

SUBJECT: EXTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK

REPORT AUTHOR: JACLYN GIBSON, CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the External Audit Progress Report to Audit Committee.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report provides Audit Committee with an update on progress in delivering responsibilities of the External Auditors.

3. Background

- 3.1 The External Auditor provides periodic update reports to the Audit Committee. Mazars are currently appointed as the Council's External Auditor.

4. External Audit Progress Report

- 4.1 The External Audit progress report attached (Appendix A) covers the following areas:

- Audit Progress
 - 2019/20 Audit
 - 2020/21 Audit
 - Code of Audit Practice – value for money in use of resources
- National Publications

- 4.2 External Audit will be in attendance at the meeting to present the progress report.

5. Strategic Priorities

- 5.1 There are no direct implications for the Council's strategic priorities. The external audit of the Council's financial statements is a statutory requirement and as such contributes towards the fitness for purpose of the Council's governance arrangements.

6. Organisational Impacts

- 6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

The Audit fee for 2019/20 as included within the Audit Strategy Memorandum, previously presented to this Committee, was £36,332, set in accordance with the scale fees set by the PSAA. The fee includes work on the VFM conclusion and the audit of the financial statements. Further separate agreement will be reached with Mazars regarding the additional fee in relation to scope changes caused by

updated audit quality expectations and scope changes caused by Covid19. Estimates of these additional costs are in the range of £15,750 - £28,500.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no direct legal implications. The External Auditor is required to satisfy themselves that the Council's accounts comply with statutory requirements and that proper practices have been observed in compiling them.

6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

7. Risk Implications

7.1 There are no specific risk implications arising as a direct result of this report. The annual Audit Strategy Memorandum sets out the key risks, as identified by the External Auditor, relevant to the audit of the financial statements.

8. Recommendation

8.1 Audit Committee is asked to note the content of the latest External Audit Progress Report.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? One

List of Background Papers: None

Lead Officer: Jaclyn Gibson, Chief Finance Officer
Telephone (01522) 873258