

Audit and Standards Committee – 20th September 2021

Report of the Director of Finance and Legal

External Audit Findings Report 2020/2021

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the external auditor's Audit Findings Report and the Management Representation Letter to the Auditor.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that:-
 - the Committee considers the Audit Findings Report 2020/21 (Appendix 1).
 - the Committee considers the draft Letter of Representation (Appendix 2).
 - the Committee authorises the Chair to sign and date the final version of the Letter of Representation in due course.
 - the Committee approves the delegation of the approval of a revised Letter of Representation to the Chair of the Audit & Standards Committee in consultation with the Director of Finance & Legal Services in the event of audit work on the valuation of property assets or any other issue extends beyond the date of the Committee meeting.

Background

3. The Council has delegated the responsibility for the approval of the Statement of Accounts, and all audit matters, to the Audit and Standards Committee.
4. Grant Thornton UK LLP have been re-appointed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd as the Council's auditor until 2022/23.
5. The Audit Findings report presents the observations arising from the audit of the 2020/21 accounts which the auditor deems significant to those charged with the

governance to oversee the financial reporting process. Appendix 1 will be presented by the external auditor.

6. Towards the end of each audit of the annual accounts, the Director of Finance and Legal provides a management representation letter (sometimes known as a letter of comfort), confirming the completeness and reliability of the information and records supplied to the auditors. The external auditors request that this letter should also be signed by the Chair of Audit and Standards Committee, to evidence members' acknowledgment of responsibility for financial management. A draft of this letter is attached as Appendix 2.

Finance

7. This report is financial in nature but does not give rise to any direct costs.

Law

8. Legislation appertaining to Local Authority Audit and Accounts is contained in the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Risk Management

9. The proposals contained in this report do not create any "material" risks.

Equality Impact

10. The proposals take into account the Council's Policy on Equality and Diversity.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

11. There are no Human Resources or Organisational Development implications resulting from the items in this report.

Commercial/Procurement

12. There are no implications associated with this report.

Council Priorities

13. All of the Council's priorities are underpinned by having effective governance arrangements in place.



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