

Auditor's Annual Report 2021/22 and 2022/23

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Audit, Governance & Standards Committee	11 April 2024

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

The Council's external auditor, Grant Thornton, is required to report on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The report is attached at Appendix A. It identifies no significant weaknesses, but a number of recommendations have been made which are being addressed.

Purpose of Report

Noting.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Auditor's Annual Report for 2021/22 and 2022/23, attached as Appendix A, be noted.

Auditor's Annual Report 2021/22 and 2022/23

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	We do not expect the Auditor's Annual Report will affect the corporate priorities. However, they will inform strategies to implement the priorities.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Cross Cutting Objectives	The Auditor's Annual Report will not have any material impact on the cross-cutting objectives.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Risk Management	The Auditor's Annual Report for 2020/21 found that risk management arrangements were generally satisfactory. It made some recommendations for improvement which are being addressed.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Financial	The Auditor's Annual Report has confirmed that there are no significant weaknesses in financial sustainability. It has made some recommendations which are being addressed.	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.	Deputy Head of Legal
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's external auditor, Grant Thornton, is required to report on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Its report also addresses governance and financial sustainability.
- 2.2 Grant Thornton's work on the 2021/22 audit was delayed, so the opportunity has been taken, in accordance with NAO guidance, to combine reports for 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- 2.3 The report identifies no significant weaknesses. Grant Thornton have however made a number of recommendations (on pages 12 to 33 of the Appendix) which are being addressed, as set out in the accompanying management comments.

- 2.4 Grant Thornton also report on the status of previous recommendations (pages 35 to 37). Where these have not yet been addressed, the report sets out the Council's plans for doing so.
- 2.5 Grant Thornton report provides assurance that there are no significant weaknesses in financial sustainability, governance, and economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Council nevertheless takes seriously the recommendations made by our auditors and is taking steps to address these.
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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.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The Auditor's Annual Report highlights no risks of significant weakness. A previous annual report, in 2020/21, commented specifically on the Council's risk management arrangements and found these to be generally satisfactory.
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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 The recommendations set out in the Auditor's Annual Report will be addressed and the outcomes reported back to the Committee where appropriate.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Auditor's Annual Report for 2021/22 and 2022/23
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None