

AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1. General

A Committee established to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the internal controls and assurance mechanisms of the Council, to approve its financial accounts, promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Council members and co-opted members and consider breaches of the Council's Code of Conduct or the Codes of Conduct of town/parish councils within the district

2. Membership, Chairmanship and Quorum

Number of Members	Nine
Substitute Members Permitted	No
Political Balance Rules apply	Yes
Appointments/Removals from Office	By resolution of full Council.
Restrictions on Membership	Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council and Members of the Cabinet are ineligible
Restrictions on Chairmanship/Vice-Chairmanship	None
Quorum	Four
Number of ordinary meetings per Council Year	Minimum of Two

3. Terms of Reference

To deal with the following matters:-

- a) To consider the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements, the control environment and associated anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements.
- b) To seek assurances that action is being taken on risk-related issues identified by auditors and inspectors.
- c) To review and approve the authority's assurance statements, including the Statement on Internal Control, on behalf of the authority.
- d) To approve, but not direct, internal audit's strategy, plan and monitor performance
- e) To review the main issues arising from the internal audit reports and seek assurance that action has been taken where necessary.
- f) To receive the annual report of the internal audit service.

- g) To consider the reports of external audit and inspection agencies, and monitor management action in response to issues raised.
- h) To ensure that there are effective relationships between external and internal audit, inspection agencies, other relevant bodies, and that the value of the audit process is actively promoted.
- i) To review and approve the financial statement on behalf of the authority and review the external auditors opinion on the financial statements.
- j) To review on a regular basis the Code of Conduct for Members and also for Officers and to monitor the effect of implementation of the Codes of Conduct
- k) To agree and review a complaints procedure for investigating allegations that members of the District, or any parish council within the District have failed to comply with their authority's Code of Conduct.
- l) To receive complaints and thereafter consider, review, investigate, conduct hearings and impose or recommend sanctions as may be required.
- m) To promote on an active basis the highest standards of ethical conduct by Councillors and Officers.
- n) To ensure training and guidance is provided to Councillors, including assisting Parishes to train their own Councillors, on all aspects of Codes of Conduct and adherence to ethical standards for Councillors.
- o) To establish a Hearings Sub-Committee – terms of reference, membership, quorum and frequency of meetings as set out in the Council's adopted Complaints procedure

4 Delegations

All these Terms of Reference are full delegated except any recommendations arising out of Items j) and k) shall be reported full Council as appropriate.

HEARING SUB-COMMITTEE

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager concurrently with the Monitoring Officer, after consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, or in his absence the Vice-Chairman (if appointed), to select any three members of the Audit and Standards Committee to hear cases referred to it by the Monitoring Officer following an investigation into an allegation that a member may have failed to comply with their authority's Code of Conduct.

An Independent Person will be invited to attend any sub-committee so convened.

Where a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct is found the range of actions which the Sub-Committee can take might include the following:-

- a) A censure or reprimand
- b) Reporting its findings to Full Council or in respect of Town/Parish Councillors to the members' Council for information
- c) A recommendation that the member be removed from any or all Committees or Sub-Committee of the Council
- d) Instructing the Monitoring Officer to arrange training for the member or in respect of Town/Parish Councillors recommending that the member's Council arrange training.
- e) A recommendation that the member be removed from appointments to outside bodies or in respect of Town/Parish Councillors recommending to the member's Council that they be removed
- f) A recommendation that facilities provided to the member by the Council [or in respect of Town/Parish Councillors by the members' Council] are withdrawn such as a computer, website or internet access
- g) A recommendation that a member be excluded from Council offices or other premises [or in respect of Town/Parish Councillors from any offices or premises of the members' Council] except for meeting rooms as necessary for attending Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings