
Internal Audit Charter

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**Cherwell District
Council**

March 2016

Distribution List

The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee

Paul Sutton - Head of Finance and
Procurement

TBC – S151 Officer

Sue Smith - Chief Executive

About this charter

This Internal Audit Charter provides the framework for the conduct of the Internal Audit function in Cherwell District Council and has been approved by the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee. It has been created with the objective of formally establishing the purpose, authority and responsibilities of the Internal Audit function.

Purpose

Internal Auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value to and improve an organisation's operation. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

Scope

All of Cherwell District Council's activities (including outsourced activities) and legal entities are within the scope of Internal Audit. Internal Audit determines what areas within its scope should be included within the annual audit plan by adopting an independent risk based approach. Internal Audit does not necessarily cover all potential scope areas every year. The audit program includes obtaining an understanding of the processes and systems under audit, evaluating their adequacy, and testing the operating effectiveness of key controls.

Internal Audit can also, where appropriate, undertake special investigations and consulting engagements at the request of the Audit Committee, senior management and regulators.

Notwithstanding Internal Audit's responsibilities to be alert to indications of the existence of fraud and weaknesses in internal control which would permit fraud to occur, the Internal Audit activity will not undertake specific fraud-related work.

Internal Audit will coordinate activities with other internal and external providers of assurance and consulting services to ensure proper coverage and minimise duplication of efforts.

Authority

The Internal Audit function of Cherwell District Council derives its authority from the Board through the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee. The Chief Audit Executive is authorised by the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee to have full and complete access to any of the organisation's records, properties and personnel. The Chief Audit Executive is also authorised to designate members of the audit staff to have such full and complete access in the discharging of their responsibilities, and may engage experts to perform certain engagements which will be communicated to management. Internal Audit will ensure confidentiality is maintained over all information and records obtained in the course of carrying out audit activities.

Responsibility

The Chief Audit Executive is responsible for preparing the annual audit plan in consultation with the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee and senior management, submitting the audit plan, internal audit budget, and resource plan for review and approval by the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee, implementing the approved audit plan, and issuing periodic audit reports on a timely basis to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee and senior management.

The Chief Audit Executive is responsible for ensuring that the Internal Audit function has the skills and experience commensurate with the risks of the organisation. The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee should make appropriate inquiries of management and the Chief Audit Executive to determine whether there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.

It is the responsibility of management to identify, understand and manage risks effectively, including taking appropriate and timely action in response to audit findings. It is also management's responsibility to maintain a sound system of internal control and improvement of the same. The existence of an Internal Audit function, therefore, does not in any way relieve them of this responsibility.

Management is responsible for fraud prevention and detection. As Internal Audit performs its work programs, it will be observant of manifestations of the existence of fraud and weaknesses in internal control which would permit fraud to occur or would impede its detection.

Independence

Internal Audit staff will remain independent of the business and they shall report to the Chief Audit Executive who, in turn, shall report functionally to the Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee and administratively to the Head of Finance.

Internal Audit staff shall have no direct operational responsibility or authority over any of the activities they review. Therefore, they shall not develop nor install systems or procedures, prepare records or engage in any other activity which they would normally audit. Internal Audit staff with real or perceived conflicts of interest must inform the Chief Audit Executive, then the Board/Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee, as soon as these issues become apparent so that appropriate safeguards can be put in place.

Professional competence and due care

The Internal Audit function will perform its duties with professional competence and due care. Internal Audit will adhere to the Definition of Internal Auditing, Code of Ethics and the Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing that are published by the Institute of Internal Auditors.

Internal Audit will also adhere to the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

Reporting and monitoring

At the end of each audit, the Chief Audit Executive or designee will prepare a written report and distribute it as appropriate. Internal Audit will be responsible for appropriate follow-up of audit findings and recommendations. All significant findings will remain in an open issues file until cleared by the Chief Audit Executive or the Board/Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee.

The Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee will be updated regularly on the work of Internal Audit through periodic and annual reports. The Chief Audit Executive shall prepare reports of audit activities with significant findings along with any relevant recommendations and provide periodic information on the status of the annual audit plan.

Periodically, the Chief Audit Executive will meet with the Chair of the Audit Committee in private to discuss internal audit matters.

The performance of Internal Audit will be monitored through the implementation of a Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme, the results of which will be reported periodically to Senior Management and the Board/Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee.

Our team

Name	Role
Richard Bacon	Engagement Leader Chief Audit Executive
Chris Dickens	Internal Audit Senior Manager
Edward Cooke	Internal Audit Manager
Lucy Fenton	Internal Audit Team Leader

Definitions

Board	The highest level of governing body charged with the responsibility to direct and/or oversee the activities and management of the organisation.
Accounts, Audit and Risk Committee	The governance group charged with independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of financial reporting.
Senior Management	The individuals at the highest level of organisational management who have day-to-day responsibility for managing the organisation.
Chief Audit Executive	<p>Chief Audit Executive describes a person in a senior position responsible for effectively managing the internal audit activity. The specific job title of the Chief Audit Executive may vary across organisations.</p> <p>Throughout this document, the term ‘Chief Audit Executive’ refers to Head of Internal Audit and this role is fulfilled by Richard Bacon – Chief Internal Auditor (PwC).</p>

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