

**To the Chair and Members of the
AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**AUDIT COMMITTEE PROSPECTUS, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK
PROGRAMME 2017/18**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The report sets out the formal Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee for 2017/18, which were approved at Annual Council meeting on 19th May 2017, and highlights the minimal changes that have been made to the previous year's Terms of Reference.
2. The report also contains a 'Prospectus' which sets out the scope and standards applicable to the Audit Committee, and shows how these and the Terms of Reference enable the Committee to comply with Local Government Audit Committee standards and the Council's requirements of the Committee.
3. The Prospectus includes a draft work programme, which demonstrates how the Committee will fulfill its Terms of Reference for the year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. **The Audit Committee is asked:**
 - to note the Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee for the 2017/18 Municipal Year
 - to agree the Prospectus setting out the Audit Committee's scope, standards and work programme for the year.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER

5. Effective oversight through the Audit Committee adds value to the Council operations in managing its risks and achieving its key priorities.

BACKGROUND

Audit Committee prospectus

6. An Audit Committee prospectus has been produced which provides an oversight of the role of the audit committee, clearly setting out the scope and standards of the committee, the scope of its work and how it will seek the assurances about the management of risks across the Council. Importantly, it sets out the intended outcomes sought from the work of the committee.

Terms of Reference

7. At its Annual Meeting on 19th May 2017, the Council approved the Terms of Reference for Council Committees and Sub-Committees, which included the Audit Committee. The Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee are attached to this report at **Appendix A**. For ease of identifying the changes in the attached terms of reference, deletions are crossed through whilst additions are shown in bold italics.
8. The Terms of Reference approved by the Council are consistent with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) Practical Guidance on Local Government Audit Committees. This is the authoritative guidance that audit committees should comply with.
9. The changes made to the Terms of Reference for 2017/18 are largely typographical in nature. However, a change has been made at 2(v). In order to ensure the Council is able to meet the requirement to approve both the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Statement of Accounts by 31st July each year, the delegation to the Audit Committee which was previously to oversee the production of the Annual Governance Statement on behalf of the Council, as now been extended to include the formal approval of the Statement. This is a natural extension to the Committee's authority and ensures the Council can meet the new timescales easily.
10. The Audit Committee is asked to formally note the Terms of Reference for the year.

Prospectus and Draft Work Programme

11. The Terms of Reference are augmented by the draft Audit Committee Prospectus, attached at **Appendix B**. The Prospectus is a public facing document that sets out the role, scope and standards of the Audit Committee, as well as some of the expected outcomes from its work during the year.
12. The work programme is also an integral part of the prospectus and demonstrates the Committee's coverage of the areas identified in its Terms of Reference, as follows:
 - a. Internal Audit
 - b. External Audit
 - c. Accounts/Financial Reporting
 - d. Risk Management
 - e. Ethical Governance
 - f. Other matters
13. Within the work programme, it is proposed as a default to maintain reporting the following regular items to the Audit Committee on a six monthly basis:

- Progress by the Council in implementing Inspection and External Audit recommendations
 - Compliance with Contract Procedure Rules and Procurement Breaches
 - Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) surveillance.
14. However, if there are any significant issues in any of these areas they will be reported immediately to the Audit Committee.
15. Update briefings and/or training for Members will be provided as required.
16. Internal Audit Update reporting for 2016/17 is scheduled for July 2017, October 2017 and February 2018, with an annual report of the Head of Internal Audit in April 2018.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND RECOMMENDED OPTION

17. In order to discharge its functions effectively, the Committee is required to operate within an agreed Terms of Reference.
18. The work programme is designed to ensure that, where appropriate, the Audit Committee is able to ensure the Council meets certain statutory deadlines and also discharge its responsibilities under its Terms of Reference, whilst achieving a balanced and manageable work load.
19. It should be noted that the programme of work may have to be varied in response to any issues emerging during the course of the year.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

20. The Audit Committee assesses how effectively the Council is managing risks that threaten the achievement of the Council's objectives. Any improvement in the management of the risks will have a positive impact thereby increasing the likelihood of the Council achieving its objectives. The Audit Committee's work is, therefore, relevant to all priorities but in particular the following:

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>All people in Doncaster benefit from a thriving and resilient economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	
	<p>People live safe, healthy, active and independent lives.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	
	<p>People in Doncaster benefit from a high quality built and natural environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	
	<p>All families thrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	
	<p>Council services are modern and value for money.</p>	<p>Effective oversight through the Audit Committee adds value to the Council operations in managing its risks and achieving its key priorities of improving services provided to the citizens of the borough</p>
	<p>Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance.</p>	<p>The work undertaken by the Audit Committee improves and strengthens governance arrangements within the Council and its partners.</p>

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

21. The Audit Committee oversees the management of risks across the Council. Specific risks being considered by the Committee are identified in reports presented to it during the course of the year.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

22. The maintenance of an effective audit committee enables the Council's to meet ongoing standards relating to governance, risk management and internal control. Guidance relating to local government audit committees is produced by CIPFA. The Council's audit committee complies with the guidance.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

23. There are no identified direct financial implications arising from this report.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

24. There are no identified human resources implications arising from this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

25. There are no identified technology implications arising from this report.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

26. We are aware of the Council's obligations under the Public Sector Equalities Duties and there are no identified equal opportunity issues within this report.

CONSULTATION

27. The Council's Section 151 Officer; the Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Director of Finance, and the Council's Governance Group have been consulted in the production of the Terms of Reference and Audit Committee Prospectus.

REPORT AUTHORS & CONTRIBUTORS

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Annual Council on 19th May 2017 - Council Appointed Committees' And Sub-Committees' Terms Of Reference For 2017/18.

Steve Mawson
Chief Financial Officer &
Assistant Director of Finance

APPENDIX A

AUDIT COMMITTEE

This Committee is a Committee of the Council constituted under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972.

FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:-

- (a) The adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct.

DELEGATED MATTERS:- (the Committee may recommend any matter to Full Council when it considers it expedient to do so, after taking advice from the Head of Paid Service)

1. Audit Activity

- I. To consider the Head of Internal Audit's annual report and opinion, on the control environment, and reports on internal audit activity (actual and proposed), including for internal audit, the setting of Terms of Reference, **and** ~~for internal Audit~~, the internal audit strategy, and reviewing of resourcing and considering the level of assurance the **Head of Internal Audit's** annual report and opinion can give, over the council's corporate governance arrangements.
- II. To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.
- III. To consider reports dealing with the management and performance of the internal audit function.
- IV. To consider a report from internal audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale.
- V. To have the right to call any officers or agencies of the Council as required to offer explanation on progress in the implementation of audit recommendations.
- VI. To consider arrangements for cooperation between internal audit, external audit and other review agencies.
- VII. To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance and to monitor the implementation of external audit recommendations.
- VIII. To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.

- IX. To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
- X. To liaise with the Public Sector Appointments Ltd over the appointment of the council's external auditor.
- XI. To commission work from internal and external audit as resources allow.
- XII. To have the right to call any Officers or agencies of the Council as required to offer explanation in the management of internal controls and risks.
- XIII. To, as required, meet privately separately with the external auditor and the Head of Internal Audit.

2. Regulatory Framework

- I. To review and where appropriate make recommendations to Council on proposed revisions to the Council's Constitution and other policies and procedures in relation to Corporate Governance issues.
- II. To review any issue referred to it by the Chief Executive or a director or any council body as the Chair considers appropriate within the general Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee.
- III. To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management and corporate governance in the council particularly in so far as they relate to the adequacy of the internal control environment, effective management of risks, the background to the annual governance statement and production of the financial accounts.
- IV. To monitor **the Council's** council policies in 'Raising Concerns at Work' and the antifraud and corruption **policy and** strategy.
- V. To oversee the production of **and approve** the **Council's** authority's Annual Governance Statement. ~~and to recommend its adoption.~~
- VI. To consider the council's arrangements for corporate governance and agreeing necessary actions to ensure compliance with best practice.
- VII. To consider the council's compliance with its own and other published standards and controls.

- VIII. To report and make recommendations to Cabinet or Council on major issues and contraventions.
- IX. To have rights of access to other Committees of the Council and to strategic functions as it deems necessary.
- X. To maintain oversight of any major issues arising from Police or other enquiries into the conduct of the Council in order to minimise disruption to other branches of the Authority.
- XI. To receive periodic reports from appropriate Directors on probity and corporate governance issues not specifically referred to elsewhere within the Committee's Terms of Reference.
- XII. To review the Council's policy under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 annually and to monitor compliance with the policy on a twice yearly basis.

3. Accounts

- I. To approve the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the council.
- II. To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

4. Ethical Governance

- I. To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and Officers.
- II. To grant dispensations to Councillors and Co-opted Members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members Code of Conduct, where not delegated to the Monitoring Officer.
- III. To hear appeals against decisions of the Monitoring Officer not to grant a dispensation.
- IV. To monitor and review the Council's Whistleblower's policy.
- V. To monitor and review protocols for standards of behaviour for Members and Officers.
- VI. To monitor and review protocols for Members and Officers on relationships and dealings with outside organisations and

individuals.

- VII. To monitor and review Member and Officer procedures relating to gifts and hospitality and disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests.
- VIII. To monitor and oversee the response by the Council to complaints to the Ombudsman.
- IX. **To deal** ~~Dealing~~ with complaints of alleged Member misconduct referred to the Monitoring Officer under Section 28(6) of the Localism Act 2011.
- X. **To approve the granting** ~~Granting~~ and supervision of exemptions from posts being designated as politically restricted.
- XI. To arrange for the exercise of all the above functions in relation to Parish Councils wholly or mainly in its area and to the members of those Parish Councils.

HEARINGS SUB-COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This Sub-Committee is a Sub-Committee of the Council constituted under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972.

1. To consider complaints referred to it by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Person in accordance with Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011.
2. To hear appeals against decisions of the Monitoring Officer not to grant a dispensation.

Audit Committee Prospectus, Terms of Reference and Work Plan 2017/18

The purpose of an audit committee is to provide to those charged with governance independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and annual governance processes. CIPFA

The Audit Committee at Doncaster Council

The Audit Committee has primary responsibility for ensuring there are effective governance arrangements in place and operating throughout the organisation, and is the principal advisory function to the Council and Executive on governance related matters.

This Prospectus sets out the scope and the standards of the Audit Committee, which are consistent with Local Government standards. It also describes the approach that will be taken by the Audit Committee and outlines its 2017/18 work programme.

Scope and Standards

In accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Position Statement and guidance on Audit Committees, the Audit Committee will:

- ✓ Satisfy itself and others that the Annual Governance Statement reflects the Council's arrangements and position
- ✓ Monitor the effectiveness of the internal control environment¹ and assurances obtained about its operation
- ✓ Consider the accuracy and effectiveness of risk management
- ✓ Ensure Internal Audit is independent and effective. In particular the Committee will:
 - review and approve the responsibilities of the internal audit function and ensure the function has the necessary resources to enable it to perform in accordance with appropriate professional standards
 - review and assess the annual internal audit work plan
 - receive a report on the results of the internal auditor's work and its compliance with its professional standards on a periodic basis
- ✓ Review the arrangements for employees to raise concerns, in confidence, about

¹ The internal control environment is comprised of all the checks and balances in place, including risk management, to ensure the Council's actions are completed properly and recorded accurately

possible wrongdoing in financial reporting or other matters (whistleblowing)

- ✓ Review the Council's arrangements for managing the risk of fraud
- ✓ Review and approve the external auditor's annual audit plan and ensure that it is consistent with the scope of the audit engagement
- ✓ Review the findings of the external auditor's work with the external auditor, including a discussion of any major issues which arise during the audit
- ✓ Review the financial statements and the external auditor's opinion on the statements. In particular, the Committee will review and challenge where necessary:
 - the consistency of, and any changes to, significant accounting policies
 - the methods used to account for significant or unusual transactions where different approaches are possible
 - whether the Council has followed appropriate accounting standards and made appropriate estimates and judgements, taking into account the views of the external auditor
 - the clarity and completeness of disclosure in the financial reports and the context in which statements are made
- ✓ Consider external audit and inspection recommendations and ensure these are fully responded to.

The Audit Committee has *Terms of Reference* that reflect the scope and standards, and agrees an annual work-plan showing how the Committee will deliver its responsibilities. The 2017/18 work-plan, which is a 'live' document that is updated throughout the year, is attached at **Appendix 1**.



The Audit Committee has a current membership of five Council Members and one independent Co-opted member. It will meet five times per year. The Committee's operating model ensures that it:

- ✓ Has clear rights of access to other committees and functions, for example scrutiny
- ✓ Will have as regular attendees, the Chief Financial Officer & Assistant Director of (Section 151 Officer), the Head of Internal Audit and the External Auditor. Other attendees may include the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer
- ✓ Is able to meet privately and separately with the External Auditor and with the Head of Internal Audit
- ✓ Has the right to call on any other officers as required
- ✓ Will report regularly on its work to the Council.

The Role of the Audit Committee

The Audit Committee has a lead role in ensuring risks are managed effectively across the Council. The Committee challenges the Council and its managers to demonstrate their awareness, reporting and controlling of any risks that could either prevent the Council from achieving its objectives or could cause major disruption of any nature.

For 2017/18, the Committee will:

- ✓ Keep an active interest in the maintenance of the Council’s overall risk management framework, policy and strategy,
- ✓ Receive and review the quarterly Corporate Risk Register on a regular basis and confirm the management of risks within it
- ✓ Receive and consider service/departmental risk registers where appropriate, with the attendance of senior managers to explain their management of risks.

In addition, the Committee aims to strengthen its own contribution. It will:

- ✓ Provide an opportunity for public questions at the start of committee meetings.
- ✓ Carry out a self-assessment against revised CIPFA guidance for audit committees, expected to be published in 2017.
- ✓ Receive regular, detailed, update sessions on relevant topics throughout the year.

- ✓ Receive other development and support as required, individually and/or collectively.

How will we know we have succeeded?

The role of the Audit Committee is crucial. The Committee has primary responsibility for ensuring there are effective governance arrangements in place and operating throughout the organisation.

The Audit Committee will be accountable for meeting its responsibilities. We expect the following outcomes to be achieved:

- ✓ Comprehensive risk registers, including fraud risks, with risks demonstrably controlled
- ✓ Demonstrable implementation of audit and inspection recommendations
- ✓ A clear risk-based Internal Audit plan that is adequately delivered
- ✓ The achievement of a clear opinion on the Statement of Accounts
- ✓ An Annual Governance Statement, external audit Value for Money opinion and Internal Audit control environment assessment that fairly reflect the Council’s position.

The Audit Committee will produce an Annual Report which will show how the Audit Committee is delivering these success measures and contributing positively to improving governance and risk management and adding value to the organisation.

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Councillor Austen White, Chair

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Councillor R. Allan Jones, Vice-Chair

21 June 2017

APPENDIX 1

Doncaster Council- Audit Committee Workplan 2017/18

Objective and Agenda Item	June 2017	July 2017	Oct 2017	Feb 2018	April 2018
Satisfy itself and others that the Annual Governance Statement reflects the Council's arrangements and position					
Draft Annual Governance Statement 2016/17	✓				
Final Annual Governance Statement 2016/17		✓			
Delivering Good Governance - Local Code of Corporate Governance	✓				
Update on Annual Governance Statement Issues 2016/17				✓	
Audit Committee Annual Report 2017/18					✓
Audit Committee Prospectus, Terms of Reference and draft work programme	✓				
Partnership Governance Update		✓			
Internal Audit Plan 2018/19					✓
Monitor the effectiveness of the internal control environment					
Internal Audit– Progress Report		✓	✓	✓	
Annual Report of the Head of Internal Audit 2017/18					✓
Monitoring Officer Annual Report	✓				
Internal Audit review of Deprivation of Liberties Safeguards (DOLS)		✓			
Update report on Internal Drainage Boards in the Doncaster Borough		✓			
Internal Audit review of the Solar Centre			✓		
Safeguarding Assets Personal Assets Team – Responsive Review			✓		
Internal Audit Report on Direct Payments / Personal Budgets for Adults			✓		
Update Report on Contracts and Commissioning in Adults, Health and Wellbeing			✓		
Report on any non-compliance with Financial Procedure Rules and Contract Procedure Rules			✓		✓
Internal Audit Plan 2018/19					✓
Consider the accuracy and effectiveness of risk management					
Internal Audit– Progress Report		✓	✓	✓	✓
Review of Risk Management Framework		✓			
Corporate Risk Register	✓		✓	✓	✓

Objective and Agenda Item	June 2017	July 2017	Oct 2017	Feb 2018	April 2018
Risk Report Update on Doncaster Children's Services Trust following Inspection			✓		
Directorate risk register review	✓				
Ensure Internal Audit is independent and effective.					
Internal Audit– Progress Report		✓	✓	✓	✓
Internal Audit Charter and Strategy	✓				
Internal Audit Plan 2018/19					✓
Internal Audit Annual Report 2017/18					✓
Review the Council's arrangements for managing the risk of fraud					
Annual Fraud Report 2016/17		✓			
Covert Surveillance – Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA)	✓		✓		
Review the council's ethical arrangements including those for employees to raise concerns, in confidence, about possible wrongdoing in financial reporting or other matters (whistleblowing)					
Overview of ethical arrangements				✓	
Annual Whistleblowing and Complaints Report	✓				
Review the findings of the external auditor's work					
External Auditor's Audit Plan 2017/18				✓	
Report to Those Charged With Governance (ISA 260 Report) 2016/17		✓			
External Auditor's Annual Audit Letter 2016/17			✓		
Certification of Claims and Returns – Annual Report 2016/17					✓
Update on Appointment of External Auditor			✓		
Review the financial statements and the external auditor's opinion on the statements					
Draft Statement of Accounts 2016/17	✓				
Final Statement of Accounts 2016/17		✓			
Report to Those Charged With Governance (ISA 260 Report) 2016/17		✓			
Arrangements and Timetable for Preparation of Accounts				✓	
Consider external audit and inspection recommendations and ensure these are fully responded to					
Update report on the Implementation of Inspection and External Audit Recommendations	✓			✓	
Review of Outstanding Internal Audit Recommendations		✓	✓	✓	✓