

External Auditor's Audit Plan 2020/21

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

Executive Summary

This report from the Council's External Auditor, Grant Thornton, sets out the planned approach to delivering the audit of the 2020/21 financial statements and value for money conclusion.

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 plan, attached at Appendix 1 be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Audit, Governance & Standards Committee	15 March 2021

External Auditor's Audit Plan 2020/21

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 2020/21 financial statements audit and value for money conclusion.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Cross Cutting Objectives	The recommendations set out above will not have any material impact on the cross cutting objectives.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Risk Management	This report is presented for information only and has no decisions which give rise to risk management implications.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Financial	The scale fee published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd is £38,866. However, the final audit fee for 2020/21 remains subject to discussion with Grant Thornton.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Staffing	No implications identified.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Legal	The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 sets out the framework for audit of local authorities. The recommendation is to note the report and has no decisions which give rise to legal implications.	Team Leader Corporate Governance
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified.	
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Public Health	No implications identified.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Crime and Disorder	No implications identified.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance

Procurement	No implications identified.	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The external auditor produces an annual audit plan for the financial statements audit opinion and value for money conclusion. As in previous years this work will be undertaken by Grant Thornton, the appointed auditors. A copy of the plan, which includes the outcomes of work undertaken to date, is attached at Appendix 1.
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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 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, the results of the work undertaken to date and the anticipated audit fee. It is considered appropriate for the committee to receive this information at this time.
- 4.2 The scale audit fee set by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) for 2020/21 is £38,866 for Maidstone Borough Council. It is anticipated that Grant Thornton will propose an increase to the scale fee to accommodate the additional work required by regulators, new auditing standards and the new Value for Money code issued by the National Audit Office. The proposed fee for 2020/21 remains subject to discussion with Grant Thornton and will be reported to members at the July meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.
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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.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Maidstone Borough Council Audit Plan
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None