

4 REPORTING COMMITTEES

4.1 AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference (Delegations)

Parent committee: Finance and Performance Committee

Purpose

The purpose of the Audit and Risk Committee is to assist and advise the Governing Body in discharging its responsibility and ownership of governance, risk management, and internal control.

The committee will review the effectiveness of the following aspects of governance, risk management and internal control:

- enterprise risk management (ERM) across the Auckland Council group
- internal and external audit and assurance
- integrity and investigations
- monitoring of compliance with laws and regulations
- significant projects and programmes of work focussing on the appropriate management of risk
- oversight of preparation of the LTP, Annual Report, and other external financial reports required by statute.

The scope of the committee includes the oversight of risk management and assurance across council's CCOs with respect to risk that is significant to the Auckland Council group.

To perform his or her role effectively, each committee member must develop and maintain his or her skills and knowledge, including an understanding of the committee's responsibilities, and of the council's business, operations and risks.

Decision-Making Powers

The committee has no decision making powers other than those in these terms of reference.

The committee may request expert advice through the chief executive where necessary.

The committee may make recommendations to the Governing Body and / or chief executive.

Tenure

External members will be appointed for an initial period not exceeding three years, after which they will be eligible for extension or re-appointment, after a formal review of their performance, and have not already served two terms on the committee. Councillors appointed to the committee will automatically cease to hold office at the time of the local authority triennial elections. They may be eligible for re-appointment post those elections if they are returned to office and have not already served two terms on the committee.

The chief executive, and the senior management team members will not be members of the committee.

The members, taken collectively, will have a broad range of skills and experience relevant to the operations of the council. At least one member of the committee should have accounting or related financial management experience, with an understanding of accounting and auditing standards in a public sector environment.

Committee's responsibilities

The committee's responsibilities are detailed below.

Forward Work Programme

The committee will agree and approve annually a forward work programme – which will consist of in depth briefings and reviews of specific significant risks and assurance strategies, as contained in the ERM “Top Risks” or Auckland Council’s work plan.

Risk management

- Review, approve and monitor the implementation of the ERM policy, framework and strategy (including risks pertaining to CCOs that are significant to the Auckland Council group).
- Review and approve the council’s “risk appetite” statement.
- Review the effectiveness of risk management and internal control systems including all material financial, operational, compliance and other material controls. This includes legislative compliance (including Health and Safety), significant projects and programmes of work, and significant procurement.
- Review risk management reports identifying new and / or emerging risks, and any subsequent changes to the ERM “Top Risk” register.

Internal Audit

- Review annually the Internal Audit Charter – which confirms the authority, independence and scope of the function.
- Review and approve annually and monitor the implementation of the 3 year Internal Audit Strategy and 12 month detailed Internal Audit Plan.
- Review the co-ordination between the risk and internal audit functions – including the integration of the council’s ERM risk profile with the Internal Audit programme. This includes assurance over all material financial, operational, compliance and other material controls. This includes legislative compliance (including Health and Safety), significant projects and programmes of work, and significant procurement.
- Review the reports of the Internal Audit functions dealing with findings, conclusions and recommendations (including assurance over risks pertaining to CCOs that are significant to the Auckland Council group)
- Review and monitor management’s responsiveness to the findings and recommendations – enquiring into the reasons that any recommendation is not acted upon.

Fraud and Integrity

- Review and approve annually, and monitor the implementation of, the Fraud and Integrity Strategy, including detailed work programme.
- Review annually the whistleblowing procedures and ensure that arrangements are in place by which staff, may, in confidence, raise concerns about possible improprieties in matters of financial reporting, financial control or any other matters, and that there is proportionate and independent investigation of such matters and appropriate follow-up action.
- Review the procedures in relation to the prevention, detection, reporting and investigation of bribery and fraud.
- Review and monitor policy and process to manage conflicts of interest amongst elected members, local board members, management, staff, consultants and contractors.
- Review reports from the Risk, Internal Audit, Integrity and Investigations, external audit and management related to whistle blower, ethics, bribery and fraud related incidents.

Statutory Reporting

Review and monitor the integrity of the interim and annual report including statutory financial statements and any other formal announcements relating to the council's financial performance, focussing particularly on:

- compliance with, and the appropriate application of, relevant accounting policies, practices and accounting standards
- compliance with applicable legal requirements relevant to statutory reporting
- the consistency of application of accounting policies, across reporting periods, and the Auckland Council group
- changes to accounting policies and practices that may affect the way that accounts are presented
- any decisions involving significant judgement, estimation or uncertainty
- the extent to which financial statements are affected by any unusual transactions and the manner in which they are disclosed
- the disclosure of contingent liabilities and contingent assets
- the clarity of disclosures generally
- the basis for the adoption of the going concern assumption
- significant adjustments resulting from the audit.

External Audit

- Discuss with the external auditor before the audit commences:
 - the nature, scope and fees of the external audit
 - areas of audit focus
 - error and materiality levels.
- Review with the external auditors representations required by elected members and senior management, including representations as to the fraud and integrity control environment.
- Review the external auditors management letter and management responses, and inquire into reasons for any recommendations not acted upon.
- Where required, the chair may ask a senior representative of the Office of the Auditor General to attend the committee meetings to discuss the office's plans, findings and other matters of mutual interest.

Interaction with Council Controlled Organisations

Other committees dealing with CCO matters may refer matters to the Audit and Risk Committee for review and advice.

This committee will enquire to ensure adequate processes at a governance level exist to identify and manage risks within a CCO. Where an identified risk may impact on Auckland Council or the wider group, the committee will also ensure that all affected entities are aware of and appropriately managing the risk.

The Head of Risk and Head of Internal Audit are responsible for the provision of quality risk, assurance, insurance and ethics and integrity services for all CCOs except Auckland Transport and Watercare (with the exception of insurance services which are provided to Auckland Transport). Auckland Transport and Watercare have their own risk and assurance functions. The Head of Risk and Head of Internal Audit are responsible for monitoring CCO risk and internal audit strategies with respect to risks that are significant to the Auckland Council group.

Annual Report on the work of the committee

The chair of the committee will submit a written review of the performance of the committee to the chief executive on an annual basis. The review will summarise the activities of the committee and how it has contributed to the council's governance and strategic objectives. The chief executive will place the report on the next available agenda of the governing body.

Membership:

Chairperson (independent):

Deputy chairperson: Cr Greg Sayers

Governing Body members (2): Deputy Mayor Bill Cashmore Cr Richard Hills

Independent members (2):

Ex officio: Mayor
IMSB Chair (or nominee)*

* expected to attend for matters that are relevant to the IMSB

Quorum: 3 (which must include 2 Governing Body members)

Frequency of Meetings: Quarterly