

Governance and Audit Committee

Terms of Reference

The overall purpose of the Governance and Audit Committee is to provide effective challenge across the Council and independent assurance on the risk management framework and associated internal control environment to Members and the public, independently of the Executive.

Specifically the Governance and Audit Committee will:

- Consider and make recommendations to the Council on proposed changes to the Constitution.
- Consider any issues emanating from the Government and determine their effect on the Council's business and governance processes.
- Review the effectiveness of the Council's Risk Management arrangements, the control environment and associated Anti Fraud and Corruption arrangements.
- Seek assurance that action is being taken on risk related issues identified by auditors and inspectors.
- Be satisfied that the Council's assurance statements (currently produced annually by all Heads of Service) and the Annual Governance Statement properly reflect the risk environment and any actions required to improve it.
- Be satisfied that any Partnership that the Council enters into has robust Governance and Risk Management arrangements and that any risk to the Council from the Partnership is minimised.
- Approve the Internal Audit Strategy and Plan (to ensure that there is adequate coverage) and monitor performance (assessing whether adequate skills and resources are available to provide an effective function).
- Review summary internal audit reports and the main issues arising and seek assurances that action has been taken where necessary.
- Receive the annual report from the Head of Internal Audit.
- To consider any issues brought to the attention of the Committee, or Chair and Vice Chair, by the Head of Internal Audit at any time during the year.
- Consider reports of external audit and inspection agencies.
- Ensure that there are effective relationships between external and internal audit and inspection agencies and other relevant bodies and that the value of the audit process is actively promoted.
- Review the financial statements, including the suitability of accounting policies and treatments, provisions or adjustments.
- Review the external auditors annual audit letter, any other reports and opinion and monitor management action in response to issues raised. (Also comment on the external auditors planned work programme.)