

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee
DATE	20 February 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Internal Audit Report AC2509 – Councillors Induction and Development
REPORT NUMBER	IA/AC2509
DIRECTOR	N/A
REPORT AUTHOR	Jamie Dale
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.2

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the planned Internal Audit report on Councillors Induction and Development.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee review, discuss and comment on the issues raised within this report and the attached appendix.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 Internal Audit has completed the attached report which relates to an audit of Councillors Induction and Development.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. RISK

7.1 The Internal Audit process considers risks involved in the areas subject to review. Any risk implications identified through the Internal Audit process are detailed in the resultant Internal Audit reports. Recommendations, consistent with the Council’s Risk Appetite Statement, are made to address the identified risks and Internal Audit follows up progress with implementing those that are agreed with management. Those not implemented by their agreed due date are detailed in the attached appendices.

8. OUTCOMES

8.1 There are no direct impacts, as a result of this report, in relation to the Council Delivery Plan, or the Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes of Prosperous Economy, People or Place.

8.2 However, Internal Audit plays a key role in providing assurance over, and helping to improve, the Council’s framework of governance, risk management and control. These arrangements, put in place by the Council, help ensure that the Council achieves its strategic objectives in a well-managed and controlled environment.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	An assessment is not required because the reason for this report is for Committee to review, discuss and comment on the outcome of an internal audit. As a result, there will be no differential impact, as a result of the proposals in this report, on people with protected characteristics.
Privacy Impact Assessment	Not required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 There are no relevant background papers related directly to this report.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Internal Audit report AC2509 – Councillors Induction and Development

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Internal Audit

Assurance Review of Councillors Induction and Development

Status: Final

Date: 10 December 2024

Risk Level: Corporate

Report No: AC2509

Assurance Year: 2024/25

Net Risk Rating	Description	Assurance Assessment
Moderate	There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified, which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.	Reasonable

Report Tracking	Planned Date	Actual Date
Scope issued	04-Jul-24	04-Jul-24
Scope agreed	12-Jul-24	12-Jul-24
Fieldwork commenced	29-Jul-24	29-Jul-24
Fieldwork completed	23-Aug-24	17-Sep-24
Draft report issued	13-Sep-24	04-Oct-24
Process owner response	04-Oct-24	07-Nov-24
Director response	11-Oct-24	10-Dec-24
Final report issued	18-Oct-24	10-Dec-24
AR&S Committee	20-Feb-25	

Distribution	
Document type	Assurance Report
Directors	Andy MacDonald, Executive Director – Corporate Services
Process Owner	Vikki Cuthbert, Interim Chief Officer – Governance
Stakeholders	Alan Thomson, Interim Chief Officer – Governance
	Isla Newcombe, Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services
	Lesley Strachan, Service Lead – People Services
	Sandie Scott, People Development Manager
	Jonathan Belford, Chief Officer - Finance*
Final Only	External Audit
Lead auditor	Farai Magodo, Auditor

1 Introduction

1.1 Area subject to review

The Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee reported, in January 2006, that the public were entitled to have high expectations of their Councillors and to feel confident that they are carrying out their role effectively and efficiently. It concluded it was important that Councillors actively engage with training and development opportunities on an ongoing basis and recommended that all Councillors, whether new to the role or long-serving, should participate in a training needs analysis and agree a personal development plan as soon as possible after an election. The plan should be based around the core competencies determined as being important to the effectiveness of Councillors.

In August 2010, Audit Scotland produced their publication *“Roles and working relationships: are you getting it right?”*, which concluded that Councils must:

- Ensure all newly elected Councillors are provided with training and support to help them understand their roles.
- Provide guidance, training and advice to Councillors serving on external boards and highlight the specific responsibilities attached to these roles.
- Provide regular training and support to Councillors to help them fulfil their roles.
- Review induction training and consider introducing practical guidance to provide new Councillors with a more detailed understanding of what their roles and responsibilities mean on a day-to-day basis.

The report also concluded that Councillors must:

- Ensure they are aware of expected behaviour and conduct set out in the Councillors’ Code of Conduct.
- Communicate with officers and explain their training and development needs.
- Provide feedback on training courses to help ensure their needs are met.
- Make better use of training and development opportunities to help them fulfil their roles.

A further 2016 report by Audit Scotland entitled *“How councils work - Roles and working relationships in councils: are you still getting it right?”* identified several issues relating to Councillor training, including:

- Evidence from Best Value audits highlighted that councillors’ take up of training is at best variable and sometimes they have poor perceptions of the training they receive.
- Councils should consider the role of their training and development programmes in advising members and officers on their responsibilities in relation to ALEOs.
- Involving councillors (both incumbents and newly elected) can help tailor training programmes to be more effective and wide-ranging, covering all issues and help prevent knowledge gaps developing once new Councillors begin their duties.
- Training and development should be an ongoing process, not just a one-off induction.

1.2 Rationale for review

The objective of this audit is to obtain assurance over the processes in place for onboarding and ongoing support and training of Councillors, including the role of Group leaders.

In the absence of adequate training and support, there is a greater risk Councillors will not understand their role, impairing the Council’s governance and risk management arrangements, and reducing necessary scrutiny of Council policy and the delivery of Council priorities. This area was last subject to review in January 2018 in Internal Audit AC1816. Recommendations were made to enhance control over training plans; training attendance / completion; risk management of untrained Councillors; and continuous personal development of Councillors.

1.3 How to use this report

This report has several sections and is designed for different stakeholders. The executive summary (section 2) is designed for senior staff and is cross referenced to the more detailed narrative in later

sections (3 onwards) of the report should the reader require it. Section 3 contains the detailed narrative for risks and issues we identified in our work.

2 Executive Summary

2.1 Overall opinion

The full chart of net risk and assurance assessment definitions can be found in Appendix 1 – Assurance Scope and Terms. We have assessed the net risk (risk arising after controls and risk mitigation actions have been applied) as:

Net Risk Rating	Description	Assurance Assessment
Moderate	There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified, which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.	Reasonable

The organisational risk level at which this risk assessment applies is:

Risk Level	Definition
Corporate	This issue / risk level impacts the Council as a whole. Mitigating actions should be taken at the Senior Leadership level.

2.2 Assurance assessment

The level of risk is assessed as **MODERATE**, with the control framework deemed to provide **REASONABLE** assurance over the Council's approach to Councillors induction and development.

The Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee concluded in 2006 that it was important that Councillors actively engage with training and development opportunities on an ongoing basis and recommended that all Councillors, whether new to the role or long-serving, participate in a training needs analysis and agree a personal development plan. Subsequent reviews by Audit Scotland concluded that councils must provide appropriate induction and training to support Councillors in their roles and that councillors must make better use of training provided, ensure that they provide feedback on that training and explain their training needs to officers.

There are 45 Councillors in Aberdeen City Council - 18 newly elected and 27 incumbent councillors following the May 2022 election.

Assurance was available over the following elements of training and ongoing support:

- **Induction** – An extensive induction programme was delivered to Councillors in May and June 2022 following the May 2022 election. This was developed strategically by a Steering Group attended by the Chief Officer of People & Organisational Development, Chief Officer of Governance, and their respective reports – People Development Manager and Assurance Manager; resulting in a training needs analysis 'All Training' tracker informed by:
 - An 'Archive – All Training' tracker of previously delivered induction training at Aberdeen City Council for elections in 2012, 2018 and 2022.
 - Improvement Service
 - Best Value Audit reports
 - Insights and guidance from Chief Officer Governance
 - Engagement with subject matter experts

The outcome of this work was the "Elected Members' Induction Programme 2022: The First Seven Days" document – which the Service advise was sent to all potential Elected Members before the count. The Service also advised a full "Elected Members Induction Programme 2022" (copy shared with Internal Audit), covering the eight-week induction programme, was issued to successfully elected Councillors immediately after the count, then again on Councillors' arrival at Aberdeen City Council's Town House on Councillors' first official day of duty, 9 May 2022. The induction covered a range of Councillor roles and responsibilities, including in relation to Council committees, the IJB, NESPF and other outside bodies.

- **Onboarding checklist** – A OneNote-based onboarding checklist with responsible officers allocated to necessary tasks was used following the 2022 local elections. Meetings took place

weekly between working group members to progress actions timeously in the build up to the count and start of induction period.

- **People Development Team** – Part of the People Development team’s function is to co-ordinate the overall Elected Members Development programme.
- **Members Support Team** – A Members Support team within People & Citizen Services is in place, providing non-political administrative support to Councillors, including capturing their development needs and recording training undertaken via Personal Development Plans.
- **ACC Intranet Site** – The Elected Members Information and Development intranet acts as an online, dynamic Councillors’ Handbook – with intranet pages rather than physical chapters providing comprehensive information on all administrative, corporate and housekeeping aspects of a Councillors’ role (e.g. organisational structure, key contacts, security and ID badges, health and safety). The Service advise it was built using the previous Councillors’ Handbook as a template to ensure all aspects covered, but it builds upon this by providing Councillors with resources from their induction programme (including presentation slides, recordings of the training, and other useful reading), as well as updates shared as news posts (e.g. from the Standards Commission for Scotland and from subject matter experts e.g. Integrated Impact Assessment update issued September 2024).
- **eLearning** - In addition, Councillors also have access to the online learning platform ‘ACC Learn’, where they can access a range of various personal and progression development courses, in addition to their core programme.
- **Training Feedback and Lessons Learned** – People Development sought feedback from Councillors on their induction via MS Forms to inform future training delivery. In general feedback was positive, with some suggestions made for improvements. The generally positive feedback was consistent with responses received to a separate questionnaire issued by Internal Audit to Councillors during this review. Feedback is regularly sought on the development opportunities – past and upcoming – through the Members’ Services Working Group which takes place quarterly between representatives from all political parties and independents, and service managers from relevant service areas. Feedback and ideas are incorporated into upcoming events. Examples of these suggestions include all development opportunities being made available hybrid, recordings uploaded to intranet for playback, and meetings taking place on a Monday so as not to clash with committees or other meetings. People and Citizen Services advise recent feedback will inform future training delivery

However, the review identified some areas of weakness where enhancements could be made to strengthen the framework of control, specifically:

- **PVG Checks** – PVGs were not in place in all cases for members on relevant Committees/the Integrated Joint Board. In total out of 25 Councillors where a PVG membership should be in place, across the E&CS Committee, the IJB and the School Placing and Exclusion Appeals Committee, two (8%) did not have one. In the absence of a PVG where required, there is a greater risk of a barred individual undertaking regulated work and associated reputational damage for the Council. It should be noted that the instances identified stemmed from changes in year to Committee membership and attendance, and do not relate specifically to the induction process.
- **Elected Members Development Framework** – An Elected Members Development Framework has been drafted detailing training available to Councillors which is positive, and People Development advise that this formed the basis of the Elected Members Induction Programme document which the Service advise was distributed to Councillors for the 2022 induction. However, the full Framework is still in draft form, has not been published on the Elected Members intranet page (for ongoing support and development), and does not categorise training priorities in all cases, including in relation to Prevent counter terrorism training which has not been delivered to Councillors. Where the Development Framework does not fully formalise Councillor training needs this risks training completion, the effectiveness of Councillors undertaking their duties and in the case of Prevent, vulnerable individuals not being referred for support where necessary.
- **Monitoring and Exception Reporting** – The Elected Members Development Framework defines ‘statutory’ training as training required of Councillors to help ensure the Council complies with the law, and ‘essential’ training as being a requirement to enable Councillors to undertake their duties. Essential training can be addressed via other development

opportunities however it is expected this would be captured in the relevant Councillors Personal Development Plan, which Members Support are required to monitor. However, statutory training completion relating to Code of Conduct (completion 78%), the Planning Development Management Committee membership (completion 67%), and Finance Stewardship and Governance (completion 49%), and Local Review Body (completion 54%) has not been completed by all required Councillors nor has all essential training (average attendance rate across all courses where data available 45%). In addition, Personal Development Plans had not captured training gaps for a sample of four Councillors who had not completed certain statutory training and six Councillors who had not completed certain 'essential' training, nor was any compensating training. Failure to undertake relevant training can diminish Councillors' effectiveness undertaking their duties, including scrutiny of Council activity and decision making, risking the achievement of Council Priorities.

Recommendations have been made to address the above risks, including establishing a system of control over Councillor PVG completion; formalising and publishing the Elected Members Development Framework; and establishing a system of monitoring and exception reporting to help ensure relevant training is completed. Where it is recognised that many of the issues and risks stem from the responsibilities put on individual councillors, recommendations have been tasked to officers to strengthen the framework of control overall. However, where a recommendation has not been made covering the point, it is suggested that as part of the outputs of this review, Management, through a suitable forum (such as Group leaders) remind councillors of their responsibilities and the related risks of non-compliance.

2.3 Severe or major issues / risks

Issues and risks identified are categorised according to their impact on the Council. No higher rated issues / risks that have been identified as part of this review.

2.4 Management response

People & Citizen Services and Governance have welcomed the input of Internal Audit in this area and has worked in partnership to identify potential risks and improvement actions. The audit findings have highlighted a number of areas where we can make improvements to our induction and development process. Additionally, our audit colleagues identified improvement that could be made regarding PVG checks for committee member changes that may arise after initial induction.

In terms of the audit findings and risks identified:

- *PVG exception has arisen due to committee membership changing in 2023 and this resulted in Elected Members joining relevant committees after the initial PVG checks took place during Elected Members Induction in 2022.*
- *Monitoring of face-to-face attendance events where delivery is undertaken by subject-matter-experts can be challenging and easily missed, so was not routinely undertaken during the first induction week, with follow-up recording relying on memory. It is also the case that where training is delivered by digital or hybrid means, it is not possible to capture/track which Elected Members have subsequently watched the recording to catch up.*
- *Whilst a summary version of the Elected Members Development Framework was presented to Elected Members as part of their Induction and then presented as a dynamic SharePoint page on their Elected Members Intranet – it had not been published as a stand-alone document in part or full.*

In terms of actions, this case has highlighted that there is a need to more closely monitor membership of committees and ensure statutory requirements are in place, both PVG membership and any required training. There is also a need to finalise and publish the Elected Members Development Framework.

This will be done by ensuring closer and more immediate communication between Governance and People & Citizen Services to notify of all and any committee changes. HR Service Centre will monitor PVG membership and notify Governance of outcome of PVG check before an Elected Member commences on a committee. Quarterly 'Elected Member Compliance Monitoring and Exception

Reporting' meetings will be established between People & Citizen Services and Governance to review compliance with statutory requirements. In addition, we will publish a news post to the Elected Members' Intranet with full information about the PVG and statutory training requirements, to increase awareness, transparency and accountability. We will also include PVG and statutory training compliance as part of committee effectiveness reports, so that it is monitored and published annually.

The summary version of the Elected Members Development Framework in their Induction Programme has now been published as a PDF on the Elected Members Intranet – and work is under way to finalise the full Framework, with updates provided through a training needs analysis informed by engagement with subject matter experts, the Improvement Service and review of Elected Members' Personal Development Plans.

We accept all the recommendations within the report and will work on providing assurance against these within the agreed timescales as set out within the report.

3 Issues / Risks, Recommendations, and Management Response

3.1 Issues / Risks, recommendations, and management response

Ref	Description	Risk Rating	Moderate																				
1.1	<p>PVG Checks – The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 (PVG Act) introduced a membership scheme for individuals carrying out regulated work with children and protected adults. The Council has a statutory duty under the Act to obtain appropriate Disclosure Scotland checks to ensure that it does not allow any individual to carry out regulated work who has been barred from such work.</p> <p>The Act includes a requirement for PVG membership for members of committees/joint committees concerned with provision of education, accommodation, social services, or health services, including for their sub-committees, as this is defined as “regulated work”.</p> <p>Letters were issued to Councillors in April 2022 covering leaver and onboarding processes related to the May 2022 elections. In relation to PVGs, the letter stated:</p> <p><i>“Please note that should you be elected and sit on the Education Operational Delivery Committee [since replaced by Education and Children’s Service Committee], School Placings and Exclusion Appeals Committee or the Integration Joint Board you will need to have a PVG check ahead of the first meeting. The relevant paperwork will be provided to you to fill out upon notification of your Committee membership.”</i></p> <p>However, review of committee membership and related PVG status identified the following gaps:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #003366; color: white;"> <th>Committee / Board</th> <th>Number of Members</th> <th>Number of Members without PVG</th> <th>% Members without PVG</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Education and Children Services Committee</td> <td>13</td> <td>1*</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration Joint Board</td> <td>6</td> <td>2*</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>School Placing and Exclusion Appeals Committee</td> <td>17</td> <td>1*</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> <tr style="font-weight: bold;"> <td>Total Membership (excluding duplicates but excluding subs)</td> <td>20</td> <td>2</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>* One Councillor without a PVG is a member of both Committees above / the IJB.</i></p> <p>The Service advised that the two PVG exceptions concerning regular IJB / E&CS Committee / School Placing and Exclusion Appeals Committee members related to Councillors who became a member of the E&CS Committee / School Placing and Exclusion Appeals Committee / IJB later than other members of the respective Committee / IJB in 2023 (rather than the first meeting after the May 2022 local elections).</p> <p>It was also noted that during the initial audit review it appeared that eight (40%) Councillors required to have PVG membership were not recorded as having this in place. However subsequently, membership was identified for six of these Councillors on a separate recording system. People & Citizen Services advised that PVG membership has been recorded against each Councillor’s record on the HR/Payroll system to rectify this and will be used as the central record for oversight purposes in future – a recommendation is made for tracking progress.</p> <p><u>Substitute Members</u></p>	Committee / Board	Number of Members	Number of Members without PVG	% Members without PVG	Education and Children Services Committee	13	1*	8%	Integration Joint Board	6	2*	17%	School Placing and Exclusion Appeals Committee	17	1*	6%	Total Membership (excluding duplicates but excluding subs)	20	2	10%	Risk Rating	Moderate
Committee / Board	Number of Members	Number of Members without PVG	% Members without PVG																				
Education and Children Services Committee	13	1*	8%																				
Integration Joint Board	6	2*	17%																				
School Placing and Exclusion Appeals Committee	17	1*	6%																				
Total Membership (excluding duplicates but excluding subs)	20	2	10%																				

Ref	Description	Risk Rating	Moderate
	<p>A further review of actual E&CS Committee attendance in July 24 showed that one of six E&CS Committee member substitutes did not have PVG membership.</p> <p>Disclosure Scotland guidance indicates the following in relation to who is regarded as doing regulated work (and therefore requires PVG membership):</p> <p><i>“It is Disclosure Scotland’s conclusion that it is the standing orders of each council that will determine who is a ‘member of a committee’ and which councillors will consequently be doing regulated work with children or protected adults. Disclosure Scotland cannot comment on the content of these standing orders.”</i></p> <p>A ‘member of a committee’ is not clearly defined within the Council’s standing orders, just a ‘substitute member’, which includes both substitutes named by the relevant body (IJB / relevant committee) or nominated by Members of Groups. Since both types of substitute are ‘substitute <u>members</u>’ Standing Orders presently indicates both meet the definition of a ‘member of a committee’ and are therefore undertaking regulated work.</p> <p>However, in the same guidance from Disclosure Scotland it states:</p> <p><i>“During the passage of the Bill that led to the 2007 Act, Scottish Ministers were keen that the 2007 Act reflected a general desire across Scotland that the PVG Scheme should be applied in a proportionate way. It was not envisaged that every elected councillor would be doing regulated work. This was achieved by the criterion of PVG Scheme membership being determined by being a member of certain committees rather than being an elected councillor. It is against that background, that each council should then decide who is to be classed as a ‘member of a committee.’”</i></p> <p>Governance, in consultation with People & Citizen Services, has confirmed that in accordance with the guidance from Disclosure Scotland that PVG checks should be applied in a proportionate way, they do not regard a substitute nominated by another Member or Group as being a ‘member of a committee’ as this is not part of their normal day to day council business, or carrying out ‘regulated work’ due to their significantly reduced involvement in committee / IJB business. In the view of officers, to require substitutes to have PVG membership would mean obtaining PVG membership for all elected members which is not proportionate.</p> <p>However, the Council’s standing orders do not presently reflect the position described by the Service meaning the Scheme of Governance requires to be updated.</p> <p>More generally in relation to the absence of PVG membership where required, this risks a barred individual undertaking regulated work and associated reputational damage for the Council.</p>		
	IA Recommended Mitigating Actions		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) People & Citizen Services should continue to avail themselves of the latest guidance from Disclosure Scotland in relation to substitutes. b) Chief Officer Governance should reflect the requirements of the PVG scheme, including for substitutes, within the scheme of governance (next revision date April 2025). c) Governance should work with People & Citizen Services to ensure no Councillor undertakes regulated work as part of committee / IJB membership without PVG membership i.e. a system of control should be established to check the PVG status of new members including new substitute members. d) People & Citizen Services should formalise procedures covering PVG outcome recording requirements for Councillors to facilitate oversight for the purposes of identifying any PVG omissions. 		
	Management Actions to Address Issues/Risks		

Ref	Description	Risk Rating	Moderate
	<p><i>There is a clear process for ensuring that PVG membership is in place for new Elected Members following their appointment to relevant committees, as part of the Councillor Induction and Development process.</i></p> <p><i>Since this process was undertaken following the last local government election in May 2022, we have been subject to an Internal Audit Assurance Review of PVG & Disclosure Checks, which was approved by Audit Risk and Scrutiny Committee in May 2023. One of the recommendations within this audit was to ensure that PVG/ Disclosure Check requirements are captured against each role within the HR/Payroll system. Whilst Elected Members were not within the scope of the review, work has now been undertaken to ensure that these are now captured within the record for each Elected Member within CoreHR (the Council's HR/Payroll system) to ensure an accurate and easily accessible record going forward as well as exception reporting .</i></p> <p><i>Having investigated this particular situation, it has been established that the 2 Councillors who do not have PVG membership in place were appointed to Committees at a later point, during 2023.</i></p> <p><i>In terms of actions, People & Citizen Services will continue to ensure that the PVG membership element within the checklist in place for new Councillors Induction and Development is completed and the process will be updated to ensure that where there are changes to committee membership that these are communicated to the team within People & Citizen Services to ensure PVG membership is completed for any new committee members as required.</i></p> <p><i>This will be done by ensuring closer and more immediate communication between Governance and People & Citizen Services to notify of all and any committee changes. HR Service Centre will monitor PVG membership and notify Governance of outcome of PVG check before an Elected Member commences on a committee. Quarterly 'Elected Member Compliance Monitoring and Exception Reporting' meetings will be established between People & Citizen Services and Governance to review compliance with statutory requirements. In addition, we will publish a news post to the Elected Members' Intranet with full information about the PVG and statutory training requirements, to increase awareness, transparency and accountability. We will also include PVG and statutory training compliance as part of committee effectiveness reports, so that it is monitored and published annually.</i></p>		
	Risk Agreed	Person(s)	Due Date
	Yes	Service Lead – People Services / Interim Chief Officer – Governance	a) & d) March 2025 1b) April 2025 1c) December 2024

Ref	Description	Risk Rating	Minor
1.2	<p>Elected Member Development Framework – The Elected Members' Development Framework describes the core competencies and requirements of effective Elected Member. This should be informed by a comprehensive Training Needs Analysis to ensure appropriate training is developed and prioritised for completion.</p> <p><u>Training Prioritisation</u></p> <p>An Elected Members' Development Framework was made available during this review that People & Citizen Services advised was used to inform the induction and development</p>		

Ref	Description	Risk Rating	Minor
	<p>programme and was shared in summary format with Councillors for their induction. This includes training prioritisation definitions for courses delivered to Councillors as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory – a requirement in law or otherwise a requirement of the Council to help ensure compliance with the law. • Essential – a requirement to enable you to undertake all aspects of your role. • Recommended – content which will give you key skills and knowledge to undertake your role. <p>The framework states:</p> <p><i>“It is up to each Elected Member to assess your own confidence and undertake suggested or alternative development opportunities to enhance your skills and knowledge, except where the training is a statutory requirement in law.”</i></p> <p>Whilst the framework lists training available to Councillors and categorises most courses by priority, this is not the case for all.</p> <p>In addition, the full Elected Members Development Framework made available to Internal Audit is in draft format and is unavailable to Councillors on the ACC intranet. Also, the framework training classifications do not match the “<i>Members Development So Far</i>” spreadsheet used to track training delivery, with Code of Conduct and Planning training classed as ‘Essential’ in the draft framework and ‘Statutory’ in the training delivery spreadsheet.</p> <p>These issues risk Councillors being unclear about training requirements and not attending / completing training as required.</p> <p><u>Councillor Consultation / Training Evaluation</u></p> <p>People Development advised they twice sought feedback from Councillors on their overall 2022 induction via MS Forms to inform future training deliver, and that an email was sent to all Elected Members after first 4 weeks (2nd June 2022) titled: Elected Member Induction: 4 week evaluation; then another one after summer recess (29/08/22): Elected Members’ Upcoming Development Events. In general feedback was positive with some suggestions for improvements e.g. more in person sessions, more mandatory sessions where members are required to attend, more repeat / refresher sessions. In addition, members of People Development and Members Support met with Group Leaders from Lib Dem, SNP, Independent and Conservative in January 2023 get Induction Feedback and to discuss development needs of the groups.</p> <p>Internal Audit also sought feedback from Councillors on their induction and responses were positive overall, feedback included requests for more one-to-one sessions and potentially a reduction in the volume of information delivered in initial sessions i.e. spacing sessions out further.</p> <p>Notably, the response rate to People & Citizen Services’ evaluations via MS Forms exercise was low with only eight (18%) Councillors providing feedback and the next induction will not be delivered until 2026, by which time training needs may have changed. Therefore, it may be prudent to involve long standing Councillors as part of the next induction programme development process closer to the time, for example through a relevant group / forum, to inform training content and delivery.</p> <p><u>Corporate Mandatory Training</u></p> <p>Whilst it is not a core part of their Induction Programme or promoted on their Elected Members Intranet, Councillors have access to Council’s online eLearning platform, ACC Learn, and the wide variety of corporate training this offers, include the employee mandatory</p>		

Ref	Description	Risk Rating	Minor																																														
	<p>training courses. A comparison of the mandatory ACC Learn training for employees and the Elected Member Development Framework course priorities is detailed below.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #003366; color: white;">ACC Learn Mandatory Course</th> <th style="background-color: #003366; color: white;">EM Development Framework Course</th> <th style="background-color: #003366; color: white;">Coverage</th> <th style="background-color: #003366; color: white;">Priority Classification</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Information Governance</td> <td>Data Protection and Freedom of Information</td> <td>Similar</td> <td>Essential</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Corporate Parenting</td> <td>The Role of Chief Social Work Officer</td> <td>Similar</td> <td>Recommended</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevent</td> <td>No equivalent</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>No Classification</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fire Safety</td> <td>Health and Safety: lone working, personal safety</td> <td>n/a</td> <td>No Classification</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Adult Protection</td> <td>The Role of Chief Social Work Officer</td> <td>Similar</td> <td>Recommended</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Essential Child Protection</td> <td>The Role of Chief Social Work Officer</td> <td>Similar</td> <td>Recommended</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Introduction to the Bribery Act</td> <td>Councillors' Code of Conduct; Finance Session 1 Stewardship and Governance</td> <td>Similar</td> <td>Essential and Statutory respectively</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Equality and Diversity for All Employees</td> <td>Equalities</td> <td>Similar</td> <td>Optional</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Introduction to Health and Safety</td> <td>Health and Safety: lone working, personal safety, trade unions</td> <td>Similar</td> <td>Recommended</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Customer Service Training</td> <td>Supporting Constituents</td> <td>Similar</td> <td>Essential</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Whilst the majority of mandatory ACC Learn training for employees has a relevant equivalent for Councillors within their programme, a gap is noted in relation to Prevent counter terrorism. There is no evidence Prevent has been addressed, risking delivery of relevant support where needed.</p> <p>People and Citizen Services advised they understand the need to fully formalise training requirements and are liaising with the Improvement Service to inform this process. A recommendation is included to track progress.</p>			ACC Learn Mandatory Course	EM Development Framework Course	Coverage	Priority Classification	Information Governance	Data Protection and Freedom of Information	Similar	Essential	Corporate Parenting	The Role of Chief Social Work Officer	Similar	Recommended	Prevent	No equivalent	n/a	No Classification	Fire Safety	Health and Safety: lone working, personal safety	n/a	No Classification	Adult Protection	The Role of Chief Social Work Officer	Similar	Recommended	Essential Child Protection	The Role of Chief Social Work Officer	Similar	Recommended	Introduction to the Bribery Act	Councillors' Code of Conduct; Finance Session 1 Stewardship and Governance	Similar	Essential and Statutory respectively	Equality and Diversity for All Employees	Equalities	Similar	Optional	Introduction to Health and Safety	Health and Safety: lone working, personal safety, trade unions	Similar	Recommended	Customer Service Training	Supporting Constituents	Similar	Essential		
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<p>a) The Elected Development Members Framework should be finalised and published for Councillor training describing training requirement and frequency of completion. This should cover Prevent training and any other online training that's relevant e.g. via ACC Learn corporate mandatory training.</p> <p>b) Councillors should be engaged via an appropriate forum as part of the development of future training particularly for the induction and development programme.</p> <p>c) Training needs analysis should be regularly undertaken to inform the Elected Members Development Framework.</p>																																																	
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<p><i>Whilst it is true that the full Elected Members Development Framework document has not been published to Elected Members, it is also true to say that those elements that were relevant to Councillors at the point of Induction were shared in the Induction programme that was shared, the only exceptions to this were potential training courses that had not been fully scoped out and were part of initial planning/thinking for their development over the course of</i></p>																																																	

Ref	Description	Risk Rating	Minor
	<p><i>the 2022-2027 intake. All relevant training courses, alongside their prioritisation and clarity for whom these courses were statutory, was added as an outlook appointment directly into Elected Member diaries. So the risk of Councillors being unclear about training requirements was minimised as far as possible - and the likelihood of attendance increased by ensuring the time was held in their diaries. The only difference between the summary version of the Elected Members Development Framework shared with Councillors in advance of election, at the point of election, and on their first formal day in office – and the draft one held by People Development, is additional courses which are still planned but without firm dates.</i></p> <p><i>Having said this, finalising the Elected Members Development Framework is well underway. Engagement commenced with subject matter experts in June 2024 to seek insights into legislative changes etc that might require an update and refresh session with Members. People Development are working with the Improvement Service to access a Political Skills Assessment Toolkit that can be used to undertake a training needs analysis to identify gaps in Members' skills and knowledge. It is our intention to adapt this so that it also enables self-assessment against the Elected Members Development Framework, then promote this to Elected Members via Group Leaders to increase uptake. The results will be used to shape the updated Elected Members Development Framework which we intend to publish early in 2025, and an associated calendar of development events to enable Elected Members to refresh their knowledge and plug any gaps.</i></p> <p><i>Engagement has been undertaken with our CONTEST lead for Aberdeen City Council, who has confirmed that completion of PREVENT is not statutory or essential for Elected Members as they do not have the same legislative responsibilities as incumbent upon employers, but it should be 'Recommended' as part of their development as awareness for them. It has been determined that our existing ACC Learn module is suitable for their awareness and that the undertaking of this training online is sufficient for their training need and level of priority. Therefore, PREVENT will be promoted to Elected Members by Christmas 2024. We will take this opportunity to raise awareness of the rich wider development offering available to all and any employees, partners, volunteers via our online eLearning platform ACC Learn – there may be a number of courses that are of personal interest to Elected Members as part of their own continuous professional development. Their completion of online training modules can be tracked centrally at any time.</i></p> <p><i>To improve the way Councillors are engaged in the development of future training, evaluations will now be sent following any development intervention – this will also be an opportunity to chase any missing attendance lists from trainers and remind Elected Members of other available development and a reminder to record on the PDP.</i></p> <p><i>The People Development Manager attends quarterly Members Services Working Group, or submits a brief update where attendance isn't possible. This provides an opportunity/appropriate forum to engage Councillors face-to-face (via Microsoft Teams) on their development programme – this involves both gathering feedback on training undertaken, proposed and scheduled, as well as the means of delivery.</i></p>		
	Risk Agreed	Person(s)	Due Date
	Yes	Service Lead – People Services	November 2025

Ref	Description	Risk Rating	Moderate
1.3	Monitoring and Exception Reporting – As stated in the introduction to this report above, the Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee concluded, in January 2006, that it was important that Councillors actively engage with training and development opportunities on an ongoing basis and recommended that all Councillors, whether new to the role or long-		

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	<p>serving, should participate in a training needs analysis and agree a personal development plan as soon as possible after an election.</p> <p>As described in 1.2 above, the Council's draft Elected Members' Development Framework describes statutory, essential and recommended training for Councillors, intended to ensure Councillors comply with the law and can meet the essential aspects of their role. It is up to each Councillor to assess their own confidence and undertake suggested or alternative development opportunities, except where training is a statutory requirement in law.</p> <p>However, statutory training completion relating to Code of Conduct (completion 78%) the Planning Development Management Committee (completion 67%), Finance Stewardship and Governance (completion 49%), and Local Review Body (completion 54%) has not been fully completed. Also, in relation to Planning Development and Management Committee it was verified that two (33%) Committee members sat on this Committee without having completed the necessary training (meeting 18 Sep 24).</p> <p>Statutory Training</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #003366; color: white;">Course</th> <th style="background-color: #003366; color: white;">Applies to</th> <th style="background-color: #003366; color: white;">Councillors completed</th> <th style="background-color: #003366; color: white;">Completion %</th> <th style="background-color: #003366; color: white;">Target %</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Code of Conduct</td> <td>All Cllrs (45)</td> <td>35¹</td> <td>78%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Licensing Board</td> <td>9 LB Cllrs</td> <td>9</td> <td>100%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planning Development Management Cttee</td> <td>9 PDMC Cllrs</td> <td>7</td> <td>67%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Finance 1 – Stew ards hip & Governance</td> <td>All Cllrs (45)</td> <td>17</td> <td>49%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Local Review Body</td> <td>13 LRB Cllrs</td> <td>7</td> <td>54%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Essential training completion is also shown below. This training is required to undertake essential aspects of a Councillors and whilst alternative development opportunities can be pursued by Councillors it was notable that attendance was relatively low as shown in the table below (average across all courses where attendance available 45%).</p> <p>Essential Training</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #003366; color: white;">Course</th> <th style="background-color: #003366; color: white;">Applies to</th> <th style="background-color: #003366; color: white;">Councillors completed</th> <th style="background-color: #003366; color: white;">Completion %</th> <th style="background-color: #003366; color: white;">Target %</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee</td> <td>AR&S Cllrs (9)</td> <td>9²</td> <td>No record</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Civil Contingencies</td> <td>All Cllrs (45)</td> <td>11</td> <td>24%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Climate, Energy and Just Transition Commitments</td> <td>All Cllrs (45)</td> <td>18</td> <td>40%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Code of Conduct – the Standards Commission</td> <td>All Cllrs (45)</td> <td>No record</td> <td>No record</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Data Protection and Freedom of Information</td> <td>All Cllrs (45)</td> <td>19³</td> <td>42%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Decision Making - How the Council Works</td> <td>All Cllrs (45)</td> <td>13</td> <td>29%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Developer Obligations</td> <td>9 PDMC Cllrs</td> <td>10⁴</td> <td>111%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Digital Skills 1 – Your Device and Digital Workplace</td> <td>All Cllrs (45)</td> <td>18</td> <td>40%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Digital Skills 2 - Collaboration and Co-authoring</td> <td>All Cllrs (45)</td> <td>14</td> <td>31%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Equalities</td> <td>All Cllrs (45)</td> <td>17</td> <td>38%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Course	Applies to	Councillors completed	Completion %	Target %	Code of Conduct	All Cllrs (45)	35 ¹	78%	100%	Licensing Board	9 LB Cllrs	9	100%	100%	Planning Development Management Cttee	9 PDMC Cllrs	7	67%	100%	Finance 1 – Stew ards hip & Governance	All Cllrs (45)	17	49%	100%	Local Review Body	13 LRB Cllrs	7	54%	100%	Course	Applies to	Councillors completed	Completion %	Target %	Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee	AR&S Cllrs (9)	9 ²	No record	100%	Civil Contingencies	All Cllrs (45)	11	24%	100%	Climate, Energy and Just Transition Commitments	All Cllrs (45)	18	40%	100%	Code of Conduct – the Standards Commission	All Cllrs (45)	No record	No record	100%	Data Protection and Freedom of Information	All Cllrs (45)	19 ³	42%	100%	Decision Making - How the Council Works	All Cllrs (45)	13	29%	100%	Developer Obligations	9 PDMC Cllrs	10 ⁴	111%	100%	Digital Skills 1 – Your Device and Digital Workplace	All Cllrs (45)	18	40%	100%	Digital Skills 2 - Collaboration and Co-authoring	All Cllrs (45)	14	31%	100%	Equalities	All Cllrs (45)	17	38%	100%			
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¹ This was estimated from memory (no formalised records)

² Governance advise this was an online session which shows attendance of 9 Elected Members the majority of which were AR&S Committee members.

³ Data Protection & FOI – as advised by People Development based on their review of training recording.

⁴ According to People and Citizen Services records from 2023.

Ref	Description			Risk Rating	Moderate
	Finance Overview – Councillor Finance Role and Responsibilities	All Cllrs (45)	15 ⁵	33%	100%
	Finance Session 2 - Resources, Transformation and Decisions	All Cllrs (45)	11	24%	100%
	Finance Session 3 - How Local Government Finance Works	All Cllrs (45)	16	36%	100%
	Finance Session 4 – Costing, Options Appraisal & Treasury	All Cllrs (45)	10	22%	100%
	Integrated Impact Assessment	All Cllrs (45)	13	29%	100%
	Integrated Joint Board – Role and Functions of IJB and H&SCP	All Cllrs (45)	No record	No record	100%
	Integrated Joint Board Induction on the Strategic Plan	IJB Cllrs (6)	6	100%	100%
	Licensing Committee Training	LCT Cllrs (9)	5	56%	100%
	Mod.gov – Accessing Committee Papers	All Cllrs (45)	16	36%	100%
	Outside Bodies including ALEOs	All Cllrs (45)	19	42%	100%
	Pension Committee	PC Cllrs (7)	5	71%	100%
	Supporting Constituents	All Cllrs (45)	27 ⁶	60%	100%
	Average attendance			45%	

Personal Development Plans

A comprehensive Personal Development Plan (PDP) pro-forma was circulated to Councillors in 2023 by Members Support. These included details of courses completed during the induction for each Councillor in their respective PDP. There is an onus on Councillors to engage with the PDP process and indicate where training is necessary, and Members Support are expected to facilitate this as stated in the ongoing development sections of the PDP (see below):

“The Members Support team will review Personal Development Plans on a regular basis to ensure that relevant training is issued and organised. Should you identify any new development as a high priority, please contact Members Support directly at memberssupport@aberdeencity.gov.uk so that this can be dealt with urgently”.

To determine if the PDP process is operating as it should, nine Councillors PDPs were reviewed where either statutory or essential training had not been completed. All three (100%) Councillors reviewed who had not completed statutory training (one Planning Development Management Committee and two Finance 1 – Stewardship & Governance) had no record of this on their respective PDP and similarly all six other Councillors reviewed who had not completed six different essential training courses (Digital Skill 1, Equalities, Integrated Impact Assessment, Climate, ModGov, Civil Contingencies) had no recorded training that compensated for this i.e. to show within the Personal Development Plan that no essential training gap exists which would require to be resolved. This indicates the PDP process is not identifying these training gaps for further support to be delivered.

In addition, as shown in the tables above, attendance records were unavailable for certain courses meaning Members Support are not fully informed of training completed to help identify training gaps.

Also, it was noted that one Councillor did not appear to have a PDP based on what had been shared during the audit.

⁵ Finance Overview – Attendance not recorded. Service advises 15 accessed online but no record for in person.

⁶ Supporting Constituents – Attendance not recorded. Service understands up to 27 attended.

Ref	Description	Risk Rating	Moderate
	<p>Failure to undertake relevant training can diminish Councillors' effectiveness undertaking their duties, including scrutiny of Council activity and decision making, risking the achievement of Council Priorities.</p>		
	IA Recommended Mitigating Actions		
	<p>a) A process should be established for ensuring necessary training is completed particularly where this is required for Committee / Board membership.</p> <p>b) Training attendance records should be adequately maintained, and Personal Development Plans should be monitored to ensure statutory and essential training is completed where necessary.</p> <p>c) If feasible a system of automated exception reporting should be established to notify Councillors to undertake necessary training where outstanding.</p>		
	Management Actions to Address Issues/Risks		
	<p>a) <i>The audit has highlighted that there is a need to more closely monitor membership of committees and ensure statutory requirements are in place, both PVG membership and any required training. This will be done by ensuring closer and more immediate communication between (Governance) Committee Services and People & Citizen Services (the HR Service Centre) to notify of all and any committee changes. HR Service Centre will monitor PVG membership and notify Governance of outcome of PVG check before an Elected Member commences on a committee. Quarterly Elected Member Monitoring and Exception Reporting between People Development, HRSC, Committee Services and Members Support to review compliance with statutory requirements.</i></p> <p>b) <i>To improve and ensure accurate attendance lists, from early 2024 onwards, the People Development Co-ordinator has joined the start of all known EM Development events, to check attendance. She is in close communication with the trainer after the event to capture any late joiners and to gather any feedback, as well as any resources/recordings that need to be shared as part of the SharePoint page that is built for every single training course.</i></p> <p>c) <i>We accept that Personal Development Plans have not been reviewed/monitored as closely as they should be. A comprehensive review of PDPs will take place in the next few months – including a review of the template, review of how these are captured and maintained by Members Support. We will engage with Members Support and Councillors to seek their feedback on the current template and approach, then roll out training and support once a new template and approach is agreed, to ensure both Members Support and Councillors are meeting regularly, discussing development records and needs, and updating PDPs correctly. People Development will explore whether PDPs and Elected Members development more broadly could be moved into our Learning Management System, ACC Learn, which would enable automated exception reporting and easier monitoring.</i></p> <p>d) <i>Training on scrutiny is currently considered to be 'essential' for members of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee however is 'recommended' for other elected members. Given that scrutiny is a role for members in all committee meetings, we intend to develop a programme of scrutiny training which incorporates all members to support them in their scrutiny role. This will be a part response to the Audit Scotland Best Value recommendation that there is scope to use the Committee more effectively to scrutinise council decisions. This is being progressed through the next Scheme of Governance review, reporting to Council in April 2024.</i></p>		
	Risk Agreed	Person(s)	Due Date
	Yes	People Development Manager	November 2025

4 Appendix 1 – Assurance Terms and Rating Scales

4.1 Overall report level and net risk rating definitions

The following levels and ratings will be used to assess the risk in this report:

Risk level	Definition
Corporate	This issue / risk level impacts the Council as a whole. Mitigating actions should be taken at the Senior Leadership level.
Function	This issue / risk level has implications at the functional level and the potential to impact across a range of services. They could be mitigated through the redeployment of resources or a change of policy within a given function.
Cluster	This issue / risk level impacts a particular Service or Cluster. Mitigating actions should be implemented by the responsible Chief Officer.
Programme and Project	This issue / risk level impacts the programme or project that has been reviewed. Mitigating actions should be taken at the level of the programme or project concerned.

Net risk rating	Description	Assurance assessment
Minor	A sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited.	Substantial
Moderate	There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified, which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.	Reasonable
Major	Significant gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance were identified. Improvement is required to the system of governance, risk management and control to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.	Limited
Severe	Immediate action is required to address fundamental gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance identified. The system of governance, risk management and control is inadequate to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.	Minimal

Individual issue / risk	Definitions
Minor	Although the element of internal control is satisfactory there is scope for improvement. Addressing this issue is considered desirable and should result in enhanced control or better value for money. Action should be taken within a 12 month period.
Moderate	An element of control is missing or only partial in nature. The existence of the weakness identified has an impact on the audited area's adequacy and effectiveness. Action should be taken within a six month period.
Major	The absence of, or failure to comply with, an appropriate internal control, such as those described in the Council's Scheme of Governance. This could result in, for example, a material financial loss, a breach of legislative requirements or reputational damage to the Council. Action should be taken within three months.
Severe	This is an issue / risk that is likely to significantly affect the achievement of one or many of the Council's objectives or could impact the effectiveness or efficiency of the Council's activities or processes. Examples include a material recurring breach of legislative requirements or actions that will likely result in a material financial loss or significant reputational damage to the Council. Action is considered imperative to ensure that the Council is not exposed to severe risks and should be taken immediately.

5 Appendix 2 – Assurance Scope and Terms of Reference

5.1 Area subject to review

The Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee reported, in January 2006, that the public were entitled to have high expectations of their Councillors and to feel confident that they are carrying out their role effectively and efficiently. It concluded it was important that Councillors actively engage with training and development opportunities on an ongoing basis and recommended that all Councillors, whether new to the role or long-serving, should participate in a training needs analysis and agree a personal development plan as soon as possible after an election. The plan should be based around the core competencies determined as being important to the effectiveness of Councillors.

In August 2010, Audit Scotland produced their *publication "Roles and working relationships: are you getting it right?"*, which concluded that Councils must:

- Ensure all newly elected Councillors are provided with training and support to help them understand their roles.
- Provide guidance, training and advice to Councillors serving on external boards and highlight the specific responsibilities attached to these roles.
- Provide regular training and support to Councillors to help them fulfil their roles.
- Review induction training and consider introducing practical guidance to provide new Councillors with a more detailed understanding of what their roles and responsibilities mean on a day-to-day basis.

The report also concluded that Councillors must:

- Ensure they are aware of expected behaviour and conduct set out in the Councillors' Code of Conduct.
- Communicate with officers and explain their training and development needs.
- Provide feedback on training courses to help ensure their needs are met.
- Make better use of training and development opportunities to help them fulfil their roles.

A further 2016 report by Audit Scotland entitled *"How councils work - Roles and working relationships in councils: are you still getting it right?"* identified several issues relating to Councillor training, including:

- Evidence from Best Value audits highlighted that councillors' take up of training is at best variable and sometimes they have poor perceptions of the training they receive.
- Councils should consider the role of their training and development programmes in advising members and officers on their responsibilities in relation to ALEOs.
- Involving councillors (both incumbents and newly elected) can help tailor training programmes to be more effective and wide-ranging, covering all issues and help prevent knowledge gaps developing once new Councillors begin their duties.
- Training and development should be an ongoing process, not just a one-off induction.

Rationale for review

The objective of this audit is to obtain assurance over the processes in place for onboarding and ongoing support and training of Councillors, including the role of Group leaders.

In the absence of adequate training and support, there is a greater risk Councillors will not understand their role, impairing the Council's governance and risk management arrangements, and reducing necessary scrutiny of Council policy and the delivery of Council priorities. This area was last subject to review in January 2018 in Internal Audit AC1816. Recommendations were made to enhance control over training plans; training attendance / completion; risk management of untrained Councillors; and continuous personal development of Councillors.

5.2 Scope and risk level of review

This review will offer the following judgements:

- An overall **net risk** rating at the **Corporate** level.
- Individual **net risk** ratings for findings.

Please see Appendix 1 – Assurance Terms and Rating Scales for details of our risk level and net risk rating definitions.

5.2.1 Detailed scope areas

As a risk-based review this scope is not limited by the specific areas of activity listed below. Where related and other issues / risks are identified in the undertaking of this review these will be reported, as considered appropriate by IA, within the resulting report.

The specific areas to be covered during the visits are:

- Written Policies and Procedures
- Training Needs Analysis
- Personal Development Plans
- Induction and Other Training/Support Delivery
- Evaluation of Training/Support
- Monitoring and Exception Reporting

5.3 Methodology

This review will be undertaken through interviews with key staff involved in the process(es) under review and analysis and review of supporting data, documentation, and paperwork. To support our work, we will review relevant legislation, codes of practice, policies, procedures, and guidance.

Due to hybrid working arrangements, this review will be primarily undertaken remotely.

5.4 IA outputs

The IA outputs from this review will be:

- A risk-based report with the results of the review, to be shared with the following:
 - Council Key Contacts (see 1.7 below)
 - Audit Committee (final only)
 - External Audit (final only)

5.5 IA staff

The IA staff assigned to this review are:

- Farai Magodo, Auditor (**audit lead**)
- Andy Johnston, Audit Team Manager
- Jamie Dale, Chief Internal Auditor (**oversight only**)

5.6 Council key contacts

The key contacts for this review across the Council are:

- Andy MacDonald, Executive Director – Corporate Services
- Sandie Scott, People Development Manager
- Vikki Cuthbert, Interim Chief Officer – Governance
- Alan Thomson, Interim Chief Officer – Governance
- Isla Newcombe, Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services

5.7 Delivery plan and milestones

The key delivery plan and milestones are:

Milestone	Planned date
Scope issued	04/07/24

Milestone	Planned date
Scope agreed	12/07/24
Fieldwork commences	29/07/24
Fieldwork completed	23/08/24
Draft report issued	13/09/24
Process owner response	04/10/24
Director response	11/10/24
Final report issued	18/10/24