



HILLINGDON
LONDON



Audit Committee

Members of the Committee

John Chesshire (Chair)
Councillor Reeta Chamdal (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Tony Burles
Councillor Nick Denys
Councillor Henry Higgins
Councillor June Nelson

Date: MONDAY, 12 FEBRUARY
2024

Time: 5.10 PM

Venue: COMMITTEE ROOM 5 -
CIVIC CENTRE

**Meeting
Details:** Members of the Public and
Media are welcome to attend
this meeting

This Agenda is available online at:
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Published: Friday, 02 February 2024

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Putting our residents first

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Useful information for residents and visitors

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Attending, reporting and filming of meetings

For the public part of this meeting, residents and the media are welcomed to attend, and if they wish, report on it, broadcast, record or film proceedings as long as it does not disrupt proceedings. It is recommended to give advance notice to ensure any particular requirements can be met. The Council will provide a seating area for residents/public, an area for the media and high speed WiFi access to all attending. The officer shown on the front of this agenda should be contacted for further information and will be available at the meeting to assist if required. Kindly ensure all mobile or similar devices on silent mode.

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Terms of Reference

The Constitution defines the terms of reference for the Audit Committee as:

Introduction

The Audit Committee's role will be to:

- Review and monitor the Council's audit, governance, risk management framework and the associated control environment, as an independent assurance mechanism;
- Review and monitor the Council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk and/or weakens the control environment;
- Oversee the financial reporting process of the Statement of Accounts.

Decisions in respect of strategy, policy and service delivery or improvement are reserved to the Cabinet or delegated to Officers.

Internal Audit

1. Review and approve (but not direct) the Internal Audit Strategy to ensure that it meets the Council's overall strategic direction.
2. Review, approve and monitor (but not direct) Internal Audit's planned programme of work, paying particular attention to whether there is sufficient and appropriate coverage.
3. Through quarterly Internal Audit summary reports of work done, monitor progress against the Internal Audit Plan and assess whether adequate skills and resources are available to provide an effective Internal Audit function. Monitor the main Internal Audit recommendations and consider whether management responses to the recommendations raised are appropriate, with due regard to risk, materiality and coverage.
4. Make recommendations to the Leader of the Council or Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Business Services on any changes to the Council's Internal Audit Strategy and Internal Audit Plans.
5. Review the Annual Internal Audit Report and Opinion Statement and the level of assurance this provides over the Council's corporate governance arrangements, risk management framework and system of internal controls.
6. Consider reports dealing with the activity, management and performance of Internal Audit.
7. Following a request to the Corporate Director of Finance, and in consultation with the Leader of the Council or Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Business Services, to request work from Internal Audit.

External Audit

8. Receive and consider the External Auditor's annual letter, relevant reports and the report to those charged with governance.
9. Monitor management action in response to issues raised by External Audit.
10. Receive and consider specific reports as agreed with the External Auditor.
11. Comment on the scope and depth of External Audit work and ensure that it gives value for money, making any recommendations to the Corporate Director of Finance.
12. Be consulted by the Corporate Director of Finance over the appointment of the Council's External Auditor.
13. Following a request to the Corporate Director of Finance, and in consultation with the Leader of the Council or Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Business Services, to commission work from External Audit.
14. Monitor arrangements for ensuring effective liaison between Internal Audit and External Audit, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance.

Governance Framework

15. Maintain an overview of the Council's Constitution in respect of contract procedure rules and financial regulations and where necessary bring proposals to the Leader of the Council or the Cabinet for their development.
16. Review any issue referred to it by the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Corporate Director, any Council body or external assurance providers including Inspection agencies.
17. Monitor and review, but not direct, the authority's risk management arrangements, including regularly reviewing the Corporate Risk Register and seeking assurances that appropriate action is being taken on managing risks.
18. Review and monitor Council strategy and policies on anti-fraud and anti-corruption including the 'Raising Concerns at Work' policy, making any recommendations on changes to the relevant Corporate Director in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
19. Oversee the production of the authority's Annual Governance Statement and recommend its adoption.
20. Review the Council's arrangements for corporate governance and make recommendations to the Corporate Director of Finance on suggested actions to improve alignment with best practice.
21. Where requested by the Leader of the Council or Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Business Services or Corporate Director of Finance, provide recommendations on the Council's compliance with its own and other published standards and controls.

Accounts

22. Review and approve the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from financial statements or from the external auditor that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.
23. Consider the External Auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the external audit of the accounts.

Review and reporting

24. Undertake an annual independent review of the Audit Committee's effectiveness and submit an annual report to Council on the activity of the Audit Committee.

Formal duty of senior officers to attend

Whilst Council officers will invariably attend meetings voluntarily, in fulfilling its role, and should it be required, the Committee may require the Head of Paid Service and/or any senior officer (third tier and above) to attend before it to explain in relation to matters within its remit and it shall be the duty of those persons to attend if so required.

Where any senior officer is required to attend the Committee under this provision, the Chairman will inform the Head of Democratic Services. The Head of Democratic Services shall inform the officer in writing or by email giving at least 10 working days' notice of the meeting at which he/she is required to attend. The notice will state the nature of the item on which he/she is required to attend to give account and whether any papers are required to be produced for the Committee. Where the account to be given to the Committee will require the production of a report, then the officer concerned will be given sufficient notice to allow for preparation of that documentation.

Where, in exceptional circumstances, the officer is unable to attend on the required date, then the Committee shall, in consultation with the officer, arrange an alternative date for attendance.

When calling senior officers under this provision, the Committee will remain bound by the Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members, ensure questioning is conducted in a fair and balanced manner and not of a personal critical nature.

Agenda

PART I

- 1** Apologies for absence
- 2** Declarations of interest
- 3** To confirm that all items marked Part I will be considered in Public and that any items marked Part II will be considered in Private
- 4** Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 November 2023 1 - 8
- 5** Counter Fraud Progress Report 2023-2024 Q3 9 - 22
- 6** External Audit Update 23 - 26
- 7** Internal Audit Progress Report 2023-2024 Q3 27 - 40
- 8** Internal Audit Charter 41 - 60
- 9** Risk Management Report 2023-2024 Q3 61 - 68
- 10** Strategic Risk Report 69 - 76
- 11** Skills Matrix 77 - 80
- 12** Work Programme 81 - 82