

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Membership and Meetings

The Audit and Governance Committee will be composed of 11 elected Councillors, except any councillor who is a member of the Executive;

The Quorum for the Audit and Governance Committee shall be 4 voting members of the Committee.

The Committee will normally meet on a quarterly basis.

Scope

The Audit and Governance Committee will have overall responsibility for governance and audit matters as set out in the terms of reference.

Terms of Reference

The Audit and Governance Committee will have the following roles and functions:

A. Corporate Governance

1. Oversee the Council's use of risk management.
2. Approving the Local Code of Corporate Governance.
3. Approving the Annual Governance Statement.
4. Considering and approving the Council's Risk Management Statement and Strategy.
5. Monitor and review the Council's internal and external audit functions.
6. Monitor and review the Council's systems of internal control
7. To make recommendations to the Council regarding any suggested major changes to the Constitution.
8. Monitoring and reviewing the operation of the Council's Constitution, particularly in respect of financial procedures and protocols, procurement procedures and guidelines.

9. Reviewing any corporate governance issue referred to the Committee by the Chief Executive, the Section 151 Officer or the Monitoring Officer, the Leader/Executive or any other committee of the Council.
10. Considering the Council's arrangements for corporate governance and necessary actions to ensure compliance with best practice, together with any relevant issues referred by the Leadership Team or Statutory Officers.
11. Considering the Council's compliance with its own and other published standards and controls.
12. Considering the annual report regarding complaints about the Council referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
13. Approving payments or other benefits of a value greater than £5,000 arising from complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
14. Monitoring the effectiveness of the Council's policies and procedures that ensure sound governance arrangements, including:
 - a) whistle-blowing procedure;
 - b) anti-fraud and corruption policy;
 - c) anti-bribery policy and procedure;
 - d) complaints procedure;and making appropriate recommendations to the Executive.
15. Monitoring and auditing of the Council's equalities and diversity policies.

B. Audit and Accounts

1. Agreeing the internal and external audit plans and monitoring delivery of the plans.
2. Review and challenge any significant issues and the action plans arising in the annual audit report and management letter for the Council.
3. Monitoring the implementation of significant audit recommendations.
4. Raising the profile of internal control within the authority.
5. Reviewing and approving the annual Statement of Accounts and Narrative Statement.

6. To regularly review the effectiveness of overall governance arrangements for the Hinkley Point Project and receive both internal and external audit reports including those undertaken by EDF.
7. Considering reports dealing with the management and performance of the providers of the internal audit function.
8. Considering reports from internal audit on recommendations agreed with service leaders as a result of an internal audit review which have not been implemented within a reasonable timescale.
9. Considering specific reports submitted by the internal or external auditors.
10. Commenting on the scope and depth of external audit work and ensuring that it gives value for money.
11. Considering any other matter referred by the Section 151 Officer.

Annual Report

The Audit and Governance Committee must report annually to the Full Council on its work undertaken during the year, its future work programme and amended working methods if appropriate.