



INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER

1. Introduction

The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 introduced a requirement for all Scottish Local Authorities to operate a professional and objective internal auditing service, which must be delivered in accordance with recognised standards. The standards and practices applied in the UK for all public sector internal audit providers, in-house, shared or outsourced, are the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and came into effect in April 2013.

PSIAS encompasses the mandatory elements of international internal audit professional practices framework and includes both standards of practice and a professional code of ethics.

A key requirement of the Standards is the need to hold a formal Internal Audit Charter. This Charter sets out the purpose, authority and responsibility of the Council's Internal Audit function, in accordance with PSIAS.

The Charter will be reviewed annually and presented to the Scrutiny and Audit Committee for final approval.

2. Definition

Internal auditing is an independent and objective assurance and consulting activity that is guided by a philosophy of adding value to improve the operations of Angus Council.

It assists the Council in accomplishing its objectives by bringing a systematic and disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, control, and governance processes.

3. Role

The internal audit activity is established by the Board, which for the purposes of internal audit is the Scrutiny and Audit Committee (the committee). Internal Audit's responsibilities are defined by this committee as part of their oversight role.

The main objective of Internal Audit is to provide, in terms of the PSIAS, a high quality, independent audit service to the Council which provides annual assurances in relation to internal controls and overall governance arrangements.

In addition to this primary assurance role, Internal Audit will also:-

- Support the Head of Corporate Improvement and Finance in discharge of his "Section 95 Officer" duties.
- Support the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in discharge of her "Monitoring Officer" duties.
- Provide consultancy services to directorates.
- Provide a counter fraud function.
- Investigate any allegations of fraud or irregularity.

- Advise on internal control implications of new systems and provide a project assurance service.
- Support the Council and Senior Management during key transformational/ change projects.

The nature of the assurance services provided by Internal Audit include, but are not limited to the following :

- Risk based audit
- Developing systems audit
- Compliance audits
- Value for money audits
- Quality assurance audits
- Fraud/irregularity investigations
- Advisory/consultancy reviews

The Council's Internal Audit service does not currently provide assurance services to parties external to the Council. The standards defined in the Charter will apply to any such work which may be carried out in the future.

4. Professionalism

Internal audit will adhere to the PSIAS, which are based on the Institute of Internal Auditors' mandatory guidance including the Definition of Internal Auditing, the Code of Ethics, and the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (Standards). This mandatory guidance constitutes principles of the fundamental requirements for the professional practice of internal auditing and for evaluating the effectiveness of the internal audit activity's performance.

Other professional guidance will also be adhered to as applicable to guide operations. In addition, Internal Audit will adhere to the Council's relevant policies and procedures and Internal Audit's standard operating procedures manual.

A programme of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is maintained for all staff working on audit engagements to ensure that auditors maintain and enhance their knowledge, skills and audit competencies.

5. Authority and Scope

All internal audit staff shall have authority to:-

- a. enter any Council premises or land.
- b. have access to, and remove, all records, documents and correspondence which, in the view of the Audit Manager (or nominated representatives), are considered to relate to any matter which may have audit or assurance implications for the Council.
- c. be provided with full access to any computer system and personal computer or other computer storage device/ media in the ownership of the Council.
- d. require explanations considered necessary from any employee, including Chief Officers.

- e. require any employee, or agent of the Council, to produce cash, stores, assets or any other property under his control or to which he has access.

The scope of Internal Audit allows for unrestricted coverage of the Council's activities. In addition, Internal Audit through the Audit Manager, where they deem necessary, will have unrestricted access to:-

- The Chief Executive
- The Scrutiny and Audit Committee and all members
- Individual Chief Officers
- All Council employees

Right of access to other bodies funded by the Council should be set out in the conditions of funding.

Internal audit will safeguard all information obtained in performing its work and will only use it for the purposes of an audit, investigation or consultancy work. Internal audit will not disclose any information held unless this is authorised or there is a legal or professional requirement to do so.

All employees are requested to assist Internal Audit in fulfilling its roles and responsibilities.

6. Organisation

The Service Manager, Governance & Consultancy is the senior officer responsible to the committee for the provision of an independent internal audit service. The Service Manager, Governance & Consultancy will discharge this responsibility through a mixed provision, co-sourced service with a private sector partner and a directly employed team. This arrangement will address the recognised independence issues arising from the Service Manager's other responsibilities in relation to Scrutiny support, Corporate Governance and Risk Management.

The co-sourcing arrangement will provide an Audit Manager who will be the Chief Audit Executive for the purposes of the PSIAS. The Audit Manager will provide the core independent assurance service to the committee. In relation to this the Audit Manager will report functionally¹ to the committee, and administratively to the Service Manager, Governance & Consultancy on a contract management basis. It is recognised the administrative reporting line does not have authority over the scope or reporting of results of Internal Audit activity. Ultimate authority in this regard vests

¹ In this context functional reporting means the Committee will:-

- Approve the audit charter.
- Approve the Internal Audit risk based internal audit plan.
- Approve the Internal Audit Resources
- Receive reports from the Audit Manager on the result of Internal Audit activity or other matters the Audit Manager determines necessary.
- Approve decisions regarding the appointment or removal of the Audit Manager.
- Make enquiries of management and the Audit Manager to determine whether there are inappropriate scope or resource limitations

in the Audit Manager, who reports in their own name and retains final right of edit over all Internal Audit reports.

The Audit Manager will also have open access to the Chief Executive and Executive Management Team. The Audit Manager will be responsible to the committee for all elements of core assurance internal audit planning, delivery and reporting and provision of an annual report and opinion on governance, risk and internal control.

The Service Manager, Governance & Consultancy, the Audit Manager, the Senior Auditor and the Senior Governance & Consultancy Officer are required to hold a professional qualification and be suitably experienced.

7. Independence and objectivity

Internal Audit will remain free from interference by any element in the organisation, including matters of audit selection, scope, procedures, frequency, timing, or report content to permit maintenance of a necessary independent and objective mental attitude.

Internal auditors will have no direct operational responsibility or authority over any of the activities audited. Accordingly, they will not implement internal controls, develop procedures, install systems, prepare records, or engage in any other activity that may impair internal auditor's judgment.

Internal auditors must exhibit the highest level of professional objectivity in gathering, evaluating, and communicating information about the activity or process being examined. Internal auditors must make a balanced assessment of all the relevant circumstances and not be unduly influenced by their own interests or by others in forming judgments.

The Audit Manager will confirm to the committee, at least annually, the organisational independence of the internal audit activity.

8. Responsibility

The scope of internal auditing encompasses, but is not limited to, the examination and evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk management, and internal control processes in relation to the Council's defined goals and objectives. Areas to be considered by internal audit include:

- Consistency of operations or programs with established objectives and goals and effective performance
- Effectiveness and efficiency of operations and employment of resources
- Compliance with significant policies, plans, procedures, laws, and regulations
- Reliability and integrity of management and financial information processes, including the means to identify, measure, classify, and report such information
- Safeguarding of assets.

Internal Audit is responsible for evaluating all processes ('audit universe') of the entity including governance processes and risk management processes.

Based on its activity, Internal Audit is responsible for reporting significant risk exposures and control issues identified to the committee and to Senior Management (the Council's Executive Management Team), including fraud risks, governance issues, and other matters needed or requested by the committee.

Internal Audit resource may be used to support consultancy and advisory services, but not to the detriment of provision of core assurances. These consultancy activities will be led by the Service Manager, Governance & Consultancy.

Fraud and Corruption

Managing the risk of fraud and corruption is the responsibility of management. Management is also responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining systems of internal control to guard against fraud or irregularity and ensure probity in systems and operations. Internal Audit will assist management by reviewing the controls and procedures in place.

Audit procedures alone cannot guarantee that fraud and corruption will be detected, nor does Internal Audit have the responsibility for prevention and detection of fraud. However, individual Auditors will be alert in their work to risks and exposures that could allow a fraud, irregularity or corrupt practice to take place.

Financial Regulations lay out the responsibilities of Council Chief Officers, Managers and other staff in relation to any suspicion of fraud or irregularity. The role of Internal Audit is to fully investigate any suspicion of fraud, irregularity or corrupt practice and report in accordance with the Fraud Response Plan.

9. Internal audit plan

At least annually, the Audit Manager will submit an internal audit plan that includes risk assessment criteria to the committee for review and approval. The Audit Manager will communicate the impact of any resource limitations and significant interim changes to senior management and the committee.

The internal audit plan will be developed based on a prioritisation of the audit universe using a risk-based methodology, including input of senior management and the committee. Any significant deviation from the approved internal audit plan will be communicated through the periodic activity reporting process to the committee.

Audits will be only allocated to staff who have the appropriate skills, experiences and competence.

10. Reporting and monitoring

A written report will be prepared and issued by the Audit Manager or Senior Auditor following the conclusion of each internal audit engagement and will be distributed as appropriate. Internal audit results will also be reported to the committee.

The internal audit report may include management's response and corrective action taken or to be taken in regard to the specific findings and recommendations.

Management's response should include a timetable for anticipated completion of action to be taken and an explanation for any corrective action that will not be implemented.

The internal audit activity will be responsible for appropriate follow-up on engagement findings and recommendations. All significant findings will remain open until evidentially cleared.

11. Periodic assessment

Internal Audit is subject to a Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme that covers all aspects of internal audit activity. This consists of an annual self-assessment of the service and its compliance with the UK PSIAS, ongoing performance monitoring and external assessment.

The Audit Manager is responsible for providing periodically a self-assessment on the internal audit activity as regards its consistency with the Audit Charter (purpose, authority, responsibility) and performance relative to the Annual Plan.

In addition, the Audit Manager will communicate to senior management and the committee on Internal Audit's quality assurance and improvement program, including results of ongoing internal assessments.

External assessments will be conducted at least once every four years by a suitably qualified, independent assessor. These reviews will be commissioned by the Convener of the Committee and the Service Manager, Governance and Consultancy.