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Report of the Chief Finance Officer

Report to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Date: 28th January 2019

Subject: 2018/19 Grant Thornton Audit Plan

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number:		
Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

1. In order to discharge their statutory duties, Grant Thornton issue an annual audit plan which covers the Council's accounts and the process for assessing its arrangements to secure value for money in the use of resources. The attached report from Grant Thornton represents their audit plan for 2018/19, covering their audit approach, the timing of audit work, and the significant audit risks identified to date.

Recommendations

2. Members of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee are asked to note and agree the nature and scope of the audit plan presented by Grant Thornton.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To inform members of Grant Thornton's audit plan for the audit of the Council's accounts and value for money arrangements. The attached report from Grant Thornton highlights the risk based approach to the audit and the main risks they have identified for 2018/19.

2 Background information

- 2.2 Grant Thornton's statutory responsibilities and powers are set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the National Audit Office's Code of Audit Practice. As the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton are required to satisfy themselves that the Council's accounts comply with statutory requirements and that they have been compiled according to proper practices. In addition they are also required to conclude as to whether the Council has arrangements in place for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Grant Thornton's audit has two key objectives, to give an opinion on the council's financial statements (including the annual governance statement), and to review and report on the council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Their audit plan sets out their approach to this work and the planned timing of their reporting to the council during the year.
- 3.2 In relation to their audit of the council's statement of accounts, Grant Thornton have identified two areas where there is a significant risk of material misstatement due to the scale of the assets and liabilities involved – the valuation of property, plant and equipment and the valuation of pension liabilities and assets
- 3.3 In relation to their audit of the council's arrangements for securing value for money, Grant Thornton have identified the key risks as being the council's overall financial standing given the continuing significant pressures which it faces, and the potential for Brexit to impact on the council.
- 3.4 The audit plan confirms that Grant Thornton's proposed audit fee for 2018/19 is £179k.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 The audit plan does not raise any issues requiring consultation or engagement with the public, ward members or Councillors.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 This report does not raise any issues regarding equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 Under the Committee's terms of reference members are required to agree the nature and scope of the external audit plan.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The audit plan outlines the areas which Grant Thornton will review in assessing whether the Council has proper arrangements for securing value for money.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 In their audit plan Grant Thornton outline how they propose to discharge their responsibilities as defined by in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the National Audit Office's Code of Audit Practice.

- 4.5.3 As this is a factual report provided by the external auditors none of the information enclosed is deemed to be sensitive or requesting decisions going forward and therefore raises no issues for access to information or call in.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 The report identifies the key risks which Grant Thornton have identified in their audit planning process so far.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Grant Thornton have provided the Council with a plan for discharging their responsibilities in respect of the external audit of the Council's 2018/19 accounts and for assessing the Council's arrangements for securing value for money. They have also identified what they see as the main risks.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Members of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee are asked to note and agree the nature and scope of Grant Thornton's external audit plan.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.