

Audit, Governance & Standards

20 March 2017

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

External Audit Progress Report March 2017

Final Decision-Maker	Audit, Governance & Standards Committee
Lead Director or Head of Service	Mark Green, Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Ellie Dunnet, Chief Accountant
Classification	Non-exempt
Wards affected	None

This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:

1. That the committee notes the external auditor's progress report attached at **Appendix A**.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

The report is focused on ensuring that the auditor's opinion on the 2016-17 financial statements and value for money conclusion are issued by the statutory deadline of 30 September 2017.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Audit, Governance & Standards Committee	20 March 2017

External Audit Progress Report March 2017

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Committee members are invited to consider the report of the external auditor which provides an update on progress with the 2016-17 audit and offers a summary of emerging national issues and developments of relevance to the local government sector.
- 1.2 Representatives from Grant Thornton will be in attendance at the meeting to present their report and respond to questions.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 External audit services are provided by Grant Thornton who successfully tendered for the five year contract from 2012-13 following the abolition of the Audit Commission's audit practice.
- 2.2 The report attached at **Appendix A** provides an update on progress with the 2016-17 audit and informs committee members of a number of relevant emerging issues and developments.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the committee 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.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is recommended that the committee notes the report. Given the respective responsibilities of both the external auditor and this committee, a progress report of this nature is judged to be appropriate for consideration by committee members.

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The report is focused on ensuring that the auditor's opinion on the 2016-17 financial statements and value for money conclusion are issued by the statutory deadline of 30 September 2017.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

Risk Management	This report supports the committee in the delivery of its governance responsibilities. It also helps to mitigate the risk of non-compliance with the statutory timetable for the production and audit of the annual accounts through timely communication of any potential issues.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Financial	There are no direct financial implications arising from the report, although the opinion on the financial statements and value for money conclusion are one mechanism through which the council demonstrates financial accountability.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	Not applicable	
Legal	Not applicable	
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	Not applicable	
Environmental/Sustainable Development	Not applicable	
Community Safety	Not applicable	
Human Rights Act	Not applicable	
Procurement	Not applicable	
Asset Management	Not applicable	

6. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- **Appendix A:** External Audit Progress Report March 2017

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None