

External Auditor's Progress Report & Sector Update

Final Decision-Maker	Audit, Governance & Standards Committee
Lead Head of Service	Mark Green, Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Adrian Lovegrove, Head of Finance
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report from the Council's External Auditor, Grant Thornton provides an update on progress with auditing the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts.

Representatives from Grant Thornton will be in attendance at the meeting to present their report and respond to questions.

Purpose of Report

Noting

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the external auditor's audit progress report, attached at Appendix 1 be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Audit, Governance & Standards Committee	13 March 2023

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1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, they will support the Council's ability to discharge its responsibilities in relation to the 2021/22 financial statements audit and value for money conclusion.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Cross Cutting Objectives	The recommendations set out above will not have any material impact on the cross-cutting objectives.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Risk Management	This report is presented for information only and has no decisions which give rise to risk management implications.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Financial	The Statement of Accounts provides an overview of income and expenditure for the financial year to 31 March 2022, and details the council's assets, liabilities and reserves at this date. The work of the external auditor provides independent assurance over this information.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Staffing	No implications identified.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Legal	The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 sets out the framework for audit of local authorities.	Interim Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance)

Privacy and Data Protection	None identified.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	No implications identified.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Crime and Disorder	No implications identified.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Procurement	No implications identified.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Biodiversity and Climate Change	There are no implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council is required to have its audited Statement of Accounts approved by the Audit, Governance & Standards Committee, and for 2021/22 that deadline was 30th November 2022. However, Members will be aware from previous meetings that the final part of the external audit process for 2021/22 was not scheduled to commence until January 2023 due to resourcing issues on the part of the external auditor and the need to conclude the audit of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts.

- 2.2 The external auditor's report provides an update on progress to date as well as a sector update. Representatives from Grant Thornton will be present at the meeting to present the report and answer any questions.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 As the committee charged with responsibility for overseeing the financial reporting process, the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee is asked to consider and note this report. The committee could choose not to consider this report; however, this option is not recommended since the report is intended to assist the committee in discharging its responsibilities in relation to external audit and governance.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The committee is asked to note this report. The report provides an update on the external audit process for 2021/22 and it is considered appropriate for the committee to receive this information at this time.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 This report is presented for information only and has no decisions which give rise to risk management implications.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 No consultation has been taken in relation to this report.
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Next steps are outlined within Appendix 1.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: External Auditor's Progress Report & Sector Update
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None