

Governance and Audit Committee

1. Membership: 13 Members; plus, 2 (non-voting) co-opted members.
2. Members may not serve as ordinary or substitute members of the Governance and Audit Committee, or any sub-committees, where any of the following apply:
 - a. They have not had the training required for this Committee.
 - b. They are an Executive Member or a Deputy Cabinet Member.
 - c. They are the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.
 - d. They have served as an Executive Member at any time within the two years preceding the date of the meeting.
3. The Committee may appoint or remove up to two non-voting Co-Opted Members (independent of the elected membership) who may participate in the business of the Committee in accordance with the rules set out in the Constitution.
4. There is an expectation that Members not on the Committee, and Officers, attend in relation to material matters on the agenda. However, Officers below Senior Manager level are not required to attend meetings except with their agreement and that of the relevant Senior Manager.
5. The purpose of this Committee is to provide independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk, finance, and control arrangements. Towards this purpose, its role is to:
 - a. ensure there is sufficient assurance over governance risk and control and provide reports to full Council on the effectiveness and adequacy of these arrangements;
 - b. have oversight of both internal and external audit together with the financial and governance reports, helping to ensure that there are adequate arrangements in place for both internal challenge and public accountability,
 - c. through a and b above, give greater confidence to all those charged with governance for Kent County Council that its arrangements are effective and reporting to full Council or other Committees as necessary where the Committee has concerns that these arrangements are not effective; and
 - d. ensure that the County Council is sighted on the activity of the Committee alongside the importance of financial probity, good governance and learning lessons from audit activity through an annual report.
6. The Governance and Audit Committee is responsible for the following:

- a. monitoring the development and operation of the Council's corporate governance, financial, risk and assurance frameworks and arrangements to ensure it meets recommended practice, is embedded across the whole Council and is operating consistently throughout the year,
- b. monitoring the development and operation of the Council's Internal Audit function, including review of the internal audit charter and annual audit plan, and reviewing assurances that it is effective and independent of the activities it audits,
- c. oversight of the appointment and remuneration of external auditors to ensure they are approved in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance, and the function is independent and objective,
- d. monitoring the effectiveness of the external audit process, to help ensure that it is of appropriate scope and depth, gives value for money taking into account relevant professional and regulatory requirements, and is undertaken in liaison with Internal Audit,
- e. considering the external auditor's annual letter/report, and any other specific reports by, and with the agreement of, the external auditors,
- f. monitoring the arrangements and preparations for financial reporting to ensure that statutory requirements and professional standards can be met,
- g. receiving reports on the effectiveness of financial management arrangements, including Productivity Plans, savings plans, and compliance with the Financial Management Code,
- h. monitoring the Council's arrangements to secure value for money and reviewing assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements,
- i. considering reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions,
- j. reviewing assurances that accounting policies are appropriately applied across the Council,
- k. monitoring the robustness of the Council's counter-fraud arrangements, including the assessment of fraud risks, and reviewing assurances that the Council effectively monitors the implementation of the whistle-blowing policy and Bribery Act policy.
- l. reviewing assurances that the Council has appropriate governance arrangements in place to manage the relationship between the Council and significant partnerships or collaborations, as well as any company in which the Council has majority control,

- m. reviewing assurances that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to ensure that the commercial opportunities and risks presented through company ownership are managed effectively,
 - n. oversight of the Executive's shareholder strategy regarding companies in which the Council has an interest,
 - o. approval of Spending the Council's Money, sending this document to full Council for noting,
 - p. review and approval of the Statement of Accounts, with related reports, and the Annual Governance Statement,
 - q. reporting to full Council for assurance on the Accounts and Annual Governance Statement approval.
7. The Corporate Director of Finance has delegated authority from the Committee to make minor corrections and updates to Spending the Council's Money where it does not affect the meaning of the sections.