

3.6 Audit Committee: Specific Terms of Reference

3.6.1 Membership: All Councillors except Members of the Executive may be Members of the Audit Committee. The Committee has eight members who are elected councillors and who are appointed at the Annual Meeting of Full Council. The Committee will also appoint up to two Independent Members, who are non-voting.

3.6.2 Areas of Work: Its role is to provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements. In this regard, the Audit Committee will be attended by Chief Finance Officer and the Head of Internal Audit or their nominated deputies.

Its responsibilities include:

(a) Financial Management of the Council:

- To monitor the arrangements and preparations for financial reporting to ensure that statutory requirements and professional standards can be met.
- To review and approve the authority's financial statements and annual accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.
- To approve the Council Tax Base.
- To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.
- To consider a report from the Chief Finance Officer (or relevant responsible officer) on agreed recommendations which have not been implemented within a reasonable timescale.
- To maintain an overview of the Council's Constitution in respect of contract procedure rules or financial regulations and maintain oversight of any exemptions or waivers.

(b) Internal Audit:

- To review and approve the internal audit charter and internal audit plan, including the scope of internal audit work and its resourcing requirements.
- To consider The Head of Internal Audit's annual report and opinion, including a summary of internal audit activity; a statement on the level of conformance with audit standards; and the level of assurance it can give over the Council's corporate governance arrangements.
- To consider reports from the Head of Internal Audit on internal audit performance during the year, to include key findings; acceptance of recommendations; and the results of follow-up audits relating to previously agreed audit recommendations.
- To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested;
- To consider reports dealing with the management and performance of the providers of internal audit services.

- To facilitate private meetings with the Head of Internal Audit, as may be required

(c) External Audit:

- To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance.
- To consider any statutory recommendations or public interest reports issued by the external auditor.
- To monitor the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
- To facilitate opportunities for private meetings with the external auditor as may be required.

(d) Other corporate governance matters:

- To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management and corporate governance in the Council.
- To monitor progress addressing risk related issues.
- To consider the Council's arrangements for corporate governance and agreeing necessary actions to ensure compliance with best practice.
- To review and approve the Annual Governance Statement and consider whether it is commensurate with the assurances received by the committee during the reporting period.
- To consider the arrangements to secure value for money and review the effectiveness of these arrangements.
- To review the assessment of fraud risk and to monitor policies on 'Raising Concerns at Work', anti-fraud and anti-corruption.
- To receive reports on the Council's use of investigatory powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.