

## **Audit Committee Terms of Reference**

### **1. Membership**

- 1.1 The Committee shall comprise at least two members. Members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Board, on the recommendation of the nomination and governance Committee in consultation with the chair of the audit Committee.
- 1.2 All members of the Committee shall be independent non-executive directors at least one of whom shall have recent and relevant financial experience ideally with a professional qualification from one of the professional accountancy bodies. The chair of the Board shall not be a member of the Committee.
- 1.3 Only members of the Committee have the right to attend and vote at Committee meetings with, if required, the Chair having a casting vote. However, the external auditor chief financial officer, head of internal audit will be invited to attend meetings of the Committee on a regular basis and other non-members may be invited to attend all or part of any meeting as and when appropriate and necessary.
- 1.4 Appointments to the Committee shall be for a period of up to three years extendable by no more than two additional three-year periods, provided members remain independent.
- 1.5 The Board shall appoint the Committee chair. In the absence of the Committee chair and/or an appointed deputy, the remaining members present shall elect one of themselves to chair the meeting.
- 1.6 Each member of the Committee shall disclose to the Committee:
  - (a) any personal financial interest (other than as a Shareholder) in any matter to be decided by the Committee; or
  - (b) any potential conflict of interest arising from a cross-directorship.
- 1.7 Any such member shall abstain from voting on resolutions of the Committee in relation to which such interest exists and from participating in the discussions concerning such resolutions and (if so requested by the Board) shall resign from the Committee.

### **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**

The quorum necessary for the transaction of business shall be two members present in person or by audio or video conference.

### **4. Frequency of meetings**

- 4.1 The Committee shall meet at least three times a year at appropriate intervals in the financial reporting and audit cycle and otherwise as required.
- 4.2 Outside of the formal meeting programme, the Committee chair will maintain a dialogue with key individuals involved in the company's governance, including the Board chair, 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 convened by the secretary of the Committee at the request of any of its members or at the request of the external audit lead partner or chief financial officer 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 and supporting papers, shall be forwarded to each member of the Committee, any other person required to attend and all other non-executive directors, no later than five working days before the date of the meeting.

## **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 Committee chair.

## **7. Annual general meeting and engagement with Shareholders**

The Committee chair should attend the annual general meeting to answer Shareholder questions on the Committee's activities. In addition, the Committee chair should seek engagement with Shareholders on significant matters related to the Committee's area of responsibility.

## **8. Duties**

The Committee should carry out the duties below for the parent company, major subsidiary undertakings 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 and 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, significant 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 standards 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 business review and the corporate governance statements relating to the audit and to 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 should 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 for Shareholders to assess the company's performance, business model and strategy.

## 8.3 Internal controls and risk management systems

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; and
- 8.3.2 review and approve the statements to be included in the annual report concerning internal controls and risk management.

## 8.4 Compliance, whistleblowing and fraud

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;
- 8.4.3 review the company's systems and controls for the prevention of bribery and receive reports on non-compliance;

## 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 review and approve the charter of the internal audit function and ensure the function has the necessary resources and access to information to enable it to fulfil its mandate, and is equipped to perform in accordance with appropriate professional standards for internal auditors;
- 8.5.3 ensure the head of internal audit has direct access to the Board chair and to the Committee chair, providing independence from the executive and is accountable to the Committee;
- 8.5.4 review and assess the annual internal audit work plan;
- 8.5.5 receive a report on the results of internal audit's work on a regular basis;
- 8.5.6 review and monitor management's responsiveness to internal audit's findings and recommendations;
- 8.5.7 meet with the head of internal audit at least once a year without the presence of management;
- 8.5.8 monitor and assess the role and effectiveness of internal audit in the overall context of the Group's risk management system and carry out an annual assessment of the effectiveness of the internal audit function;
- 8.5.9 approve the appointment or termination of appointment of the head of internal audit.

## 8.6 External audit

The Committee shall:

- 8.6.1 consider and make recommendations to the Board, to be put to Shareholders for approval at the AGM, 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 reviewed 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 recommendations on their remuneration, including both fees for audit and 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 UK 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, and 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) and 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 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 review the findings of the audit with the external auditor.

This shall include but not be limited to, the following:

  - 8.6.7.1 a discussion of any major issues which arose during the audit;

- 8.6.7.2 key accounting and audit judgements;
- 8.6.7.3 levels of errors identified during the audit; and
- 8.6.7.4 the effectiveness of the audit process.

The Committee shall also:

- 8.6.8 review the management letter and management's response to the auditor's findings and recommendations; and
- 8.6.9 develop and implement policy on the supply of non-audit services by the external auditor to avoid any threat to auditor objectivity and independence taking into account any relevant ethical guidance on the matter.

## **9. Reporting responsibilities**

- 9.1 The Committee chair shall report formally to the Board on its proceedings after each meeting on all matters within its duties and responsibilities and shall also formally report to the Board 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.
- 9.2 The Committee shall make whatever recommendations to the Board it deems appropriate on any area within its remit where action or improvement is needed.
- 9.3 The Committee shall compile a report on its activities to be included in the company's annual report. The report should include an explanation of how the Committee has addressed the effectiveness of the external audit process; the significant issues that the Committee considered in relation to the financial statements and how these issues were addressed, having regard to matters communicated to it by the auditor; and all other information requirements set out in the Code.
- 9.4 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 but should include at least those matters that have informed the Board's assessment of whether the company is a going concern. The report to Shareholders 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 have access to sufficient resources in order to carry out its duties, including access to the company secretariat for assistance as required;
- 10.2 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;
- 10.3 give due consideration to laws and regulations, the provisions of the Code and the requirements of the Financial Conduct Authority's Listing, Prospectus and Disclosure Guidance and Transparency Rules and any other applicable rules, as appropriate;
- 10.4 be responsible for co-ordination of the internal and external auditors;
- 10.5 oversee any investigation of activities which are within its terms of reference;
- 10.6 work and liaise as necessary with all other Board Committees

10.7 arrange for periodic reviews of its own performance and, at least annually, review its constitution and terms of reference to ensure it is operating at maximum effectiveness and recommend any changes it considers necessary to the Board.

## **11. Authority**

The Committee is authorised to:

- 11.1 seek any information it requires from any employee of the company in order to perform its duties;
- 11.2 obtain, at the company's expense, independent legal, accounting or other professional advice on any matter it believes it necessary to do so;
- 11.3 call any employee to be questioned at a meeting of the Committee as and when required; and
- 11.4 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

Approved by the Board  
28 Feb 2024