

PART 13

APPENDIX E - AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

PROCEDURE RULES - EXTRACT

1.

Role of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee

1.1

The Council has established an Audit, Standards and Governance Committee.

1.2

The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee works independently of the Council's Executive and Scrutiny to provide assurance to the Council on the effectiveness of its governance arrangements .

Commented [MM1]: Insertions for consistency.

1.3

The ultimate responsibility for audit rests with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for finance and the Section 151 Officer. Therefore the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee can make recommendations but it is not the role of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee to be a substitute for management of Internal Audit.

1.4

The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee do not have the power to make decisions with regard to Internal Audit or to direct officers with regard to Internal Audit.

1.5

The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee shall work in partnership with the Council's Monitoring Officer, Deputy Monitoring Officer, Leaders of the Political Groups and the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for corporate governance to support the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by Councillors and co-opted members of Council bodies.

Commented [MM2]: MM 14.12.2023

Terminology: use the [majority / leading] Political Group?

Commented [CW3R2]: Group is right

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2. Terms of Reference

2.1

The terms of reference of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee are as follows:

To provide independent assurance to the Council in relation to:

a. The effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements, risk management framework and internal control environment, including overseeing:

- Risk management strategies;
- Anti-fraud arrangements;
- Whistle-blowing strategies;
- Internal and external audit activity
- Democratic Governance

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- b. the effectiveness of the Council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent it affects exposure to risk and poor internal control;
- c. the annual governance statement.
- d. The review of the annual statement of accounts, confirming the appropriate accounting policies have been followed, including the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

Appointment of External Auditors

- e. To arrange the recruitment and operation of the Council's Auditor Panel and to recommend the appointment of external auditors in accordance with the requirements of the Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Standards

- f. Promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Councillors and any co-opted members of Council bodies.
- g. Assist Councillors and co-opted members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct.
- h. Advise the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct.
- i. Monitor the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct.
- j. Advise, train or arrange to train Councillors and co-opted members on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct.
- k. Formulate advice for Members and officers on declarations of gifts and hospitality and monitor and review the arrangements for recording interests, gifts and hospitality.
- l. Grant dispensations to Councillors and co-opted members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct.
- m. For both District and Parish Councils, deal with any report from the Monitoring Officer following an investigation into a complaint concerning the Members' Code of Conduct.
- n. For both District and Parish Councils, consider and determine allegations that a Councillor or co-opted Councillor may have failed to follow the

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Code of Conduct and where a breach of the Code is established, impose sanctions as delegated by full Council or make recommendations as to any sanctions to the appropriate person or body.

- o. Monitor and review the operation of the Protocol on Member-Officer relations.
- p. Monitor and review the operation of the Protocol on Member-Member relations.

2.2 Within those terms of reference, the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee will:

Audit

- a. agree the annual and strategic audit plans;
- b. review Internal Audit's progress against the audit plan and consider Internal Audit performance measures;
- c. receive and consider a summary of work undertaken by Internal Audit since the last meeting, plus current status;
- d. receive and consider executive summaries of financial process/procedures;
- e. receive and consider executive summaries of Value For Money reports;
- f. receive and consider executive summaries of contract audit reports;
- g. receive and consider executive summaries of any special investigations undertaken by Internal Audit.
- h. receive and consider a chronological summary of Internal Audit reports awaiting departmental response and address any evident problems.
- i. monitor the proportion of key recommendations actioned since the previous meeting.
- j. consider all external audit reports including the Annual Audit Letter.

Standards

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k. receive and consider a quarterly report from the Monitoring Officer detailing any Code of Conduct issues which have arisen since the last quarterly report, an update on Member training and any requests for dispensations.

k.l. deal with any report from the Monitoring Officer following an investigation into a complaint concerning the Members' Code of Conduct.

l.m. through the operation of a Hearings Sub-Committee, consider and determine allegations that a Councillor or co-opted member may have failed to follow the Code of Conduct and where a breach of the Code is established impose sanctions as delegated by Full Council or make recommendations as to any sanctions to the appropriate person or body.

m.n. the exercise of k – m above in relation to the Parish Councils in the Council's area and the members of those Parish Councils.

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