

Section 21

Audit & Governance Committee

21.1 STATUS

The Audit & Governance Committee is a standing committee of the Council with the purpose providing independent assurance of the adequacy of the governance framework and the associated control environment.

21.2 MEMBERSHIP AND METHOD OF APPOINTMENT

The Committee will comprise no more than 7 Members, appointed by the Council in compliance with Section 15 and Schedule 1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 concerning political balance.

The Audit & Governance Committee may not include any member of the Cabinet or the Chairman of a Scrutiny Committee.

Members will be properly trained to fulfil their role.

21.3 CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be appointed by the Council.

21.4 ATTENDANCE BY COUNCILLORS WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee may invite or allow representations from Members Officers members of the public and experts so far as these relate to the matter before them and so far as they are appropriate and proportionate.

21.5 FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

Meetings of the Committee will be held in accordance with the schedule of meetings agreed by the Council and other arrangements regarding the calling of meetings.

21.6 AGENDA

Prior to the meeting of the Committee, the Managing Director will circulate to all Members of the Committee the Agenda and Reports to be considered.

21.7 PROCEEDINGS

The Managing Director (or nominee) shall be the Clerk to the Committee.

The provisions of Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, will apply where appropriate.

Where not already provided for above, the Council's Procedure Rules will apply.

21.8 CORE FUNCTIONS

Audit Activity

- Approve internal audit's strategy and audit plan;
- Approve the Audit Charter and the Quality Assurance & Improvement Programme;
- Consider reports dealing with the management and performance of Internal Audit;
- Consider the level of assurance Internal Audit can give over the Council's corporate governance arrangements;
- Consider periodic reports from Internal Audit on the main issues arising from their work and "fundamental" recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale, and seek assurance that action has been taken where necessary;
- Consider the reports of the External Auditor and monitor the implementation of any recommendations made.

Regulatory Framework

- Consider the internal control environment and the level of assurance that may be given as to its effectiveness, to include approval of the Annual Governance Statement;
- Satisfy itself that the authority's assurance statements, including the Annual Governance Statement, properly reflect the risk environment and any actions required to improve it;
- Monitor the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements, including the actions taken to manage risks and to receive regular reports on risk management;
- Monitor the effective development and operation of the corporate governance framework in the Council and to recommend to the Cabinet or the Council, as appropriate, the actions necessary to ensure compliance with best practice;

- Monitor the effectiveness of the Council's policies and arrangements for anti-fraud and bribery, Money Laundering and Confidential Reporting.

Accounts

- Approve the financial statements following consideration of the External Auditor's opinion and reports to Members.

21.9 DELEGATED POWERS

The Committee is empowered to deal with any of the functions detailed above.