

JAC Self-Assessment Comparison

In Gwent we currently utilise the CIPFA guidance for audit committees entitled, “Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police 2013. The majority of JAC’s that responded to my request for information seem to have based their self-assessment processes on either this guidance or the updated 2018 version although some have altered and added additional areas as they see fit. There were some areas that did not undertake a self-assessment process at all although it was something being considered for the future or did not do them annually.

The following force areas responded:

- Cambridgeshire
- Derbyshire
- Devon and Cornwall
- Kent
- Norfolk
- North Wales
- Staffordshire
- Surrey
- Sussex
- Thames Valley
- West Midlands

Some of the forms are rather large (up to 15 pages) but they also contain areas to ensure their Terms of Reference (ToR) have been met over the year which we currently do in a table format.

After looking at all responses, I have pulled out the additional areas that others consider within their self-assessment process that we don’t.

Two JACs have included questions on the adequacy of the recruitment process and whether or not tenure is adequate and a quorum is in place– I have assumed that you do not want the recruitment area included in the self-assessment process so have not included specific questions. I am satisfied that we review tenure/quorum as part of the annual review of the ToR. Please let me know if you would like to consider these questions and I will provide them to you.

It seems that some JACs have expanded the question set in certain areas eg risk. This is something that we could consider in areas of concern that you may have.

Specific questions you may wish to discuss for inclusion in the Gwent Self-Assessment Process:

1. Are the senior/relevant members of the organisations invited to attend audit committee meetings, participate in discussions, and provide information to the audit committee as and when the audit committee deems it necessary?
2. Does the committee work effectively as a team?
3. Is the balance of work in relation to business risk, internal control, fraud, financial reporting, regulatory matters, other matters right?

4. Is there appropriate focus on both the Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner?
5. Does the audit committee consider that the scope of Internal Audit work, the available resources at its disposal, and their access to information and people allow it to address significant risks within the organisation?
6. Is the audit committee chair involved in agenda management? Is there a clear 'forward plan' which sets out how the committee will meet the objectives set out in the terms of reference? Has the committee considered whether all standing items on the agenda are truly adding value to the committee's work?
 - *In Gwent we do have a forward work plan – would members benefit from seeing it/knowing what reports were due at the next meeting? A list could be provided at the end of the agenda.*
7. Has the committee considered the balance of skills available and their alignment to the organisational risks and areas of focus?
8. Does the committee have oversight of risk management and governance arrangements for major change programmes and key collaboration/outsourcing arrangements (whether with police bodies, other public sector bodies or the private sector?) Has the committee considered its role in respect of these arrangements?
9. Has the committee sought assurances over the governance arrangements for collaboration?
10. Is the committee aware of the work of the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) and the assurance requested by the panel from the PCC?
11. Is the audit committee aware of inspections and findings of the HMICFRS and other external regulators? Is the audit committee confident that appropriate actions are being taken to address recommendations?
12. Does the audit committee have private meetings with the external and internal auditors?
13. Do the PCC/Chief Executive and the Chief Constable/Deputy Chief Constable regularly attend audit committee meetings?
14. Does the audit committee chair have regular face-to-face meetings with the PCC and the Chief Constable (or this could be the two CFOs) to discuss the committee work programme and opportunities for the committee to add value?
15. Does the committee understand its role to risk management? Is the committee satisfied its focus is aligned with, providing assurance in respect of, the major organisational risks faced by the PCC and Chief Constable?
16. Is there an agreed process for making risk management decisions? Is the committee informed of the judgements that have taken place in accordance with the process?

17. Is the committee satisfied it has sufficient awareness of the key organisational risks?
18. Is the committee satisfied the work of internal audit is properly focused on the organisation's major risk, including transformational change and collaboration?
19. Is there appropriate cooperation between the internal and external auditors?