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Group Audit Committee

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Terms of Reference

<b>Document Title:</b>	<b>Group Audit Committee Terms of Reference</b>
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**Bank of Ireland Group plc (the “Company”)**

**Group Audit Committee (the “Committee”)**

**Terms of Reference**

**1. Objectives**

The Group Audit Committee is the Committee of the Board of Directors of the Company (the “Board”) responsible for assisting the Board in fulfilling its independent oversight responsibilities in relation to:

- 1.1 the appropriateness and completeness of the system of internal control;
- 1.2 , reviewing in coordination with the Board Risk Committee where appropriate, the internal control framework utilised by management to ensure and monitor the extent and effectiveness of internal control systems, including accounting control systems, and thereby maintaining an effective system of internal control;
- 1.3 monitoring the quality and integrity of the financial statements and the financial reporting process and assisting the Board in meeting its obligations under relevant Stock Exchange Listing Rules and under other applicable laws and regulations;
- 1.4 monitoring and reviewing all matters relating to the relationship between the Company, including its subsidiaries, (together the “Group”) and the external auditors of the Group;
- 1.5 monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the Group’s Internal Audit function and its operations;
- 1.6 discharging the statutory responsibilities of the Group under relevant statutes and/or regulations; and
- 1.7 overseeing, as necessary, the audit committees established by the Group’s material regulated subsidiaries<sup>1</sup>.

**2. Membership**

- 2.1 The Committee shall comprise at least four (4) members, all of whom will be Independent Non-Executive Directors. The Committee as a whole shall have an appropriate mix of skills and relevant accounting/financial reporting experience. The Committee will include at least one or more members who, the Board believes, have an appropriate qualification and recent and relevant financial experience, including competence in accounting and or auditing. The Group CEO and the Chair of the Board shall not be members of the Committee; their attendance will be by invitation and managed to ensure the independence of the Committee and the maintenance of appropriate relationships with other parties, especially the external auditors. The Chair of the Board Risk Committee shall be a member of the Committee, but no single individual may hold the position of Chair of the Committee and Chair of the Board Risk Committee simultaneously. The Committee will have at least one shared member with the Group Sustainability Committee.
- 2.2 Membership of the Committee will be reviewed each year by the Group Nomination and Governance Committee, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, and changes will be recommended to the Board at that time as required. While there is no fixed term of membership, the general aim is to refresh the membership from time to time to ensure an appropriate balance between continuity and fresh perspectives. At least two members of the Committee will be selected on the basis of their potential to succeed the Committee Chair.
- 2.3 The Chair of the Committee will be appointed by the Board on the recommendation of the Group Nomination and Governance Committee in consultation with the existing Chair of the Committee.
- 2.4 The Group Secretary or his/her nominee, as agreed with the Chair of the Committee, shall act as secretary to the Committee. He/she will not be a member of the Committee.
- 2.5 The Group Chief Financial Officer, Group Chief Risk Officer, Group Chief Compliance Officer, Group Chief Internal Auditor and other relevant or expert person(s) will normally attend meetings by invitation, as will the External Auditors, except for when any matter concerning the External Auditors (e.g. performance, independence and value provided) is being considered by the Committee. Such

<sup>1</sup> Subsidiaries refers to the Group’s Material Subsidiaries which are: Bank of Ireland (UK) plc, New Ireland Assurance, Company plc, Bank of Ireland Mortgage, Bank Unlimited Company, J&E Davy Holdings ('Davy').

attendees are not members of the Committee and they may be collectively or individually required to withdraw from meetings of the Committee if requested to do so by the Chair.

- 2.6 The Committee will meet privately with the Group Chief Internal Auditor, the External Auditor, and members of management at least annually.
- 2.7 The Committee shall 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.

### **3. Meetings and Quorum**

- 3.1 The Committee will meet on at least six (6) occasions per annum at appropriate times in the reporting and audit cycle and otherwise as required.
- 3.2 The quorum for meetings shall be three (3) members.
- 3.3 In the absence of the Committee Chair for any reason, the remaining members present shall elect one of themselves to chair a meeting of the Committee.
- 3.4 Meetings of the Committee shall be summoned by the Group Secretary at the request of any of its members or at the request of the External Auditors or the Group Chief Internal Auditor if they consider it necessary.
- 3.5 Questions arising at any Committee meeting shall be decided by a majority of votes. Where there is an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a second or casting vote. Votes shall be recorded in the minutes. Where decisions are unanimous, they shall be recorded as such in the minutes. Dissensions and negative votes shall be documented in the minutes in terms acceptable to the dissenting person or negative voter.
- 3.6 3.7 Minutes of Committee meetings shall be circulated to relevant internal stakeholders for review within five (5) business days. Following this, they will be agreed with the Chair as soon as possible and submitted to a subsequent Committee meeting for approval. Copies of the approved minutes are then submitted to the Board as soon as possible for review and noting

### **4. Duties**

In performing its duties the members will comply with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements, including the Common and Additional Conduct Standards under the Central Bank of Ireland's Individual Accountability Framework. The Committee should carry out the duties below for the Company and the Group as a whole. Material Subsidiaries generally have their own Audit Committees.

Through its duties, the Committee will assist the Chair in complying with their prescribed responsibilities under the Individual Accountability Regime including Prescribed Responsibility 8, Prescribed Responsibility 9, and Prescribed Responsibility 12.

In pursuance of its objectives, the Committee shall oversee, consider, review, evaluate, or approve, where relevant:

#### **4.1 Internal Control and Risk Management**

- 4.1.1 in partnership with the Board Risk Committee;
  - 4.1.1.1 the effectiveness of the Group's internal controls, including internal financial controls, accounting and financial reporting systems, and the company's internal control frameworks and risk management systems;
  - 4.1.1.2 the findings of any relevant regulatory examinations and/or responses, and any potential disclosures/reporting implications;
  - 4.1.1.3 relevant regulatory contact in all jurisdictions, such as inspections, disciplinary matters and emerging developments; and
  - 4.1.1.4 the effectiveness of disclosure controls and procedures including such reports as the Financial Reporting Controls Disclosure Committee may provide from time to time;

- 4.1.2 the status and outcomes of Speak Up and Sensitive Investigations (including concerns and investigations requested by the Group Executive Committee, the Board or the Regulator), and any thematic findings arising from the investigations on a bi-annual basis, at a minimum, or more frequently where necessary;
- 4.1.3 whether management is setting the appropriate “control culture” through communication and example including the timely implementation of recommendations; and
- 4.1.4 the formal annual review of the effectiveness of the Group’s system of internal controls, covering all material controls, including financial, IT, operational and compliance controls and risk management systems.

#### **4.2 Regulatory and Compliance**

- 4.2.1 the Group’s whistleblowing processes via the Group’s Speak-Up Policy and arrangements for receiving, investigating, and resolving concerns raised by staff or external parties including confidential and anonymous submissions. This includes concerns regarding financial reporting, fraudulent accounting or irregularities in audit work or other material matters. The Committee will ensure that these arrangements operate independently, uphold confidentiality, are accessible and trusted, and protect individuals from retaliation, thereby supporting a culture of transparency and accountability; and
- 4.2.2 progress against Regulatory Risk Mitigation Programme actions as may be agreed with the Board Risk Committee from time to time including those relating, but not limited, to Regulatory Reporting.

#### **4.3 Credit Risk**

- 4.3.1 the adequacy and appropriateness of:
  - the Group net impairment loss/gain on financial instruments;
  - the quantum of impairment loss allowance (including if required any Group management adjustments);
  - stage allocation, including the quantum of ‘credit-impaired’ balances; and
  - the quantum of non-performing exposures,

for inclusion in the Group’s year-end and interim accounts for recommendation to the Board for approval. The Committee will have regard to the considerations of the Board Risk Committee in relevant asset quality matters.

#### **4.4 Internal Auditors**

The scope, nature, authority, role, responsibilities and effectiveness of the work of the internal audit function, which should include but not be limited to the following activities:

- 4.4.1 participation in discussions with the Group Chief Internal Auditor and senior management about the “essential conditions<sup>2</sup>,” described in the Global Internal Audit Standards, which establish the foundation that enables an effective internal audit function;
- 4.4.2 the Group Internal Audit Charter and Mandate on an annual basis;
- 4.4.3 the internal audit risk-based assurance plan on a bi-annual basis. Any changes to the approved assurance plan will be approved on a monthly basis by the Chair of the Committee and considered and approved by the Committee at the next scheduled meeting;

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<sup>2</sup> The essential conditions outlined in the Global Internal Audit Standards (2024) refer to the minimum governance and organisational requirements, such as board authorisation, independence, and adequate resourcing, that must be in place to support an effective internal audit function.

- 4.4.4 the consideration of reports on internal audit results and monitor the timeliness of management's implementation of solutions to major and significant issues. In instances where an Internal Audit Report is rated as "Needs Significant Improvement", the accountable executive shall attend the next appropriate Committee meeting to provide a briefing on the audit findings, root cause, and the proposed remediation plan. The Committee will assess the adequacy of the response and may request follow-up reporting until a satisfactory resolution is achieved;
- 4.4.5 in a similar manner, instances where there are Audit Issues Overdue for a period of six months or greater, the accountable executive shall attend the next appropriate Committee meeting to provide an explanation for the delay, an updated timeline for resolution, and any revised remediation plans. The Committee will review the response and may request continued updates until the matter is resolved to its satisfaction;
- 4.4.6 the scope, nature, independence and effectiveness of the Group Internal Audit function in the context of the Group's overall internal control and risk management systems;
- 4.4.7 the Group Internal Audit annual budget and annual resource plan, while ensuring that it is adequately resourced and is free from undue influence by management or other restrictions;
- 4.4.8 reports on the Group Internal Audit semi-annual Control Environment Opinion and the Enterprise Risk Management Approach Rating;
- 4.4.9 the performance appraisal and remuneration (including bonus, if applicable) of the Group Chief Internal Auditor, subject to the determination of the Group Remuneration Committee. Any changes must be discussed with the Chair of the Committee prior to implementation; and
- 4.4.10 the appointment, replacement or dismissal of the Group Chief Internal Auditor and the determination of the level of qualifications and competencies required for the role.

#### **4.5 External Reporting**

- 4.5.1 the integrity of the financial statements of the Group, the Annual Report and Accounts, the Preliminary Announcement of Annual Results and the Interim Statement;
- 4.5.2 significant financial reporting judgements, any alternative accounting treatments and significant assumptions made by management;
- 4.5.3 the Annual Report, and recommending to the Board that it believes that the Annual Report taken as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and provides the information necessary for shareholders to assess the Group's position and performance, business model and strategy. The Committee reviews the arrangements established to enable this assessment to be made and satisfies itself that those arrangements are appropriate;
- 4.5.4 new accounting policies and significant changes in existing policies, prior to implementation, following appropriate input from the External Auditors;
- 4.5.5 Environmental, Social and Governance disclosures including but not limited to Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive requirements;
- 4.5.6 whether, in the Committee's opinion, the Company and its subsidiaries have kept adequate accounting records and whether the financial statements have been prepared in all material respects in accordance with applicable accounting standards and give a balanced and reasonable view of the assets, liabilities and financial position and the profit or loss of the Group;
- 4.5.7 the designation of items as "non-core", i.e. those items that obscure the underlying performance trends in the business;
- 4.5.8 the Group's annual and semi-annual Pillar 3 disclosures;
- 4.5.9 the Group's Country-by-Country report required under the Capital Requirements Directive;

4.5.10ad hoc reports on matters such as material compliance issues raised by regulators which relate directly to disclosure requirements in the Annual Report, including relevant issues raised by and correspondence from the accounting and auditing regulators (including the Irish Accounting and Auditing Supervisory Authority, and the Financial Reporting Council; and

4.5.11whether or not to recommend to the Board that it should approve the annual financial statements and the interim financial statements.

#### **4.6 Capital and Liquidity Management activities**

- 4.6.1 any relevant working capital statements, including related assurance and verification processes;
- 4.6.2 the relevant capital raising documentation prospectus, shareholder circulars etc and consideration of the related assurance and verification processes;
- 4.6.3 the basis, assumptions and calculations underlying relevant pro-forma statements (including independent review opinions from the External Auditors) included in relevant shareholder documentation; and
- 4.6.4 relevant disclosures included in shareholder documentation relating to any “significant changes” to the financial condition and prospects of the Group which may have occurred since the last set of audited or interim financial statements.

#### **4.7 External Auditors**

In monitoring the performance of, and relationship with, the External Auditor the Committee shall:

- 4.7.1 oversee the selection process and make recommendations to the Board for the approval of shareholders, on the appointment, re-appointment and removal of the External Auditors. The Committee shall oversee a fair and transparent selection process for new auditors, in line with regulatory guidance and standards, with due consideration given to challenger<sup>3</sup> firms. If an External Auditor resigns the Committee shall investigate the issues leading to this and decide whether any action is required;
- 4.7.2 approve, following input deemed appropriate from management, the scope, remuneration and terms of engagement of the External Auditors, in respect of the provision of audit services to the Company and its subsidiaries, subject to appropriate shareholder approval. The Committee will consider if the level of fees is appropriate to enable an adequate audit to be conducted;
- 4.7.3 review the External Auditor’s plan for their audit of the Group’s financial statements;
- 4.7.4 review the results of the external audit, including (but not limited to) matters relating to:-
  - a) the critical accounting estimates and judgements;
  - b) key technical accounting and audit judgements;
  - c) the statement of unadjusted items as well as, if appropriate, adjustments resulting from the audit;
  - d) the clarity of disclosures; issues encountered by the External Auditors and degree of co-operation received from management;
  - e) any identified significant control deficiencies in relation to the financial reporting process and/or arising from the Financial Reporting Controls testing process;
  - f) any significant unresolved accounting and auditing issues; and
  - g) the letter of representation,

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<sup>3</sup> “Challenger” firms in this context refers to those other than the four largest firms

and, in regard thereto, receive from the statutory auditors a report on key matters arising from the statutory audit of the Company and the Group and in particular on significant control deficiencies in internal control in relation to the financial reporting process;

- 4.7.5 invite challenge by the External Auditor, giving due consideration to points raised and making changes to financial statements in response, where appropriate;
- 4.7.6 ensure that the External Auditor has full access to company staff and records;
- 4.7.7 monitor the performance and quality of the services provided by the External Auditors in particular the statutory audit, including consideration of the External Auditors' report on their own internal control and quality procedures. Reviewing their qualifications, independence and objectivity at least annually, taking into consideration all relationships between the Group including affiliates of the Group and the External Auditors;
- 4.7.8 review external / regulatory quality assessment reports on the External Auditor. Discuss the report with the External Auditor and obtain an understanding of how any issues identified are being addressed;
- 4.7.9 develop and implement a policy on the engagement of the External Auditors to supply non-audit services and the engagement of other audit firms to supply audit, review or attest services taking into account relevant legal requirements and guidance regarding the provision of non-audit services by the External Auditors and the provision of audit related services by other audit firms considering their expertise and value for money;
- 4.7.10 pre-approve all permitted non-audit services to be provided to the Group by the External Auditors. Monitor the level of such expenditure to ensure that the External Auditors' objectivity and independence from the Group is not impaired;
- 4.7.11 review any relevant issues arising out of the potential employment by the Group of any employee or former employee of the External Auditors to ensure that the External Auditors' objectivity and independence from the Group is not impaired; and
- 4.7.12 monitor the External Auditor's compliance with relevant statutory or regulatory requirements including the External Auditor's independence and rotation of relevant audit engagement partners.

#### **4.8 Material Subsidiary Audit Committees**

The Committee shall work and liaise as necessary with the Group's Material Subsidiaries and their audit committees and shall receive appropriate assurances, at least annually, to support the Company's external reporting and receive copies of the minutes from each Material Subsidiary audit committee for noting.

#### **5. Reporting**

- 5.1 The Chair of the Committee should report formally to the Board on the Committee's views in relation to the Interim Report, Preliminary Announcement of Annual Results and the Annual Report.
- 5.2 The Chair of the Committee will report formally on the key aspects of the proceedings of the Committee to the subsequent full meeting of the Board and the minutes of the Committee should be tabled at the Board as soon as possible for noting and/or discussion as necessary.
- 5.3 The Chair of the Committee shall attend the Annual General Meeting prepared to respond to shareholder questions on the Committee's activities.
- 5.4 In line with the requirements of the Central Bank of Ireland's Auditor Protocol, the Chair of the Committee will attend relevant meetings with the Central Bank of Ireland and with the External Auditor as required.

#### **6. Authority**

The Committee's remit extends to all Group activities.

- 6.1 Subject to the responsibilities of the Committee under applicable laws and regulations, the Committee will operate under delegated authority from the Board which is ultimately responsible for all matters

relating to the presentation of financial statements and all issues arising from internal and external audits in the Group.

- 6.2 The Committee acts as a channel of communication between the Board, management, auditors and shareholders and reports to the Board, with its recommendations where it considers action or improvement is needed in any area under its remit.
- 6.3 The Committee may investigate any matter falling within its terms of reference calling on whatever resources (including external professional or legal services) and information it considers necessary to do so. It shall have access to adequate funding to enable it to discharge its duties.
- 6.4 The Committee may invite any Director, Executive or other person to attend any meeting(s) of the Committee as it may from time to time consider desirable to assist the Committee in the attainment of its objectives.
- 6.5 The Committee is authorised to seek any information it requires from any employee of the Group to enable it to discharge its responsibilities.

## **7. Performance Evaluation and Discharge of Duties**

The Committee shall, at least once a year, review its own performance and terms of reference and shall report its conclusions and recommend any changes it considers necessary to the Board. The Committee shall also report to the Board, on an annual basis on how it has discharged its responsibilities.