

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Audit and Governance Committee – 14 March 2022

External Audit – Progress Report and Sector Update

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Henley, Corporate Resources

Report Author: John Dyson, Corporate Finance Manager

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The attached report provides the Audit and Governance Committee with a progress update regarding the work of the external auditors, Grant Thornton, together with information relating to emerging issues relevant to the Council.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are requested to consider and note the Progress Report and Sector Update received from Grant Thornton.

3 Background and Full details of the Report

- 3.1 The Council's external audit function is undertaken by Grant Thornton. The external auditors, as part of their work, provide regular progress updates to Members via the Audit and Governance Committee together with updates in relation to emerging national issues which may be of relevance to the Council on the approach to preparing the annual Statement of Accounts.
- 3.2 The update report is set out in the Appendix.

4 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

- 4.1 This report links to the Council's aim of achieving financial stability.

5 Finance / Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct material implications related to this report. The final Housing Benefits subsidy claim has been audited, although the Department for Work and Pensions has extended its enquires such that the claim could remain open until end March 2022.
- 5.2 The Auditor's report refers to the renewal of external audit contract progressing through the Public Sector Audit Appointments route (as reported to this Committee in December 2021). It is clear that the scope of audit has increased, requiring more audit work. Therefore, as reported in December, there is a risk that current external audit fee levels could increase when the current contract (covering the accounts for 2018/19 to 2022/23) ends. Updates will be provided by officers as they become available.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 sets out the framework for audit of local authorities.

Democratic Path:

- Audit and Governance Committee – 14 March 2022

Reporting Frequency: Twice yearly

List of Appendices:

Appendix A	Somerset West and Taunton Audit Progress Report and Sector Update, March 2022
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Contact Officers

Name	John Dyson
Email	j.dyson@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Name	Paul Fitzgerald
Direct Dial	01823 217557
Email	p.fitzgerald@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk