



## **AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, 31 July 2024**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>WIRRAL COUNCIL EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN, AUDIT PROGRESS, AND PUBLIC SECTOR UPDATE 2023/24</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF FINANCE</b>

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

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 in September 2024.

The Council's external auditors have produced the Audit Plan for their statutory audit of Wirral Council 2023-24. The plan is appended to this document in Appendix 1.

This report also brings an update of audit progress as well as a public sector update from Grant Thornton.

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

The Audit & Risk Management 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 public sector update by the auditors.

## **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 public sector update allows the Committee to be aware of recent developments in local government audits.
- 1.3 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 note, 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 2023/24 on page 26 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, 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. The files attached may not be suitable to view for people with disabilities, users of assistive technology or mobile phone devices. Interested stakeholders should contact Shaun Allen should these documents be required in an accessible format.

## **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.

## **11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The content and/or recommendations contained within this report have no direct implications for community wealth.

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – External Auditors Wirral Council Audit Plan, year ending 31 March 2024;  
Appendix 2 – External Auditors Wirral Council Audit Progress report and sector updates.

The PDF file attached may not be suitable to view for people with disabilities, users of assistive technology or mobile phone devices. Please contact Shaun Allen if you would like this document in an accessible format.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

External Audit Plan  
CIPFA Code  
Code of Audit Practice  
Code of International Standards on Auditing

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Audit and Risk Management Committee in accordance with Section F of its Terms of Reference.

### SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
External Auditors Audit Plan 2022/23	27/06/23
External Auditors Audit Plan 2021/22	22/06/22
External Auditors Audit Plan 2020/21	05/07/21