

**SUBJECT: EXTERNAL AUDIT: DRAFT AUDIT STRATEGY MEMORANDUM**

**DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK**

**REPORT AUTHOR: JACLYN GIBSON, CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To present the External Audit Draft Audit Strategy Memorandum, for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, to Audit Committee.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The External Auditor provides an Audit Strategy Memorandum ahead of each external audit along with periodic update reports to the Audit Committee. Mazars are currently appointed as the Council's External Auditor.

## **3. External Audit Progress Report**

- 3.1 The External Audit Draft Audit Strategy Memorandum for 2022/23 (Appendix A) summarises the audit approach highlights significant audit risks and areas of key judgements and provides the Audit Committee with details of the audit team.
- 3.2 External Audit will be in attendance at the meeting to present the progress report.

## **4. Strategic Priorities**

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

## **5. Organisational Impacts**

- 5.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

The Audit fee for 2022/23 is £48,403, 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, in addition the work undertake on property valuations and the net pension liability valuation is now included in the scale fee rather than being issued as a fee variation. Variations are still likely to be incurred for additional testing as a result of new auditing standards and additional working arising from changes in the Code of Audit Practice for VFM reporting, these fee variations will not be confirmed until later in 2023.

- 5.2 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.

### 5.3 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

There are no specific equality, diversity and human rights issues arising as result of this report.

## 6. Risk Implications

6.1 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.

## 7. Recommendation

7.1 Audit Committee are asked to note the content of the Draft Audit Strategy Memorandum.

**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

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