

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE



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| Report subject | External Auditor – Audit Progress & Sector Update |
| Meeting date | 26 October 2023 |
| Status | Public Report |
| Executive summary | <p>Grant Thornton, as the Council’s appointed External Auditors, have produced a report (Appendix A) which provides an update to Audit & Governance Committee on their progress to date in delivering their responsibilities.</p> <p>The report includes an update on their 2021/22 audit work. Key points of note are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Statements Audit 2021/22 – Grant Thornton are aiming to present a draft Audit Findings Report for 2021/22 to the November meeting of the Audit & Governance Committee and issue their opinion by the end of November 2023. • Value for Money 2021/22 & 2022/23 – Regular meetings have been set up with the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Cabinet Portfolio holder responsible for finance to discuss progress against the recommendations made in their Auditor’s Annual Reports for 2021/22 and 2022/23, as well as other recent external reports and emerging issues. <p>The report also includes a summary of emerging national issues and developments that may be relevant to the Council.</p> |
| Recommendations | <p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>Audit & Governance Committee notes the External Auditor’s progress to date in delivering their responsibilities and the sector update provided.</p> |
| Reason for recommendations | <p>To update Audit & Governance Committee on the External Auditor’s progress to date in delivering their responsibilities.</p> <p>To advise Audit & Governance Committee of emerging national issues and developments that maybe relevant to the Council.</p> |
| Portfolio Holder(s): | Cllr Mike Cox, Portfolio Holder for Finance |
| Corporate Director | Ian O’Donnell, Corporate Director for Resources |

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| Wards | Council-wide |
| Classification | For Information |

Background

1. During 2017, Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) awarded contracts for audit for a five-year period beginning on 1 April 2018. Grant Thornton are the appointed External Auditors for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council.
2. Grant Thornton, as the Council's External Auditors, have a responsibility to provide regular updates to those charged with governance (Audit & Governance Committee) on progress made in delivering their responsibilities.

External Audit Progress Report

Progress as at October 2023

3. The attached report (Appendix A) details progress made by Grant Thornton in delivering their responsibilities as external auditors.
4. The report includes an update on the following areas for their 2021/22 work, in summary:
 - **Financial Statements Audit 2021/22** – Grant Thornton are aiming to present a draft Audit Findings Report for 2021/22 to the November meeting of the Audit & Governance Committee and issue their opinion by the end of November 2023.
 - **Value for Money 2021/22 & 2022/23** – Regular meetings have been set up with the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Cabinet Portfolio holder responsible for finance to discuss progress against the recommendations made in their Auditor's Annual Reports for 2021/22 and 2022/23, as well as other recent external reports and emerging issues.

Sector Update

5. The report also includes a summary of emerging national issues and developments that may be relevant to the Council (as a local authority) which includes:
 - About time? Exploring the reasons for delayed publication of audited local authority accounts – Grant Thornton
 - Local government procurement and contract management: Lessons learned - Grant Thornton
 - SEND deficits kept off budgets for another three years – Grant Thornton
 - Stonewall Gold Employer: Grant Thornton's LGBTQIA+ inclusion journey
 - Sustainability: Finance at the heart of decision making - CIPFA

Options Appraisal

6. An options appraisal is not applicable for this report.

Summary of financial implications

7. The proposed 2021/22 BCP Council Audit fee is £213,875.

Summary of legal implications

8. There are no direct legal implications from this report.

Summary of human resources implications

9. There are no direct human resources implications from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

10. There are no sustainability impact implications from this report.

Summary of public health implications

11. There are public health implications from this report.

Summary of equality implications

12. There are no direct equality implications from this report.

Summary of risk assessment

13. There are no risk implications from this information report.

Background papers

None

Appendices

Appendix A – Grant Thornton – BCP Council – External Audit Progress Report and Sector Update