

ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the committee is to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, independent scrutiny of the Authority's financial and non financial performance to the extent that it affects the Authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process.

Composition

Membership of the Audit and Accounts Committee shall comprise 9 Members, be politically balanced and shall not include any Members of the Executive. A non voting member, with appropriate skills and experience, may be co-opted on to the Committee with the approval of the Council.

Terms of Reference

Internal and External Audit

- a) Review and approve (but not direct) the Internal Audit Charter and Strategy, including internal audit resourcing.
- b) Review and approve (but not direct) the annual Internal Audit work programme. Consider the proposed and actual Internal Audit coverage and whether this provides adequate assurance on organisations main business risks, review the performance of Internal Audit.
- c) Receive summary internal audit reports and seek assurance on the adequacy of management response to internal audit advice, recommendations and action plans.
- d) Review arrangements made for cooperation between Internal Audit, External Audit and other review bodies and ensure that there are effective relationships which actively promote the value of the audit process.
- e) Receive the Annual Internal Audit report and opinion.
- f) Review and consider proposed and actual External Audit coverage and its adequacy and consider the reports of external audit and inspection agencies.
- g) Receive updates from External Audit on External Audit findings and opinions (including the audit of the annual financial statements and the value for money conclusion) and seek assurance on the adequacy of management response to External Audit advice, recommendations and action plans.

Risk Management

- a) Review the adequacy of arrangements for identifying and managing the organisation's business risks, including partnerships with other organisations. This includes review of the Council's risk management policy and strategy and their implementation.
- b) Review the robustness of the strategic risk register and the adequacy of associated risk management arrangements.
- c) Receive and consider regular reports on the risk environment and associated management action.

Internal Control Arrangements, Corporate Governance and the Annual Governance Statement

- a) Review the effectiveness of corporate governance arrangements and internal control across the organisation and the adequacy of action taken to address any weaknesses or control failures.
- b) Conduct a review of the draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS), which is a key assurance statement required to be completed each year in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021.
- c) Approve the final version of the Annual Governance Statement.

Anti - Fraud and Corruption Arrangements

- a) Review and ensure the adequacy of the organisation's Anti – Fraud & Corruption policy and strategy and the effectiveness of their application throughout the Authority.
- b) Review and ensure that adequate arrangements are established and operating to deal with situations of suspected or actual fraud and corruption.

Accounts

- a) Approve the annual Statement of Accounts, including subsequent amendments.
- b) Consider the External Auditor's report on the audit of the annual financial statements.
- c) Be responsible for any matters arising from the audit of the Council's accounts, including the auditor's opinion on the accounts, identification of any misstatements, comments on the accounting and internal control systems and qualitative aspects of accounting practices and financial reporting.

Access and Reporting

- a) To have the right of access to senior officers and all committees of the Council.

- b) To report directly to the Executive or Council, as appropriate, on matters within these terms of reference.

Delegation

In exercising the power and duties assigned to the Committee in its terms of reference, the Audit and Accounts Committee shall have delegated power to resolve and to act on behalf of and in the name of the Council.