

External Audit Progress Report March 2019

Final Decision-Maker	Audit, Governance and Standards Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Chris Hartgrove, Interim Head of Finance
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

The Committee is invited to consider the report of the external auditor, which provides an update on progress with the 2018/19 audit and offers a summary of emerging national issues and developments of relevance to the local government sector.

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

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That the External Audit Progress Report attached at Appendix A be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Audit, Governance and Standards Committee	18 March 2019

External Audit Progress Report March 2019

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 External audit services to the Council are provided by Grant Thornton, following their appointment by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) for the period from 2018/19 to 2022/23.
 - 1.2 The report attached at Appendix A provides an update on progress with the 2018/19 audit and informs committee members of a number of relevant emerging issues and developments.
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2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 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, as the report is intended to assist the committee in discharging its responsibilities in relation to external audit and governance.
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3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the committee notes the report. The report details the external auditor's plan for ensuring the delivery of the audit opinion and value for money conclusion by the statutory deadline and notes the significant risks identified, and the anticipated audit fee. It is considered appropriate for the committee to receive this information at this time.
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4. RISK

- 4.1 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.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 No consultation has been undertaken in relation to this matter.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Next steps are outlined within Appendix A.
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7. 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, production of an annual Statement of Accounts which is free from material or significant error is a key element of demonstrating accountability and value for money. It is therefore important that the Statement of Accounts meets this requirement.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Risk Management	See section 4.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
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.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Staffing	None identified.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Legal	The audit of the Council's Statement of Accounts is a statutory obligation. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Privacy and Data	None identified.	Director of

Protection		Finance and Business Improvement
Equalities	None identified.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Public Health	None identified.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Crime and Disorder	None identified.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Procurement	None identified.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following document is to be published with this report and forms part of the report:

- Appendix A: External Auditor's Progress Report, March 2019

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.