

Audit and Standards Committee – 18 December 2023

Report of the Director of Finance and Legal Services

Grant Thornton Auditor's Annual Report

Purpose

1. To consider the Grant Thornton draft Auditor's Annual Report (AAR) combined for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Audit and Standards Committee considers the Auditor's Annual Report as detailed in the draft AAR attached as Appendix 1.

Background

3. Under the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice our external Auditors, Grant Thornton, are required to consider whether the Authority has in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Previously External Audit were required to provide a qualified/unqualified Value for Money (VFM) conclusion. This has been replaced with a more detailed report on the Authority's overall arrangements, as well as key recommendations identified during their audit. The final AAR is attached as Appendix 1.
4. The Auditor's Annual Report (combined for years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023) was presented to Cabinet 13th December 2023.

Finance

5. The AAR includes improvement recommendations in relation to the financial sustainability of the Council.

Law

6. Legislation appertaining to Local Authority Audit and Accounts is contained in the Local Government Act 1972, part 2 of the Audit Commission Act, 1998, and regulations made there under. The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires external auditors to report to those charged with governance on the results of their work.

Risk Management

7. The Corporate Risk Register recognises the risk that the Council may be unable to set and/or manage its budget so as to meet its statutory obligations within the resources available. This risk is currently assigned a rating of High.

Equality Impact

8. The proposals take into account the Council's Policy on Equality and Diversity. No consultations with Children and young people were undertaken or required in the preparation of this report.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

9. The AAR includes improvement recommendations in relation to the People Strategy and turnover of senior officers.

Commercial/Procurement

10. The AAR includes improvement recommendations in relation to procurement and reporting of single tenders.

Environment/Climate Change

11. There are no direct environmental implications impacting on the Council's work to address Climate Change and achieve our Net Zero target by 2030.

Council Priorities and Projects

12. An effective framework of governance, risk management and internal control will assist the Council in achieving its priorities.



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List of Background Documents

Appendix 1 – Grant Thornton Draft Annual Auditor’s Report