

AUDIT COMMITTEE - Terms of Reference

1. Membership

10 Members plus 1 co-opted independent (non-elected) Member in a non-voting capacity, appointed in accordance with the Constitution.

- Chair to be a Member who is neither a Cabinet Member nor a Scrutiny Member
- A maximum of one Cabinet Member may serve on the Committee
- At least one Scrutiny Committee Member must serve on the Committee

2. Quorum

4 Members

3. Terms of Reference

The Audit Committee provides independent assurance to Full Council on the effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk management, control and assurance arrangements and fraud prevention and detection. In discharging its role, the Committee will have regard to relevant professional guidance and standards, including the Global Internal Audit Standards (GIAS) and CIPFA guidance on audit committees.

3.1. Internal Audit

To advise or comment as appropriate on:

- The Internal Audit Charter, ensuring it reflects the Internal Audit mandate and requirements under the Global Internal Audit Standards
- The Annual Internal Audit Plan, including alignment with organisational risks and strategic priorities
- Progress against the Internal Audit Plan and the adequacy of management responses to audit findings
- Summaries of key Internal Audit reports, including themes, systemic issues, and root causes
- The Annual Report and Opinion of the Chief Audit Executive (the Council's Client Audit Manager), including confirmation of conformance with the Global Internal Audit Standards
- The Internal Audit Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme, including the timing and outcomes of any external quality assessments

3.2. External Audit

To advise or comment as appropriate on:

- The External Auditor's audit strategy, plans and approach
- The Audit Results Report/Report to Those Charged with Governance
- The Annual Audit and Inspection Letter
- Proposals relating to the appointment or procurement of the External Auditor
- The scope and depth of external audit work and any significant issues arising

3.3. Co-ordination and Assurance

To review and advise on:

- Arrangements for effective co-operation and co-ordination between Internal Audit, External Audit, and other assurance providers, in line with GIAS expectations around coordination of assurance
- The Council's overall assurance framework

3.4. Anti-Fraud

To oversee and advise on:

- The Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, including whistleblowing arrangements and associated policies.
- The Annual Anti-Fraud Plan, including alignment with organisational risks, the *Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally Strategy* and CIPFA best practice.
- Progress against the Anti-Fraud Plan and the adequacy of management responses to the risk of fraud.
- Oversight of the Council's statutory duty to prevent Fraud/Bribery/Tax Evasion and CIPFA guidance on preventing money laundering.
- Reports on fraud risks, investigations (where appropriate), and control improvements

3.5. Governance, Risk and Control

To advise or comment on:

- The Annual Governance Statement, including whether it fairly reflects the Council's governance effectiveness
- The Council's Risk Management Framework and strategic risk register
- The Council's Constitution in respect of Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules.

- Arrangements for securing value for money and Best Value

3.6. Financial Management and Reporting

To consider and advise on:

- The Statement of Accounts, including accounting policies and significant judgements
- Related capital determinations and accounting matters
- The Treasury Management Strategy and performance reports

3.7. Other Responsibilities

To oversee:

- The Council's Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) policy and activity.
- Any other matters referred to the Committee by Council, Cabinet or senior officers relating to governance, audit, anti-fraud, or financial management