



AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Monday, 5 July 2021

REPORT TITLE:	EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN WIRRAL COUNCIL 2020-21 AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

REPORT SUMMARY

The Wirral Council is required to subject its financial statements to external scrutiny before a final version is published. This scrutiny role will be carried out by the Council's appointed auditors, Grant Thornton. During the summer Grant Thornton will undertake their audit of the relevant financial activities and arrangements for securing value for money. The results of this audit will be reported back to the Committee.

The Council's external auditors have produced the Audit Plan for their statutory audit of Wirral Council 2020-21. The plan is appended to this document in Appendix 1.

A verbal update of the Statement of Accounts position will be provided by Officers, as it was not possible to submit the draft accounts for inclusion in the Committee reports due to timing of their completion, approval and publication.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Audit & Risk Committee is requested to:

1. Consider the proposed Audit Plan and confirm that the arrangements set out will meet the Committee's expectations with regard to providing independent scrutiny.
2. Note the report provided by the auditors.
3. Note the update of the Statement of Accounts.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Audit Plan sets out the work the Council Auditors, Grant Thornton will be carrying out in their statutory audit on the Council financial statements and arrangements.
- 1.2 The update of the draft Statement of Accounts brings to the Committee a verbal update of the financial position and status of the accounts in meeting the statutory deadlines.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Option to not submit to Committee for comment and approval, however, this would not comply with the audit regulations and would be at the detriment of the Council.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Grant Thornton have been appointed as the Council's independent external auditors. Their annual work programme is set in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice and includes nationally prescribed and locally determined work.
- 3.2 The report provides members of the Committee with a summary of the external audit approach; it also includes details of the audit fees for 2020/21 on page 19 of the report.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The audit fees will be met from within the revenue budget. The fees are set out in the Audit plan.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal aspects related to this matter.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 None arising directly from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 Grant Thornton will complete a risk based audit whereby they will focus audit effort on those areas where they have identified a risk of material misstatement in the accounts.

7.2 If any concerns identified by Grant Thornton are not addressed by the Council then there is a risk that the Council will not be able to meet its statutory requirements in respect to the Statement of Accounts as well as impacting upon the Value for Money and Financial Resilience of the Council and the Council's reputation.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 None arising directly from this report.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help Council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

9.2 There are no equality implications arising specifically from this report.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 No direct implications. The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no impact on emissions of Greenhouse Gases.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – External Auditors Audit Plan Wirral Council 2020-21

BACKGROUND PAPERS

External Audit Plan

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
External Auditors Audit Plan 2019/20	10/03/20
External Auditors Audit Plan 2018/19	24/04/19
External Auditors Audit Plan 2017/18	12/03/18