

<b>Audit Committee</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	23 April 2025
<b>Report Title</b>	Grant Thornton Audit Plan 2024/25
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
<b>Head of Service</b>	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	Members are asked to: 1. Note the Annual Audit Plan presented by Grant Thornton.

## 1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents Grant Thornton's Annual Audit Plan covering their audit of the Council's 2024/25 accounts and the process for assessing the arrangements to secure value for money in the use of resources.
- 1.2 As previously reported, the government has stated its intention to set a series of statutory backstop dates to try and address the issue of the local audit backlog and the plan works within the dates aimed to enable the system to recover. These are as follows:

<b>Financial years</b>	<b>Backstop date</b>
Up to and including 2022/23	13 December 2024
2023/24	28 February 2025
2024/25	27 February 2026
2025/26	31 January 2027
2026/27	30 November 2027
2027/28	30 November 2028

- 1.3 In addition to the publication of the statutory backstop deadlines the government also agreed a change to the deadline for the publication of the draft (unaudited) accounts for the financial years 2024/25 to 2027/28 from 31 May to 30 June.
- 1.4 The Audit Plan outlines Grant Thornton's proposed audit approach, as well as significant risks identified to date. As can be seen from within the plan document, the timing of the audit is scheduled to take place between July and September

2025, with aim of the final accounts reported to this committee at the October meeting and final audit sign off by 31 October 2025.

- 1.5 Despite the change in the statutory deadline for the publication of the draft accounts, the Finance team will be working towards completing the 2024/25 accounts by the 31 May 2025.

## **2 Background**

- 1.1 The Council is currently preparing the Annual Accounts for 2024/25. The Audit Committee is the body charged with governance for approving the Annual Accounts. The Audit Committee schedule of meetings for the next civic year are yet to be agreed, however the committee will be presented with the Council's 2024/25 Annual Accounts and a report from Grant Thornton, as the Council's appointed external auditors, on the Accounts. Grant Thornton's report will give an opinion on the Accounts and the Council's Value for Money arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Audit Report is to report to the Audit Committee how Grant Thornton plan to audit the 2024/25 accounts.
- 1.3 The audit fees for 2023/24 and 2024/25 are detailed on page 41 of the audit plan. At the time of drafting this report the Director of Resources is in discussion with the Key Audit Partner regarding the additional audit fees.

## **3 Proposals**

- 3.1 The Auditor's Audit Plan for the year ending 31 March 2025 is attached to this report.
- 3.2 The Audit Committee is asked to note the Audit Plan for 2024/25.

## **4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

- 4.1 There are no alternative options.

## **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

- 5.1 The Director of Resources was invited to comment on the Audit plan.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Good financial management is key to supporting the Corporate Plan objectives.
Financial, Resource and Property	The Audit Plan details the audit fees for 2023/24 and 2024/25.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The production of the financial statements is a legal requirement under the Accounts and Audit regulations. The deadline for the external audit for 2024/25 is 27 February 2026.
Crime and Disorder	No direct issues.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	No direct issues.
Health and Wellbeing	No direct issues.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	No direct issues.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	No direct issues.
Equality and Diversity	No direct issues.
Privacy and Data Protection	No direct issues.

## 7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:  
Appendix I: Auditor's Audit Plan for the year ending 31 March 2025.

## 8 Background Documents

There are no background papers for this report.