

A woman with brown hair tied back, wearing a dark blue polo shirt, an orange high-visibility safety vest with reflective stripes, and large black ear protection. She is looking intently at a large, cylindrical, metallic industrial tank. Her right hand is raised towards a circular opening on the tank. The background is a blurred industrial setting with overhead lights.

Affinity Water

Audit Risk and Assurance Committee

Terms of Reference

AUDIT RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE (ARAC) TERMS OF REFERENCE¹

1. MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 The committee shall comprise at least three members. Members of the committee shall be appointed by the board, on the recommendation of the nomination committee in consultation with the chair of the ARAC.
- 1.2 At least two members of the committee shall be independent non-executive directors, at least one of whom shall be the committee chair, and shall have recent and relevant financial experience. At least one member of the committee shall be a shareholder nominated non-executive director. The committee, as a whole, should have competence relevant to the sector in which the Company operates. 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 committee meetings. However, the external auditor and finance director 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, so long as members continue to be 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.

2. SECRETARY

- 2.1 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, including at least one independent non-executive director.

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 Chief Financial Officer, the external audit lead partner, Director of Assurance, the head of internal audit and the General Counsel.

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 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 five 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.

¹ The terms of reference are based on the Model Terms of Reference for audit committees published by the Institute of Chartered Company Secretaries in June 2013 updated with the June 2016, July 2018 UK Corporate Governance Code changes, and Ofwat's 2019 BLTG principles.

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

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

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The committee is responsible for discharging governance responsibilities in respect of audit, risk, regulatory reporting, and internal control, and will report to the board as appropriate. The committee, on behalf of the board, shall establish formal and transparent arrangements to ensure the independence and effectiveness of internal and external audit functions and satisfy itself on the integrity of financial and narrative statements within the Company's financial, risk and regulatory reporting. The main roles and responsibilities of the committee are:

8.1 Financial, risk and regulatory 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, the Company's reporting to Ofwat, and any other formal announcement relating to its financial and regulatory performance and assurance, 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 external 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;
- 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, considering 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, viability statement 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 all stakeholders to assess the Company's performance, business model and strategy. The committee will consider the clarity of reporting to ensure that shareholder interests are properly protected in relation to financial reporting and internal control and will be prepared to meet its investors.

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 including review of emerging risks;
 - 8.3.2 ensure the Head of Internal Audit has a reporting line that enables him or her to be independent of the executive to allow for independent judgement;
 - 8.3.3 ensure the internal audit function has unrestricted scope to enable it to evaluate the effectiveness of the risks, compliance, and finance functions as part of its internal audit plan;
 - 8.3.4 consider whether an independent, third-party review of internal audit effectiveness and processes is appropriate (at least every 5 years);
 - 8.3.5 review and approve the statements to be included in the annual report concerning internal controls and risk management; and
 - 8.3.6 when reviewing the viability statement consider the Company's current position and its principal risks when considering if the Company will be able to continue in operation and meet its liabilities as they fall due over the period of the viability assessment.
- 8.4 Compliance, whistleblowing, and fraud the committee shall:
- 8.4.1 review and advise the Board on the adequacy and security of the Company's arrangements for its employees to raise any matters of concern. The committee shall ensure that these arrangements allow proportionate and independent investigation of such matters and appropriate follow up action;
 - 8.4.1 review the Company's procedures for detecting fraud;
 - 8.4.2 review the Company's systems and controls for the prevention of bribery and receive reports on non-compliance;
 - 8.4.3 review regular reports on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Company's controls and systems relating to anti-money laundering and market abuse systems;
 - 8.4.4 review the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems and controls for ensuring the accuracy and reliability of regulatory information; and
 - 8.4.5 review regular reports from the Opportunity and Oversight Committee, Information Management Group (with a dotted reporting line to the Committee), Physical Security (property assets), Protective Security (in relation to the protection of National Infrastructure) and keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of the Company's compliance function.
- 8.5 Internal audit
- The committee shall:
- 8.5.1 approve the appointment or termination of appointment of the Head of Internal Audit;
 - 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, 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 the Head of Internal Audit's work on a periodic basis;
 - 8.5.6 review and monitor management's responsiveness to the Head of 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; and

8.5.8 monitor and review the effectiveness of the Company's internal audit function, in the context of the Company's overall risk management system.

8.6 External Audit

The committee shall:

- 8.6.1 subject to 8.6.2, 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. The committee should have primary responsibility for making a recommendation on the appointment, re-appointment, and removal of the external auditors. If the board does not accept the committee's recommendation, it should include in the annual report, and in any papers recommending appointment or re-appointment, a statement from the committee explaining the recommendation and should set out the reasons why the board has taken a different position;
- 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, and make recommendations to the board;
- 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 considering relevant UK professional and regulatory requirements, the FRC's 2019 Ethical Standard ("the Ethical Standard"), 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, considering the Ethical Standard and legal requirements, and monitoring the implementation of this policy;
 - 8.6.4.6 monitoring the auditor's processes for maintaining independence, compliance with relevant law, regulation, other professional requirements and the Ethical Standard and professional guidance on the rotation of audit partner and staff, the level of fees paid by the Company compared to the overall fee income of the firm, office and partner and other related requirements and assess these in the context of relevant legal, professional, and regulatory requirements, guidance and the Ethical Standard;
 - 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 the external 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;
 - 8.6.7.4 the effectiveness of the audit process;
 - 8.6.7.5 the auditor's view of its interactions with senior management; and
 - 8.6.7.6 the auditor's explanation of how the risks to audit quality were addressed. The committee shall also:
- 8.6.8 review any representation letter(s) requested by the external auditor before they are signed by management;
- 8.6.9 review the management letter and management's response to the auditor's findings and recommendations; and
- 8.6.10 develop and implement policy on the supply of non-audit services by the external auditor specifying the types of non-audit service for which the external auditor is pre-approved to avoid any threat to auditor objectivity and independence, considering any relevant ethical guidance on the matter. Such approval should only be for trivial matters.

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, and adequate time should be made available for board discussion when necessary.
- 9.3 The committee shall compile a report on its activities to be included in the Company's annual report within a separate section, describing the work of the committee in discharging its responsibilities. 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, including, but not limited to, an explanation of how it has assessed:

- the effectiveness of the external process and approach taken to the appointment or re-appointment of the external auditor;
- information on the length of tenure of the current audit firm;
- when a tender was last conducted, and advance notice of any retendering plans; and
- if the external auditor provides non-audit services, an explanation of how auditor objectivity and independence are safeguarded.

9.4 In 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 Company's instrument of appointment, Ofwat's board leadership, transparency and governance principles, the provisions of the UK Corporate Governance Code and the requirements of the UK Listing Authority's Listing, Prospectus and Disclosure and Transparency Rules and any other applicable rules, as appropriate;
- 10.4 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; and
- 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 on 28 February 2024.