

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>EXTERNAL AUDIT: AUDIT COMPLETION REPORT 2020/21 - FOLLOW UP LETTER</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE &amp; TOWN CLERK</b>
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>JACLYN GIBSON, CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER</b>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To update Members, following the issuing of the audit opinion on the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts, on matters that were originally raised in the Audit Completion Report, which was presented to this Committee in December 2021.
- 2.1 This report includes only matters of governance interest that have come to the external auditor's attention in performing the audit. It is not designed to identify all matters that might be relevant to the Authority.
- 2.2 The report will be presented at the meeting by the Council's External Auditors, Mazars.

## **2. Executive Summary**

- 2.1 The Council's financial statements are an important means by which the Council accounts for its stewardship of public funds. Council Members have final responsibility for the financial statements. It is therefore important that the Audit Committee consider Mazars findings before recommending the adoption of the financial statements to Full Council (this requirement was fulfilled in December 2021).

## **3. Opinion on the financial statements**

- 3.1 At the time of issuing the draft report in December 2021, Mazars work on the financial statements was substantially complete. This work has now been completed and Mazars issued an unqualified audit opinion. A follow up letter, to update Members on matters that were originally reported in the draft report is attached at Appendix A. This letter also includes a small number of additional reporting matters further to those set out in the draft report.

## **4. Value for Money conclusion.**

- 4.1 The Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are adequate. Mazars have issued an unqualified opinion on the Council's value for money arrangements.

## **5. Strategic Priorities**

- 5.1 The Council's Statement of Accounts are a financial summary of the Council's activities in support of its Vision 2025 and Strategic Priorities during the financial

year 2020/21.

## **6. Organisational Impacts**

### **6.1 Finance**

There are no direct financial implications arising as a result of this report.

### **6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules**

In accordance with the Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 the Statement of Accounts for 2019/20 had to be approved and published by the Council, together with the audit opinion and certificate, by the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021. As the External Auditor was unable to complete their audit work by this date and issue their audit opinion. In accordance with Regulation 10, paragraph (2a) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015:

2) Where an audit of accounts has not been concluded before the date specified in paragraph (1) an authority must—

(a) publish (which must include publication on the authority's website) as soon as reasonably practicable on or after that date a notice stating that it has not been able to publish the statement of accounts and its reasons for this”

Such a notice was published by the Council on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021. On receipt of the final audit certificate, the Council's website will be updated with the final audited accounts including the issued audit opinion.

### **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.

Due to the nature of the report, no specific Equality Impact Analysis is required.

## **7. Risk Implications**

7.1 There are no risk implications arising as a result of this report.

## **8. Recommendation**

8.1 Audit Committee are asked to consider the matters raised in the 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:**

Statement of Accounts 2020/21 – Audit Committee  
14<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

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