

Audit Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Membership

- 1.1 The committee shall comprise at least three members. At least two independent non-executive directors, which may include the chairman of the board if he or she was considered independent on appointment, must be members of the committee. Executives of The British Standards Institution may not be members of the committee. The chairman of the board may not chair the committee. Members of the committee shall be appointed by the board on the recommendation of the nominations committee in consultation with the chairman of the audit committee.
- 1.2 At least one of the members of the committee shall have recent and relevant financial experience ideally with a professional qualification from one of the professional accountancy bodies.
- 1.3 The committee as a whole shall have competence relevant to the sector in which the company operates.
- 1.4 Only members of the committee have the right to attend committee meetings. However, other individuals such as the chief executive, finance director, other directors, the heads of risk, compliance and internal audit and representatives from the finance function may be invited to attend all or part of any meeting as and when appropriate and necessary.
- 1.5 The external auditor will be invited to attend meetings of the committee on a regular basis.
- 1.6 Appointments to the committee shall be for a period of up to three years, which may be extendable by no more than two additional three-year periods, so long as the director still meets the criteria for membership of the committee.
- 1.7 The board shall appoint the committee chairman who shall be an independent non-executive director. In the absence of the committee chairman and/or an appointed deputy, the remaining members present shall elect one of themselves to chair the meeting.

2. Secretary

The company secretary or his or her nominee shall act as the secretary of the committee and will ensure that the committee receives information and papers in a timely manner to enable full and proper consideration to be given to issues.

3. Quorum and attendance

- 3.1 The quorum necessary for the transaction of business shall be three members, including at least two independent non-executive directors and may include the chairman of the Board if a member. A duly convened meeting of the committee at which a quorum is present shall be competent to exercise all or any of the authorities, powers and discretions vested in, or exercisable by, the committee.
- 3.2 A person communicating by electronic means shall be deemed to be personally present at a meeting of the committee while that person is able to communicate interactively and simultaneously with all other parties attending the meeting (including others attending by electronic means).

4. Frequency of meetings

- 4.1 The committee shall meet at least three times a year at appropriate times in the reporting and audit cycle and otherwise as required.
- 4.2 Outside of the formal meeting programme, the committee chairman will maintain a dialogue with key individuals involved in the company's governance, including the board chairman, the chief executive, the finance director, the external audit lead partner and the head of internal audit.

5. Notice of meetings

- 5.1 Meetings of the committee shall be called by the secretary of the committee at the request of any of its members or at the request of external audit lead partner or head of internal audit if they consider it necessary.
- 5.2 Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time and date together with an agenda of items to be discussed, shall be forwarded to each member of the committee, any other person required to attend and all other non-executive directors, no later than two working days before the date of the meeting. Supporting papers shall be sent to committee members, and to other attendees as appropriate, at the same time.

6. Minutes of meetings

- 6.1 The secretary shall minute the proceedings and decisions of all meetings of the committee, including recording the names of those present and in attendance.
- 6.2 Draft minutes of committee meetings shall be circulated promptly to all members of the committee. Once approved, minutes should be circulated to all other members of the board unless it would be inappropriate to do so in the opinion of the chairman of the committee.

7. Annual General Meeting

The committee chairman should attend the annual general meeting to answer member questions on the committee's activities.

8. Duties

The committee should carry out the duties below for the parent company and the group as a whole, as appropriate.

8.1 Financial reporting

8.1.1 The committee shall monitor the integrity of the financial statements of the company including its annual report and, if applicable, its half-yearly reports, interim management statements and any other formal announcement relating to its financial performance, reviewing and reporting to the Board on significant financial reporting issues and judgements which they contain having regard to matters communicated to it by the auditor.

8.1.2 In particular, the committee shall review and challenge where necessary

8.1.2.1 the consistency of, and any changes to, accounting policies both on a year on year basis and across the company/group;

8.1.2.2 the methods used to account for significant or unusual transactions where different approaches are possible;

8.1.2.3 whether the company has followed appropriate accounting policies and made appropriate estimates and judgements, taking into account the views of the external auditor;

8.1.2.4 the clarity and completeness of disclosure in the company's financial reports and the context in which statements are made; and

8.1.2.5 all material information presented with the financial statements, such as the Strategic report, including the Chief Executive's review, Operational review and Financial review, and the corporate governance statements relating to the audit and risk management.

8.1.3 Where the committee is not satisfied with any aspect of the proposed financial reporting by the company, it shall report its views to the board.

8.2 Narrative reporting

Where requested by the board, the committee shall review the content of the annual report and accounts and advise the board on whether, taken as a whole, it is fair, balanced and understandable and provides the information necessary to assess the company's position and performance, business model and strategy. Any review would need to assess whether other information presented in the Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements.

8.3 Internal controls and risk management systems

The board has ultimate responsibility for an organisation's risk management and internal control systems, but the board has delegated to the audit committee some functions to assist the board in meeting this responsibility. The committee shall

- 8.3.1 keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of the company's internal financial controls and internal control and risk management systems;
- 8.3.2 review and recommend to the Board the disclosures to be included in the annual report concerning internal control, risk management and the viability statement; and
- 8.3.3 consider the role the committee can play in promoting sound risk management and internal control systems, including operational and compliance controls and review these systems, receiving reports from management on the effectiveness of such systems seeking appropriate assurance as necessary.

8.4 Whistleblowing, fraud, bribery and compliance

The committee shall

- 8.4.1 review the adequacy and security of the company's arrangements for its employees and contractors to raise concerns, in confidence, about possible wrongdoing in financial reporting or other matters. The committee shall ensure that these arrangements allow proportionate and independent investigation of such matters and appropriate follow up action;
- 8.4.2 review the company's procedures for detecting fraud and receive reports on non-compliance;
- 8.4.3 review the company's systems and controls for the prevention of bribery and receive reports on non-compliance;
- 8.4.4 review the adequacy and effectiveness of the company's anti-money laundering systems and controls; and
- 8.4.5 review regular reports from the Compliance Officer and keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of the company's compliance function.

8.5 Internal audit

The committee shall

- 8.5.1 monitor and review the effectiveness of the company's internal audit function in the context of the company's overall risk management system;
- 8.5.2 approve the appointment and termination of appointment of the head of the internal audit function;

- 8.5.3 consider and approve the role and mandate of the internal audit function and ensure it has adequate resources and appropriate access to information to enable it to perform its function effectively and in accordance with the relevant professional standards for internal auditors;
- 8.5.4 ensure the internal auditor has direct access to the board chairman and to the committee chairman, and is accountable to the committee;
- 8.5.5 approve the annual internal audit plan, ensuring it is aligned with the key risks of the business and is co-ordinated with other assurance providers;
- 8.5.6 receive a report on the results of the internal auditor's work on a periodic basis;
- 8.5.7 review and monitor management's responsiveness to the internal auditor's findings and recommendations; and
- 8.5.8 meet the head of internal audit at least once a year, without the presence of management.

8.6 External Audit

The committee shall

- 8.6.1 consider and make recommendations to the board, to be put to members for approval at the annual general meeting, in relation to the appointment, re-appointment and removal of the company's external auditor.
- 8.6.2 ensure that at least once every ten years the audit services contract is put out to tender to enable the committee to compare the quality and effectiveness of the services provided by the incumbent auditor with those of other audit firms; and in respect of such tender oversee the selection process and ensure that all tendering firms have such access as is necessary to information and individuals during the duration of the tendering process;
- 8.6.3 if an auditor resigns, investigate the issues leading to this and decide whether any action is required;
- 8.6.4 oversee the relationship with the external auditor including (but not limited to):
 - 8.6.4.1 approval of their remuneration, whether fees for audit or non-audit services and that the level of fees is appropriate to enable an effective and high quality audit to be conducted;
 - 8.6.4.2 approval of their terms of engagement, including any engagement letter issued at the start of each audit and the scope of the audit;

- 8.6.4.3 assessing annually their independence and objectivity taking into account relevant professional and regulatory requirements and the relationship with the auditor as a whole, including the provision of any non-audit services;
 - 8.6.4.4 satisfying itself that there are no relationships (such as family, employment, investment, financial or business) between the auditor and the company (other than in the ordinary course of business) which could adversely affect the auditor's independence and objectivity;
 - 8.6.4.5 agreeing with the board a policy on the employment of former employees of the company's auditor, then monitoring the implementation of this policy;
 - 8.6.4.6 monitoring the auditor's compliance with relevant ethical and professional guidance on the rotation of audit partner, ~~the level of fees paid by the company compared to the overall fee income of the firm, office and partner~~ and other related requirements;
 - 8.6.4.7 assessing annually the qualifications, expertise and resources of the auditor and the effectiveness of the audit process, which shall include a report from the external auditor on their own internal quality procedures;
 - 8.6.4.8 seeking to ensure co-ordination with the activities of the internal audit function; and
 - 8.6.4.9 evaluating the risks to the quality and effectiveness of the financial reporting process and consideration of the need to include the risk of the withdrawal of their auditor from the market in that evaluation.
- 8.6.5 meet regularly with the external auditor, including once at the planning stage before the audit and once after the audit at the reporting stage. The committee shall meet the external auditor at least once a year, without management being present, to discuss the auditor's remit and any issues arising from the audit;
- 8.6.6 At the start of the audit cycle the committee shall review and approve the annual audit plan and ensure that it is consistent with the scope of the audit engagement, having regard to the seniority, expertise and experience of the audit team; and
- 8.6.7 ensure appropriate plans are in place for the audit and that levels of materiality, resources and the expertise of the external auditors are consistent with the scope of the audit. The committee should also discuss issues that might affect audit quality with the external auditor; and
- 8.6.8 review the findings of the audit with the external auditor. This shall include but not be limited to, the following:

- 8.6.8.1 a discussion of any major issues which arose during the audit;
- 8.6.8.2 an explanation by the external auditor of how risks to audit quality have been addressed;
- 8.6.8.3 weigh evidence and review key areas of accounting judgement;
- 8.6.8.4 receive the perceptions of the external auditors of senior management and the finance team; and
- 8.6.8.5 review and discuss and seek explanations of levels of errors identified during the audit.

The committee shall also

- 8.6.9 review and monitor managements' responsiveness to the external auditor's findings. It shall also review any representation letter(s) requested by the external auditor before they are signed by management;
- 8.6.10 assess the effectiveness of the audit process and the quality, expertise and judgement of the external auditor. In the course of its assessment of effectiveness the committee shall:
 - ascertain the risks to audit quality and how the auditor has addressed these
 - discuss key auditor firm and network level controls and enquire about audit and auditor inspections
 - review how the external auditor has kept to the audit plan and the reasons for any deviation
 - obtain feedback about the conduct of the audit from key people involved; and
- 8.6.11 review and monitor the content of the external auditor's management letter, and other communications with the audit committee, in order to assess whether it is based on a good understanding of the company's business and establish whether recommendations have been acted upon and, if not, the reasons why they have not been acted upon.

8.7 Non-audit services from the external auditor

- 8.7.1 The committee shall develop and implement policy on the engagement of the external auditor to supply non-audit services, taking into account relevant ethical guidance regarding the provision of non-audit services by the external audit firm; and to report to the board, identifying any matters in respect of which it considers that action or improvement is needed and making recommendation as to the steps to be taken.

- 8.7.2 The committee shall be responsible for approving non-audit services. The committee's objective shall be to ensure that the provision of such services does not impair the auditor's independence or objectivity.
- 8.7.3 The committee shall set and apply a formal policy specifying the types of non-audit service for which use of the external auditor is pre-approved, which should only be for matters that are clearly trivial.
- 8.7.4 The audit committee shall set a policy for how it will assess whether non-audit services have a direct or material effect on the audited financial statements and how they might affect the external auditor's independence.

8.8 Memorandum of Understanding with H.M. Government

The committee shall also monitor and report to the Board on the performance of the company's responsibilities and obligations to H.M. Government in respect of its activities as the United Kingdom's National Standards Body under Articles 5, 6 and 7 of the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 20 June 2002, and shall review the financial information and other reports that have been sent to HM Government relating to those activities.

9. Reporting responsibilities

- 9.1 The committee chairman shall report formally to the board on its proceedings after each meeting on how it has discharged its responsibilities. This report shall include:
 - 9.1.1 the significant issues that it considered in relation to the financial statements (required under paragraph 8.1.1) and how these were addressed;
 - 9.1.2 its assessment of the effectiveness of the external audit process (required under paragraph 8.6.4.7) and its recommendation on the appointment or reappointment of the external auditor; and
 - 9.1.3 any other issues on which the Board has requested the committee's opinion. The committee shall make whatever recommendations to the board it deems appropriate on any area within its remit where action or improvement is needed.
- 9.2 The committee shall produce a report on its activities to be included in the company's annual report. The report shall include the role, work and composition of the committee and how its evaluation has been carried out. It shall also provide an explanation of how the committee has addressed the effectiveness of the external audit process; details of non-audit services activity and policy and how the effectiveness of the internal audit function has been addressed;
- 9.2 In the compiling the reports referred to in 9.1 and 9.3, the committee should exercise judgement in deciding which of the issues it considers in relation to the financial statements are significant and how these issues were addressed. The report in the annual report and accounts need not repeat information

disclosed elsewhere in the annual report and accounts, but could provide cross-references to that information.

10. Other matters

The committee shall

- 10.1 consider key matters on its own initiative and review, monitor and provide assistance to the Board as it sees fit.
- 10.2 have access to sufficient resources in order to carry out its duties, including access to the company secretariat for assistance as required;
- 10.3 be provided with appropriate and timely training, both in the form of an induction programme for new members and on an ongoing basis for all members;
- 10.4 give due consideration to laws and regulations, the provisions of the Code and the requirements of the UK Listing Authority's Listing, Prospectus and Disclosure and Transparency Rules and any other applicable Rules, as appropriate;
- 10.5 be responsible for overseeing the co-ordination of the internal and external auditors;
- 10.6 oversee any investigation of activities which are within its terms of reference;
- 10.7 work and liaise as necessary with all other board committees; and
- 10.8 arrange for periodic reviews of its own performance and, at least annually, review its constitution and terms of reference to ensure it is operating effectively and recommend any changes it considers necessary to the board for approval.

11. Authority

The committee is authorised

- 11.1 to seek any information it requires from any employee of the company in order to perform its duties;
- 11.2 to obtain, at the company's expense, outside legal or other professional advice on any matter within its terms of reference;
- 11.3 to call any employee to be questioned at a meeting of the committee as and when required;
- 11.4 to have the right to publish in the Company's annual report details of any issues that cannot be resolved between the committee and the board.