

Bromsgrove District Council - S11 ACTION PLAN MONITORING UPDATE

As part of the audit of our Final Accounts 2014/15, our auditors, Grant Thornton, issued a number of recommendations as per s11 Audit Commission Act 1998. This is our response, as agreed by Full Council on 20/01/16:

Update as at 15th March 2016

Recommendation	Action	Owner	Deadline
<p>1</p> <p>The Council should put in place robust arrangements for the production of 2015/16 financial statements, which meet statutory requirements and international financial reporting standards. In order to achieve this, the Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ensure sufficient resources and specialist skills are available to support the accounts production -introduce appropriate project management skills to the production of the financial statements 	<p>External support (via procurement tender) will be appointed.</p> <p>A detailed Final Accounts closedown and production timetable will be compiled, monitored by weekly s151 officer meetings. Slippage to be escalated, explained and immediate actions implemented to rectify.</p> <p>An assessment of the level of external support required will be carried out and communicated to provider.</p> <p>Visits to be arranged for key closedown staff to observe processes at other local authorities, with the aim of sharing best practice.</p> <p>Training needs to be identified.</p> <p>Appropriate training to be provided which will include the mentoring of Technical Accountants and other key financial staff by external provider.</p>	<p>Financial Services Manager</p> <p>Technical Accountant</p> <p>Financial Services Manager/Technical Accountant</p> <p>Financial Services Manager and Technical Accountants</p> <p>All Finance</p> <p>Financial Services Manager/Technical Accountant</p>	<p>complete</p> <p>complete</p> <p>complete</p> <p>complete</p> <p>complete</p> <p>complete</p>
<p>2 The Council should develop a comprehensive project plan for the preparation of the accounts which ensures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the financial statements are compiled directly from the ledger -the entries in the accounts are supported by good quality working papers which are available at the start of the audit -the financial statements and working papers have been subject to robust quality assurance prior to approval by the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) - provides additional training, where necessary, to ensure all staff involved in the accounts production process have the -the production of the financial statements is monitored through regular reporting to Directors and the Audit Board. 	<p>Full set of template working papers to be compiled.</p> <p>Meeting with external auditors to be arranged, with the aim being to agree working paper templates.</p> <p>CIPFA Toolkit prior year figures to be populated as soon as available.</p> <p>Early training to be arranged with CIPFA advisor to ensure any errors are eliminated.</p> <p>Reconciliation schedule to be completed with clear deadlines for each reconciliation, signed off and reviewed by the Exec Director of Finance on a monthly basis.</p> <p>A review of the ledger system will be carried out to ensure that information required is available to download direct to the Statement of Accounts where practical</p>	<p>Technical Accountants</p> <p>Financial Services Manager</p> <p>Technical Accountant</p> <p>Technical Accountant</p> <p>Technical Accountants</p>	<p>22/02/2016*</p> <p>22/02/2016*</p> <p>complete</p> <p>complete</p> <p>complete</p>

3	The Council should put in place robust arrangements to ensure that the budget preparation processes are based on sound assumptions which enable forecast to be made of budget out-turn, including realistic assessments of demand factors, service and demographic changes as well as sound assumptions around turnover and vacancy rates.	Pressures/Savings/Bids forms on staff Orb intranet currently being updated by Heads of Service and budget holders. A detailed summary to determine gap will be prepared for Members.	Senior Business Support Accounting Technicians	complete
		Budget-holders in discussions to determine potential changes to 2016/17 budget (on assessment of 2014/15 out-turn).	Business Support Accounting Technicians	complete
4	The Council should ensure that budget monitoring processes are timely to enable an accurate forecast to be made in-year of the likely year-end out-turn and action to be taken, where	New Financial Planning module to be implemented, giving managers more control and flexibility of their budgets.	Senior Business Support Accounting Technician	30/06/2016
		Quarterly monitoring statements are sent out to budget-holders within 5 working days of period end. Projections and explanations are required within a week of draft Committee reporting.	Business Support Accounting Technicians and budget-holders	ongoing
		Compilation of Monitoring reports for Members. Large variances to budget to be addressed with Head of Service prior to Committee with details of cause and plans to mitigate any overspends	Senior Business Support Accounting Technician	ongoing
			Exec Director of Finance	ongoing

* A full set of working paper requirements has not been received from Grant Thornton as they have proposed that they will work with the officers during their interim audit to develop the requirements of working papers. This will be undertaken in early April