

Audit, Standards and Risk Committee

Wednesday, 22 March 2023

Committee Effectiveness

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
Purpose of this report:	Monitoring/Assurance
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Has it been included on the Forward Plan?	Not a Key Decision

Director Approving Submission of the Report:
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Executive Summary

This paper outlines the findings of the annual effectiveness survey undertaken via an online survey active between 8 and 24 February.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

Continually improving governance enables the Combined Authority to pursue its ambitions and objectives in the most effective and efficient way, bringing about better outcomes for people and businesses in South Yorkshire.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to consider the findings of the annual effectiveness survey and recommend any further actions.

Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel

None

1. Background

- 1.1 The Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), Financial Reporting Council (FRC) and the National Audit Office (NAO) state, and recommend, that audit committees should annually review their own effectiveness.

The Audit, Standards and Risk Committee previously agreed that a structured questionnaire seeking feedback on the effectiveness of the Committee should be prepared and the findings used to highlight any areas where development or improvement is required. The findings of the survey will be reflected in the Chair's Annual Report to the MCA Board in June.

2. Key Issues

2.1 The survey was launched on Tuesday 8 February with a deadline of 24 February to allow members time for completion. The survey (included at appendix A) aims to evaluate, and understand any development requirements, relating to:

- The skills and knowledge of the Committee;
- Relationships between members, members and MCA officer and members and the MCA Board and Mayor;
- Administration and operational requirements of the Committee.

New questions were added this year to ask members their opinion on the use of Working Groups and on the impact of the reduced membership of the Committee which had been agreed with the MCA Board as a trial.

2.2 Findings

The survey had an 80% response rate. The results are summarised below:

Skills and Knowledge

Members were asked about the Committee's effectiveness in:

- Advising on Annual Governance Review and Statement.
- Scrutinising Treasury Management Strategy.
- Considering and recommending the Accounts.

As well as overseeing:

- Risk management arrangements.
- The effectiveness of the control environment.
- Anti-fraud and corruption arrangements.
- The internal audit strategy and plan.

Responses indicated that in general, Members were satisfied that the Committee was effective in these areas. Members did however, indicate that an opportunity to develop knowledge around the MCA's strategies and plans and assurance processes, and develop more knowledge around anti-fraud and corruption issues would be welcomed. In line with feedback from the previous survey, it was commented that a structured induction for new members would be beneficial.

Proposed action:

Following the ratification of 23/24 appointments at the MCA Board on 5 June, Elected and Independent members will be invited to a session with the Mayor and Statutory officers. Webinars will be scheduled on a quarterly basis for members to keep abreast of key policy issues.

Relationships

In general, responses indicated that relationships between members and between members and officers are effective although it was suggested that there may be some benefit in members having more opportunity to build relationships with each other. There was still an absence of a relationship with the MCA Board and the Mayor.

Proposed action:

The Mayor is currently scheduled to attend the June meeting of the Committee. Members are asked to highlight any key objectives or issues they would like to be addressed.

Administration and Operational

Members were satisfied that the work plan covers the assurance needs of the Committee but recognised that agendas are very full and report packs quite lengthy.

Proposed action:

Members will be asked to consider the Work Plan alongside the Terms of Reference for the Committee (to ensure all accountabilities are met) at the next meeting and enhance and rationalise as appropriate to ensure agendas are manageable.

Committee Size

Members were asked if the reduced size of the Committee had had a positive impact on the quality of debate at meeting and on the overall effectiveness of the Committee. Responses were mixed but did not indicate the reduction had been detrimental and that the reduced membership had at least had a positive impact on the ability to meet quoracy requirements.

Proposed action:

It is proposed that a recommendation is made to the MCA Board via the Nominations and Appointments Report and ASRC Chair's Annual Report to the MCA Board in June to maintain the reduced membership of one elected member from each of the 4 constituent local authorities.

Working Groups

Members were asked about the usefulness of Working Groups (such as the Transport Risk Working Group) and whether any might be required in other specific areas to add an additional layer of oversight. None were identified via survey responses.

Proposed action:

Members are asked to consider, as part of Committee work planning for 23/24 if any specific working groups are required.

3. Consultation on Proposal

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to feed into the action plan to address the improvements required to increase effectiveness.

4. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

4.1 Any recommendations and actions resulting from the survey will be implemented in a timescale agreed with the Committee.

5. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

5.1 There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

6. Legal Implications and Advice

6.1 There are no legal implications relating to this report.

7. Human Resources Implications and Advice

7.1 There are no human resources implications related to this report.

8. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

8.1 There are no equality and diversity implications related to this report.

9. Climate Change Implications and Advice

9.1 There are no climate change implications related to this report.

10. Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice

10.1 There are no information and communication technology implications related to this report.

11. Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice

11.1 There are no communications or marketing implications related to this report.

List of Appendices Included

A Committee Effectiveness Survey Questions

Background Papers

[Audit, Standards and Risk Committee – 15th July 2021 - Item 17 – Committee Engagement and Annual Report Proposal](#)