

PROCEDURES FOR AUDITING THE COUNCIL

Local Authorities are subject to both internal and external audit.

1. Internal Audit

- 1.1. The requirement for an Internal Audit function for local authorities is implied by Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, which requires that authorities “make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall secure that one of their Officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs”
- 1.2. Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2006 more specifically requires that “a relevant body shall maintain an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with the proper practices in relation to internal control”.
- 1.3. Internal audit can be defined as 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”.
- 1.4. The Internal Audit function is provided under a service level agreement with Worcester City Council. The Service Manager of the Internal Audit function reports direct to the Council's Section 151 Officer and has a link to the Head of Finance and Resources. However, the Audit Services Manager can also report direct to the Chief Executive and the Audit Committee Chair, if required.

2. External Audit

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to prepare the Financial Accounts for each financial year in accordance with relevant legislation and accounting practice. In addition there is a legal requirement to have the accounts audited by an External Auditor within a prescribed framework. As part of the abolition of the Audit Commission, the contract for the provision of this External Audit Service for Council has been awarded to Grant Thornton.

The new External Audit contract will be effective for the 2012/13 Audit.

External Audit are under a duty to satisfy themselves that:

- The Council's Annual Statement of Accounts is prepared in accordance with current legislation.
- Proper practice has been observed in the completion of the accounts.
- The Council has made proper arrangements for value for money.

2.2 The Head of Finance and Resources and the Executive Director of Finance and Resources (S.151 Officer) shall ensure that the auditors are given access at all reasonable times to premises, personnel, documents and assets which the external auditors consider necessary for the purposes of their work.

2.3 The Head of Finance and Resources and the Executive Director of Finance and Resources (S.151 Officer) shall ensure that there is effective liaison between external and internal audit.

2.4 The Head of Finance and Resources and the Executive Director of Finance and Resources (S.151 Officer) shall report to Council and the Audit & Governance Committee on the external audits, Annual Management Letter and on any other reports prepared by the external auditors on specific matters and the Audit & Governance Committee shall decide how these reports are to be considered.

2.5 Information and contact details regarding the Council's current external auditors can be obtained from the Council's Financial Services Team.

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