

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER

INTRODUCTION

1. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (the PSIAS), published initially in April 2013 and revised most recently in April 2017, state that *“the purpose, authority and responsibility of the internal audit activity must be formally defined in an internal audit charter”* and *“the chief audit executive must periodically review the internal audit charter and present it to senior management and the board for approval”*. This Internal Audit Charter (the Charter) sets out the purpose, authority and responsibility of the Internal Audit Service within the context of Dundee City Council.
2. The definition of internal auditing contained within the PSIAS states it is: *“An independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes”*.
3. In addition, under the PSIAS, each UK public sector organisation is required to interpret, at a local level, specific terms which form part of the governance arrangements. These terms are listed below along with the interpretation to be used for Dundee City Council.

Public Sector Internal Audit Standards	Dundee City Council
<i>“chief audit executive”</i>	Senior Manager – Internal Audit
<i>“board”</i>	Scrutiny Committee
<i>“senior management”</i>	Council Management Team

ROLE

4. Internal audit forms a fundamental element of Dundee City Council’s governance and assurance framework. Through provision of a high quality, independent, objective assurance and consulting activity, guided by a philosophy of adding value, the service aims to bring a systematic and disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of organisation’s governance, risk management and control framework.
5. The existence of internal audit does not however diminish the responsibility of management to ensure that resources are properly applied in a manner and on the activities intended and the internal control arrangements are sufficient to address the risks facing their services.

PROFESSIONALISM

6. The internal audit service governs itself by adherence to the PSIAS along with the associated Local Government Application Note published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014. This mandatory guidance, which includes the Definition of Internal Auditing, Code of Ethics and International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing, encompasses the principles which are fundamental to the professional practice of internal auditing and evaluating the effectiveness of the Internal Audit Service’s performance.
7. The Internal Audit Service also adheres to the relevant policies and operating procedures laid down by the Council, including guidance specifically developed in respect of the Internal Audit Service.

AUTHORITY

8. The Internal Audit Service, with strict accountability for confidentiality and safeguarding records and information, is authorised full, free, and unrestricted access to all of the organisation’s records, physical properties and personnel pertinent to carrying out any engagement and effectively discharging its remit. All employees are requested to assist the Internal Audit Service in fulfilling its roles and responsibilities. The Internal Audit Service will also have free and unrestricted access to the Scrutiny Committee.

ORGANISATION

9. The Senior Manager – Internal Audit reports functionally to the Scrutiny Committee and administratively directly to the Head of Corporate Finance who is a member of the Corporate Services Management Team. In addition, the Senior Manager – Internal Audit has direct access and freedom to report to the Chief Executive, the Executive Director of Corporate Services who also is the Council's Section 95 Officer, the Council Management Team and the Convener of the Scrutiny Committee as considered appropriate.

INDEPENDENCE AND OBJECTIVITY

10. The Internal Audit Service is independent of the activities it audits. This is essential to ensure that the Service provides unbiased judgments and impartial advice to management. To achieve this requirement internal audit operates within a framework that allows no direct operational responsibility or authority over the activities audited, unrestricted access to senior management and reporting to the Scrutiny Committee in the name of the Senior Manager – Internal Audit.
11. The Senior Manager – Internal Audit will confirm to the Scrutiny Committee, at least annually, the organisational independence of the Internal Audit Service. Any impairment to independence or objectivity will be disclosed to the Scrutiny Committee and the implications discussed.
12. Each member of the Internal Audit Service must exhibit the highest level of professional integrity and objectivity in gathering, evaluating, forming opinions and communicating information about the activity or process being examined. This will include making a balanced assessment of all relevant circumstances and not be unduly influenced by their own interests or by others in forming judgements.

RESPONSIBILITY

13. 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 control framework in the context of the Council's defined goals and objectives. The Internal Audit Service is responsible for and may potentially evaluate any of the organisation's processes, also referred to as the audit universe. The internal control objectives considered by the Service in discharging its remit include the following:
 - Consistency of operations with established goals and objectives.
 - Effectiveness and efficiency of operations and deployment 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.
14. Based on its activity, the Internal Audit Service is responsible for reporting significant risk exposures identified, including governance and control issues and fraud risks to the Scrutiny Committee and to senior management.
15. Whilst the Internal Audit Service may be used to support consulting and advisory services related to governance, risk management and control this will not be at the detriment of the provision of core assurance services.

INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

16. The Senior Manager – Internal Audit will annually submit to the Scrutiny Committee an internal audit plan for review and approval which includes risk assessment criteria. The Senior Manager – Internal Audit will, as part of this submission, communicate the impact of any resource limitations and significant interim changes impacting on the organisation. Any significant deviation from the approved internal audit plan will be communicated to the Scrutiny Committee as required.
17. The internal audit plan will be developed utilising a risk-based methodology based on the audit universe and will take into account the requirement placed upon the Senior Manager – Internal Audit to deliver an annual internal audit opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management and control framework. In compiling the plan, input from senior management, Scrutiny Committee Elected Members and any other relevant parties will be sought and prior to submission to the Scrutiny Committee, for approval, the plan will be submitted to the Council Management Team for comment.

REPORTING AND MONITORING

18. Following the conclusion of each internal audit assignment a written report will be prepared. The final report will include for each of the specific findings and recommendations the action taken or to be taken, the anticipated timeframe for completion and the responsible officer. Explanations should be given by the client for any recommendations where corrective action will not be taken forward. The final reports will be distributed to the client and other relevant parties, including the Council Management Team and External Audit, and the executive summaries submitted to the Scrutiny Committee.
19. The Internal Audit Service is also responsible for providing assurance that recommendations arising from audit reports, as agreed with management, have been implemented. A summary of the results from this work will be formally reported to the Scrutiny Committee.

PERIODIC ASSESSMENT

20. Internal Audit is required to maintain a quality assurance and improvement programme that covers all aspects of the Internal Audit Service. The Senior Manager – Internal Audit is responsible for periodically completing a self-assessment on the Internal Audit Service as regards its conformance with the purpose, authority and responsibility covered in this Charter and performance relative to the internal audit plan. In addition, external assessments will be conducted at least once every five years by a suitably qualified external inspector.
21. The Senior Manager – Internal Audit will communicate the results of the quality assurance and improvement programme for both internal and external assessments to the Scrutiny Committee and the Council Management Team as appropriate.