



Audit Panel Charter

The Dorset Council (the Council) has established the Audit Panel in compliance with Part 8, Division 4 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act), the Local Government (Audit Panels) Order 2014 (the Audit Panels Order) and the Local Government (Audit Panels) Amendment Order 2015.

This charter sets out the panel's objectives, authority, composition, tenure, functions, reporting and administrative arrangements.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Audit Panel is to review the council's performance under section 85A of the Act and report to the council its conclusions and recommendations.

ROLE AND AUTHORITY

The Audit Panel's role is to advise and make recommendations to the Council on matters relevant to the Audit Panel's functions. The Council authorises the Audit Panel, within its responsibilities, to:

- obtain any information it requires from any employee (subject to prior approval of the General Manager and any legal obligation to protect information);
- obtain any information from external parties (subject to any legal obligation to protect information);
- discuss any matters with the Tasmanian Audit Office, or other external parties (subject to confidentiality considerations);
- request the attendance of any employee at Audit Panel meetings (subject to operational constraints and prior approval of the General Manager);
- request the attendance of any members of the Council at Audit Panel meetings; and
- obtain legal or other professional advice, as considered necessary to meet its responsibilities (subject to prior approval of the Mayor or General Manager).

COMPOSITION

The Audit Panel comprises a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 members appointed by the Council, of whom:

- If the panel has 4 or 5 members, at least 2 must be independent persons;
- If the panel has 3 members, a least 1 must be an independent person.

The Council will appoint an independent member as the Chairperson of the Audit Panel.

Council may appoint an alternative member Councillor to attend meetings of the Audit Panel when a member Councillor is unable to attend. The alternative member Councillor may only attend Audit Panel meetings in the capacity of alternative member when and if a member Councillor is unable to attend.

A person who is an employee, or the General Manager, or the Mayor of the Council, or a Councillor of another municipal council is not eligible for appointment as a member of the panel.

If a Commissioner is appointed to the Council, he or she may be appointed as a Council member of the panel.

TENURE

Independent members shall be appointed for a 2-year term. If the independent member of the Panel resigns Council will appoint a replacement at the earliest convenient time.

Councillor appointments to the Audit Panel shall be for a period not exceeding two years. Councillor member terms will be aligned with Council's election cycle, with positions to become vacant directly following a Council election.

Audit panel members may be re-appointed at the approval of Council and consideration will be given to the benefits of the Audit Panel maintaining some continuation of knowledge and experience.

SELECTION OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

Independent members of the Audit Panel are to possess:

- Good business acumen
- Sound management skills
- Good communication skills
- Knowledge and expertise in audit practices
- Knowledge and expertise in financial management
- Experience with governance processes including but not limited to risk management.

Knowledge of and skills in government, local government, not for profit organisations and organisations requiring a high degree of legislative compliance and delivery of projects and processes which offer solutions to complex community services obligations will be highly desirable in panel members.

Calls for independent members to apply for a position on the Audit Panel shall be publicly advertised in the first instance. The selection process for independent members will be determined and undertaken by Council and supported using Council's existing recruitment and selection process.

FUNCTIONS

To comply with the Audit Panels Order, when reviewing the Council's performance, the Audit Panel is to consider:

- the Council's financial system, financial governance arrangements and financial management;
- whether the annual financial statements of the Council accurately represent the state of affairs of the council;
- whether and how the strategic plan, annual plan, long-term financial management plan and long-term strategic asset management plans of the Council are integrated and the processes by which, and assumptions under which, those plans were prepared;
- the accounting, internal control, anti-fraud, anti-corruption and risk management policies, systems and controls that the Council has in relation to safeguarding its long-term financial position;

- whether the Council is complying with the provisions of the Act and any other relevant legislation;
- whether the Council has taken any action in relation to previous recommendations provided by the audit panel to the Council and, if it has so taken action, what that action was and its effectiveness; and
- any other activities within the panel's remit, as determined by the panel.

In fulfilling its functions, the audit panel should consider the following key areas:

- corporate governance;
- systems of internal controls;
- risk management frameworks;
- human resource management, including policies, procedures and enterprise agreements;
- information and communications technology governance;
- management and governance of the use of data, information and knowledge, and internal and external reporting requirements.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of the Audit Panel are expected to understand and observe the legal requirements of the Act and the Audit Panels Order. Members are also expected to:

- act in the best interests of the council;
- apply sound analytical skills, objectivity and judgment;
- express opinions constructively and openly;
- raise issues that relate to the Audit Panel's functions and pursue independent lines of enquiry within the Panel's deliberations and meetings; and
- contribute the time required to review the papers provided.

REPORTING

The Audit Panel is to provide a copy of its meeting minutes to the Council as soon as practicable after each Audit Panel meeting. If the Audit Panel has conducted a review under section 85A of the Act, the Audit Panel must provide a written report of its conclusions and recommendations to the Council as soon as practicable after the review is completed.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Meetings

- The Audit panel will meet at least four times per year.
- The Audit Panel is to regulate its own proceedings in accordance with this charter.
- The Chairperson may determine that a meeting is to be held in private.
- The General Manager and Finance Manager, or their delegates, are to attend Audit Panel meetings unless the Chairperson determines a meeting is to be held in private.
- The Audit Panel may invite any councillor and/or employee of the Council and/or representative of the Tasmanian Audit Office to attend meetings of the Audit Panel (subject to conditions outlined under role and authority).

Quorum

A quorum of an Audit Panel meeting is three members, including an independent member.

Work Plan

The Audit Panel is to develop an annual work plan that includes, but is not limited to, a schedule of meetings and the known objectives for each meeting.

The forward meeting schedule should include the dates, location, and proposed agenda items for each meeting.

Secretariat

The Council, in consultation with the Audit Panel, will appoint a person to provide secretariat support to the audit panel. The secretariat will:

- ensure the agenda for each meeting is approved by the chairperson;
- ensure the agenda and supporting papers are circulated at least one week prior to the meeting; and
- ensure the minutes of the meetings are prepared and submitted to the Council as soon as practicable after each meeting.

The Finance Manager or nominee will arrange any necessary information and technical support to be provided to the Panel to enable its functions.

INTERESTS

Audit Panel members must declare to the chairperson any real, potential or perceived pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests that may affect them carrying out their functions. The Audit Panel member with the interest must also notify the General Manager of the Council, in writing, of the interest within seven days of declaring the interest.

Independent members are to consider past employment, consultancy arrangements and related party issues in making these declarations.

At the beginning of each audit panel meeting, members are required to declare any potential or actual pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest that may apply to specific matters on the meeting agenda. Where required by the chairperson, the member will be excused from the meeting or from the audit panel's consideration of the relevant agenda item(s).

Details of potential or actual pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests declared by members will be appropriately reported in the minutes of the meeting and any relevant written reports.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Panel members must maintain confidentiality of any information, documents, and communications that the Council or Panel has designated as being in confidence, and only access Council information in order to perform their role as a Panel member.

INDUCTION

The Council will provide new Audit Panel members with relevant information and briefings on their appointment to assist them to meet their Audit Panel responsibilities.

REMUNERATION

Independent members of the Audit Panel shall be paid an annual fee and/or a sitting fee per meeting attended as approved by Council at the time of appointment.

The Chair of the Audit Panel shall be paid an additional annual fee and/or sitting fee per meeting attended as approved by Council at the time of appointment.

Any associated travel expenses will be reimbursed on a cents per kilometre basis at the applicable Tasmanian State Service Award rate.

Fees will be reviewed annually as part of the annual budget estimates process.

REVIEW

The Council will review this charter after every Council election and submit its recommendations to the Council for approval.



Mayor | Rhys Beattie

Date: 20 October 2025

Approved	Corporate Services Manager	20 April 2015	Minute 58/15
Reviewed	Director – Corporate Services & Audit Panel	15 July 2019	Minute 119/19
Reviewed	Finance Manager & Audit Panel	20 February 2023	Minute 28/23
Reviewed	Finance Manager & Audit Panel	20 October 2025	Minute 195/2025



Audit Panel Charter

Code of Conduct for members of the Audit Panel

This code of conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected of the Dorset Council's Audit Panel members (members). The standards supports the characteristics of good governance outlined in the [Good Governance Guide for Local Government in Tasmania](#).

As an independent source of scrutiny in the interests of the community, the Audit Panel provides checks and balances on key Council activities and a means of highlighting issues that require strategic attention.

Councillors who are members of the Audit Panel are in a unique position and have an obligation to maintain an Audit Panel perspective in the interests of the community when they discharge their duties as Panel members, i.e. they must display independence of mind, separate from their role as a councillor.

In performing their role on the Audit Panel, and in acting in the best interests of the community, all members of the Audit Panel commit to the following standards:

1. Effective management of conflicts of interest

- 1.1 Members avoid conflicts of interest that arise between their personal interest and their public duty as an Audit Panel member, as far as reasonably possible. This includes pecuniary and non-pecuniary conflicts of interest (actual, potential, or perceived). Where avoidance is not possible, members appropriately manage conflicts of interest. Members are responsible for acting in good faith and exercising reasonable judgement to manage conflicts of interest, including the offer of receipt of gifts and benefits.
- 1.2 All members will regularly provide advice of their actual, potential, or perceived conflicts to the panel.

2. Proper use of Council information

- 2.1 Members maintain the confidentiality of information, documents, and communication that the Council or panel has designated as being in confidence. Members only access Council information needed for them to perform their role as a panel member and not for personal interests or reasons.

3. Proper use of position

- 3.1 Members perform their role in the best interests of the Council and the community. Members operate within the intended scope of the Audit Panel (as outlined in the Audit Panel Charter) and adhere to relevant Council policies and procedures.

4. Appropriate interactions

- 4.1 Members act ethically and treat all persons with fairness and respect. Members conduct themselves in a way that positively represents the panel and is in the best interests of the Council and the community. Members interact appropriately with fellow members, councillors, Council staff and the community, and give full respect and consideration to all relevant information known to them. Members should not interact directly with council staff without the prior approval of the panel and the General Manager.