

Governance Panel Self-Assessment Checklist

APPENDIX C

ESTABLISHMENT, OPERATION AND DUTIES					
Role and remit					
Priority	Issue	Yes	No	N/a	Comments/action
1	Does the Governance Panel have written terms of reference?	✓			
1	Do the terms of reference cover the core functions of an Governance Panel as identified in the CIPFA guidance?	✓			
1	Are the terms of reference approved by the council and reviewed periodically?	✓			
1	Has the Governance Panel been provided with Sufficient membership, authority and resources to perform its role effectively and independently?	✓			
1	Can the Governance Panel access other committees and full council as necessary?	✓			
1	Does the authority's statement on internal control include a description of the Governance Panel's establishment and activities?	✓			
2	Does the Governance Panel periodically assess its own effectiveness?		✓		Currently being undertaken and will be reviewed annually
2	Does the Governance Panel make a formal annual report on its work and performance during the year to full council?	✓			
Membership, induction and training					
1	Has the membership of the Governance Panel been formally agreed and a quorum set?	✓			
1	Is the chair independent of the executive function?	✓			
1	Has the Governance Panel chair either previous knowledge of, or received appropriate training on, financial and risk management, accounting concepts and standards, and the regulatory regime?	✓			
1	Are new Governance Panel members provided with an appropriate induction?	✓			
1	Have all members' skills and experiences been assessed and training given for identified gaps?		✓		Ongoing
1	Has each member declared his/her business interests?	✓			
2	Are members sufficiently independent of the other key committees of the council?		✓		Links with GP Committee to be considered
Meetings					
1	Does the Governance Panel meet regularly?	✓			
1	Do the terms of reference set out the frequency of meetings?		✓		Generally set out in the Constitution
1	Does the Governance Panel calendar meet the authority's business needs, governance needs and the financial calendar?	✓			

1	Are members attending meetings on a regular basis and if not, is appropriate action taken?	✓			
1	Are meetings free and open without political influences being displayed?	✓			
1	Does the authority's S151 officer or deputy attend all meetings?		✓		The S151 Officer attends on an exception basis according to need and the Audit Manager attends every meeting
1	Does the Governance Panel have the benefit of attendance of appropriate officers at its meetings?	✓			
INTERNAL CONTROL					
1	Does the Governance Panel consider the findings of the annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control (as required by the Accounts & Audit Regulations) including the review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit?	✓			It does review the effectiveness of the SIC The review of the effectiveness of the system of Internal Audit informs the SIC and the Governance Panel will review it
1	Does the Governance Panel have responsibility for review and approval of the SIC and does it consider it separately from the accounts?	✓			Yes but it recommends it for approval by GP Committee
1	Does the Governance Panel consider how meaningful the SIC is?	✓			
1	Does the Governance Panel satisfy itself that the system of internal control has operated effectively throughout the reporting period?	✓			
1	Has the Governance Panel considered how it integrates with other committees that may have responsibility for risk management?	✓			
1	Has the Governance Panel (with delegated responsibility) or the full council adopted "Managing the Risk of Fraud – Actions to Counter Fraud and Corruption?"	✓			The Governance Panel reviews and endorses the Council's Anti-Fraud Strategy and monitors actions taken through the work of Internal Audit
1	Does the Governance Panel ensure that the "Actions to Counter Fraud and Corruption" are being implemented?	✓			As above
2	Is the Governance Panel made aware of the role of risk management in the preparation of the internal audit plan?	✓			
2	Does the Governance Panel review the authority's strategic risk register at least annually?	✓			

2	Does the Governance Panel monitor how the authority assesses its risk?	✓			
2	Do the Governance Panel's terms of reference include oversight of the risk management process?	✓			
FINANCIAL REPORTING AND REGULATORY MATTERS					
1	Is the Governance Panel's role in the consideration and/or approval of the annual accounts clearly defined?	✓			
1	Does the Governance Panel consider specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the suitability of accounting policies and treatments • major judgements made • large write-offs • changes in accounting treatment • the reasonableness of accounting estimates the narrative aspects of reporting?		✓		To be reviewed in line with role in recommending accounts for approval
1	Is an Governance Panel meeting scheduled to receive the external auditor's report to those charged with governance including a discussion of proposed adjustments to the accounts and other issues arising from the audit?	✓			
1	Does the Governance Panel review management's letter of representation?	✓			
2	Does the Governance Panel annually review the accounting policies of the authority?		✓		To be reviewed in line with role in recommending accounts for approval
2	Does the Governance Panel gain an understanding of management's procedures for preparing the authority's annual accounts?		✓		In work programme for 2007/2008
2	Does the Governance Panel have a mechanism to keep it aware of topical legal and regulatory issues, for example by receiving circulars and through training?	✓			In respect of Governance issues
INTERNAL AUDIT					
1	Does the Governance Panel approve, annually and in detail, the internal audit strategic and annual plans including consideration of whether the scope of internal audit work addresses the authority's significant risks?	✓			Approve (but not direct)
1	Does internal audit have an appropriate reporting line to the Governance Panel?	✓			
1	Does the Governance Panel receive periodic reports from the internal audit service including an annual report from the Head of Internal Audit?	✓			
1	Are follow-up audits by internal audit monitored by the Governance Panel and does the committee consider the adequacy of implementation of recommendations?		✓		Comments will now be reported as part of half year and annual Internal Audit reports

1	Does the Governance Panel hold periodic private discussions with the Head of Internal Audit?	✓			As required
1	Is there appropriate cooperation between the internal and external auditors?	✓			
1	Does the Governance Panel review the adequacy of internal audit staffing and other resources?	✓			
1	Has the Governance Panel evaluated whether its internal audit service complies with CIPFA's Code of Practice for Internal audit in Local Government in the United Kingdom?	✓			
2	Are internal audit performance measures monitored by the Governance Panel?	✓			
2	Has the Governance Panel considered the information it wishes to receive from internal audit?	✓			
EXTERNAL AUDIT					
1	Do the external auditors present and discuss their audit plans and strategy with the Governance Panel (recognizing the statutory duties of external audit)?	✓			
1	Does the Governance Panel hold periodic private discussions with the external auditor?	✓			As required
1	Does the Governance Panel review the external auditor's annual report to those charged with governance?	✓			
1	Does the Governance Panel ensure that officers are monitoring action taken to implement external audit recommendations?	✓			
1	Are reports on the work of external audit and other inspection agencies presented to the Panel, including the Audit Commission's annual audit and inspection letter?	✓			
1	Does the Governance Panel assess the performance of external audit?			✓	
1	Does the Governance Panel consider and approve the external audit fee?			✓	
ADMINISTRATION					
Agenda management					
1	Does the Governance Panel have a designated secretary from Committee/Member Services?	✓			
1	Are agenda papers circulated in advance of meetings to allow adequate preparation by Governance Panel members?	✓			
2	Are outline agendas planned one year ahead to cover issues on a cyclical basis?	✓			
2	Are inputs for Any Other Business formally requested in advance from committee members, relevant officers, internal and external audit?	✓			
Papers					
1	Do reports to the Governance Panel communicate relevant information at the right frequency, time, and in a format that is effective?	✓			
2	Does the Governance Panel issue guidelines and/or a proforma concerning the format and content of the papers to be presented?			✓	The Council has a standard format for reports

Actions arising					
1	Are minutes prepared and circulated promptly to the appropriate people?	✓			
1	Is a report on matters arising made and minuted at the Governance Panel's next meeting?		✓		
1	Do action points indicate who is to perform what and by when?		✓		