is that they believe this helps staff, stakeholders and the public understand the full role of the committee. <i>Do members have any views about whether the current name of Audit & Governance Committee should be amended if it is considered that this would better reflect its responsibilities?</i>
2.10	Although not captured in Appendix A a number of the other MCA Audit committees reported that they have a pool of reserve members of the Committee who can be used to provide support when the workload on the committees are particularly high (eg when there is a major review of the constitution or a number of deep dives to be undertaken). <i>Do members have any views about whether we should consider developing a pool of reserve members to help with specific tasks?</i>
2.11	Finally, although not specifically asked of other MCAs, there could be benefit in arranging occasional virtual meetings between Chairs and Vice Chairs of MCA Audit Committees to share ideas and best practice. This already happens with Overview & Scrutiny Committees. <i>Would there be any appetite to explore this further?</i>

3. Background

3.1	As part of the Improvement Programme it is important that all of the key parts of the governance structure of the CPCA reviews itself against best practice. This report provides an opportunity to
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	consider what, if any, changes should be considered by comparing CPCA's Audit & Governance Committee arrangements against practice in other MCA Audit Committees.
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4. Appendices

4.1	<i>Appendix A – Details of arrangements in Mayoral Combined Authorities' Audit Committees</i>
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5. Implications

Financial Implications

5.1	There are no direct financial implications from the issues contained in the report.
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Legal Implications

6.1	The purpose of the Audit and Governance Committee is to give assurance as to the governance and sound financial management of the CPCA. The proposals and recommendations in this report should assist this committee in determining whether different arrangements that will strengthen the committee in fulfilling its role should be considered.
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Public Health Implications

7.1	None directly
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Environmental & Climate Change Implications

8.1	None directly
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Other Significant Implications

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Background Papers

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