

AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Explanatory Note

The Audit functions of this Committee relate to the Council's arrangements for the discharge of its powers and duties in connection with financial governance and stewardship, risk management and audit. The Committee makes recommendations to the Council, Policy & Resources Committee, Officers or other relevant body within the Council.

The Standards functions of this Committee seek to ensure that the Members, Co-opted Members and Officers of the Council observe high ethical standards in performing their duties. These functions include advising the Council on its Codes of Conduct and administering related complaints and dispensation procedures.

In addition to the Councillors who serve on the Audit and Standards Committee, the Committee includes at least two independent persons who are not Councillors. They are appointed under Chapter 7 of the Localism Act, or otherwise co-opted, and act in an advisory capacity with no voting powers. In the terms of reference of this Committee a "Member" is an elected Councillor and a "Co-opted Member" is a person co-opted by the Council, for example to advise or assist a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council.

General Audit and Standards Delegated Functions

To review such parts of the constitution as may be referred to the Committee by the Policy and Resources Committee and to make recommendations to the Policy Resources Committee and the Council.

To appoint, co-opt or (in any case where only the Council has power) to recommend the appointment or co-option of a minimum of two independent persons:

- to give general assistance to the Committee in the exercise of its functions; and
- to give views on allegations of failure to comply with a Code of Conduct as required by Chapter 7 of the Localism Act.

To have an overview of:

- the Council's whistleblowing policy
- complaints handling and Local Ombudsman investigations

To deal with any audit or ethical standards issues which may arise in relation to partnership working, joint committees and other local authorities or bodies.

To ensure arrangements are made for the training and development of Members, Co-opted Members and Officers on audit, ethical and probity matters, including Code of Conduct issues.

To support and advise the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer in their statutory roles.

Delegated Audit Functions

To carry out independent scrutiny and examination of the Council's financial and non-financial processes, procedures and practices to the extent that they affect the Council's control environment and exposure to risk, with a view to providing assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of:

- the work of internal and external audit;
- the governance arrangements of the council and its services;
- the risk management and performance management frameworks and the associated control environment;
- the financial management process;
- arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption

To meet the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations Act 2011 in respect of:

- conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control;
- conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of internal audit;
- reviewing the outcome of annual review of governance arrangements and approving the Annual Governance Statement, ensuring it contains any actions for improvement; and
- considering and approving the Council's annual Statement of Accounts.

To consider the External Auditor's Annual Audit and Inspection Plan, Annual Governance Report, Annual Audit Letter and other relevant reports. Consider and agree the Internal Strategy and Annual Audit Plan, Head of Audit & Business Risk's Annual Internal Audit Report including Opinion, periodic progress reports and other relevant internal audit reports.

To consider and agree the Head of Audit & Business Risk's Annual Fraud & Corruption Report and consider and approve the Council's Counter Fraud Strategy.

Delegated Standards Functions

To advise the Council on the adoption, revision or replacement of Codes of Conduct for (a) Members and Co-opted Members and (b) Officers;
To exercise all other functions of the Council in relation to ethical standards, in particular those under Chapter 7 of the Localism Act, including the following:

- promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct within the Council and monitoring the operations of the Council's Codes of Conduct and registers of interests;
- in relation to allegations that a Member or Co-opted Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct, putting in place arrangements to investigate and make decisions;
- supporting the Monitoring Officer in the exercise of that Officer's ethical standards functions, in particular the duty to establish & maintain registers of interests for the Council and for Rottingdean Parish Council;
- in relation to Members or Co-opted Members with pecuniary interests, putting in place arrangements to grant dispensations, in appropriate cases, from the restrictions on speaking and/or voting.

NOTE: With the exception of the adoption, revision or replacement of the Codes of Conduct referred to above, the Audit and Standards Committee may develop and adopt its own procedures and protocols.

