

MALDON DISTRICT COUNCIL INTERNAL AUDIT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Audit 5. Committee Structure

2016-17



Maldon District Council: Committee Structure

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the alternative arrangements under the Local Government Act 2000, Maldon District Council operates a Committee system of governance with an Audit Committee, an Overview and Scrutiny Committee (which also meets as the Crime and Disorder Committee), a Standards Committee, three service committees (Finance and Corporate Services, Community Services and Planning and Licensing), three Area Planning Committees, and an Appointments Committee and Investigating and Disciplinary Committee

A significant period has elapsed since the Council last reviewed the Committee structure, however it should be noted that the structure has been updated in line with best practice (e.g. the introduction of the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee), it is considered best practice to undertake periodic reviews of the structure to ensure it remains effective in an environment in which funding, service provision and customer expectations are changing.

This will be a joint review led by BDO and undertaken in conjunction with the Centre for Public Scrutiny. An initial presentation was made to Council on 14 July 2016 to explain the purpose, benefits and timescale of the review.

PURPOSE OF REVIEW

The purpose of this review is to review the Council's Committee structure.

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The review will assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the current committee structure arrangements, in particular considering stakeholder views and benchmarking against other Local Authorities in light of external demands and budgetary priorities. The review will also seek to ensure that the Council's committee structure is fit for purpose and deliver the outcomes that would add value to the Council and residents of the District.

EXCLUSIONS

Our work will be restricted to the areas of consideration within the scope of our review.

APPROACH

Our approach will be to conduct interviews with Members and management and attend committee meetings, and to compare and benchmark arrangements with other Local Authorities to enable us to identify and evaluate options for consideration by the Council. Any opportunities identified to improve arrangements will be offered for consideration alongside recommendations to retain good working practices and to resolve any weaknesses identified.

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KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

The key aims of an effective committee structure and thus the focus for this review are to ensure the following:

- An efficient, effective and timely decision making process supported by delegation to Members and officers as appropriate, and forward planning
- A strong and productive Member / officer relationship with clarity over roles and responsibilities, enabling efficient and innovative management of services
- The Council communicates appropriately with the public and stakeholders in major decisions
- Committees are able to operate in a way which supports the Council's strategic direction, including effective decision making processes for cross cutting policies
- The committee structure and arrangements incorporate effective provisions to enable the Council to demonstrate accountability.

DOCUMENTATION REQUEST

Please provide the following documents in advance of our review (where possible):

- 2016/17 Schedule of committee meetings
- Membership of Committee meetings
- Detailed governance structure, Terms of Reference and Delegation arrangements
- Outline of results of any other Council Committee structure reviews or feedback (internal or external)
- Details of significant partnerships and related decision making protocols
- Any customer comments, questions or complaints relating to Committee operations.

Any documents provided will assist the timely completion of our fieldwork, however we may need to request further documentation and evidence as we progress through the review process.

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APPENDIX 1


TIMETABLE

Audit Stage	Date
Number of audit days planned	20 days
Introductory Presentation to Council	14 July 2016
Discussion and adoption of Terms of Reference	8 September 2016 (Council)
Planned date for issue of the draft report	XX December 2016
Planned date for receipt of management responses	XX December 2016
Planned date for issue of proposed final report	XX January 2017
Planned Council meeting for presentation of report	16 February 2017

KEY CONTACTS

BDO LLP	Role	Telephone and/or email
Greg Rubins	Head of Internal Audit	t: 07583 114 121 e: greg.rubins@bdo.co.uk
Gurpreet Dulay	Internal Audit Manager	t: 07870 555 214 e: gurpreet.dulay@bdo.co.uk
Andrew Barnes	Internal Audit Manager	t: 07912 040 848 e: andrew.barnes@bdo.co.uk
Adam Leeder	BDO Consultant	t: 0207 893 3833 e: adam.leeder@bdo.co.uk
Ed Hammond	Centre for Public Scrutiny	t: 0207 187 7369 e: ed.hammond@cfps.org.uk
Maldon District Council		
Councillor Miss Lewis	Leader	e: cllr.miriam.lewis@maldon.gov.uk
All Maldon DC Members		
Fiona Marshall	Chief Executive	e: fiona.marshall@maldon.gov.uk
Ka Ng	Director of Resources	e: ka.ng@maldon.gov.uk
Richard Holmes	Director of Customers and Community	e: richard.holmes@maldon.gov.uk
Nick Fenwick	Director of Planning & Regulatory Services	e: nick.fenwick@maldon.gov.uk

SIGN OFF

On behalf of BDO LLP:		On behalf of Maldon District Council:	
Signature:		Signature:	
Title:	HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT	Title:	
Date:		Date:	

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