

**AUDIT STANDARDS & GOVERNANCE
COMMITTEE**

18th JANUARY 2018

GRANT THORNTON ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2016/17

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|----------------------------|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder | Cllr. Brian Cooper |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes |
| Relevant Head of Service | Jayne Pickering – Exec Director Finance and Resources |
| Wards Affected | All Wards |
| Non-Key Decision | |

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To present to Members the Grant Thornton Annual Audit Letter which summarises the key findings arising from the work carried out at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2017.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **The Committee is asked to note the Audit Letter as included on Appendix 1.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Grant Thornton fee for the 2016/17 audit fee is £49k. The grant fees is a further £7k.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Council has a statutory responsibility to comply with financial regulations.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.3 The Annual Audit Letter 2016/17 from Grant Thornton details their findings and recommendations as a result of the work undertaken as part of the final accounts for 2016/17 and reflects the Audit opinion reported to this Committee in September 2017. It is worth noting that Grant Thornton have been successful in securing the External Audit contract with the Council that has recently been procured through a national framework.
- 3.4 Unqualified opinions were given for the accounts and a qualified opinion on the Value for Money Judgement.

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- 3.5 Whilst improvements were made in the preparation and production of the accounts the Auditors made 3 recommendations to be implemented during 2017/18 these are:
- Ensure adequate resources are in place to support the delivery of the accounts for 2017/18
 - A new finance manager has been recruited and has been in place from November 2017. They have extensive experience of closedown of accounts and have procured additional support for the period to cover the maternity leave of the chief accountant.
 - Improve monitoring of the efficiency plan
 - A separate schedule monitoring the plan is now in place and reported to this meeting and Cabinet
 - Reporting of Council Plan actions to be improved
 - A performance management report to include delivery of the council plan actions has been developed and will be reported to members regularly during 2018/19

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

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

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 As part of all audit work, auditors undertake a risk assessment to ensure that adequate controls are in place within the Council so reliance can be placed on internal systems.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Annual Audit Letter from Grant Thornton 2016/17

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Jayne Pickering
E Mail: j.pickering@bromsgroveandredditchbc.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 881207