

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT STANDARDS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

14th SEPTEMBER 2017

GRANT THORNTON AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT 2016/17

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Brian Cooper
Portfolio Holder Consulted	-
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering – Exec Director Finance and Resources
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	No
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non–Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To present Members with the Grant Thornton Audit Findings Report in relation to the final accounts 2016/17.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the Committee considers and notes the Audit Findings Report 2016/17 as attached at Appendix 1.**
- 2.2 **That the Committee recommend to Council the approval of the draft letter of representation as included at Appendix 2.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The cost associated with the External Audit is funded from approved budgets. There are no additional charges for the 2016/17 Audit work.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Council has a statutory responsibility to comply with financial regulations. Included within the report is a recommendation to the Council under section 11(3) of the Audit Commission Act 1998. As can be seen within the Appendix, the recommendations relating to the final accounts have all been delivered to the satisfaction of Grant Thornton. There are two further recommendations that relate to the ongoing monitoring arrangements and these are being addressed by officers.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.3 The report attached at Appendix 1 presents the Audit Findings Report in relation to the audit of the 2016/17 Statement of Accounts. Members are aware that there were a number of issues relating to completion and quality of the previous year accounts and a number of actions were put in place to ensure that deadlines were met and significant improvements were made to the working papers and reconciliations.

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- 3.4 The accounts were submitted to the Auditors on 31st may 2017 which is a month prior to the statutory deadline. As included in the Appendix there have been improvements to the working papers and the information and responses to the Auditors have been timely and clear. There are no material issues or misstatements that have been identified by the Auditors. There are a number of recommendations including completion of pension reserves, authorisation of journal transfers, improvements to the timelines of valuation information and amendments to accounting policies. The recognition of the improvements made during 2016/17 and the achievement of closing down a month demonstrate the work that the finance team have undertaken to ensure that the accounts were delivered on time working papers of a suitable quality whilst accepting that further improvements are needed to close down accurately and on time for 2017/18.
- 3.5 Whilst minor areas of work are continuing it is anticipated that an unqualified opinion will be given on the accounts.
- 3.6 In relation to the Value for Money judgement, having taken into account the financial pressures facing the Council over the next 4 years, a qualified opinion has been given. Officers will work with the Auditors to assess the ongoing delivery of savings, business cases for funding and budget projections to support the recommendations in relation to Value for Money.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.7 There are no implications arising out of this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The recommendations from the External Auditors will be picked up within the financial services risk arrangements

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Grant Thornton Audit Findings Letter 2016/17

Appendix 2 – Letter of Representation

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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