

28 February 2024**Agenda Item:6****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – FINANCE, INFRASTRUCTURE
AND IMPROVEMENT****EXTERNAL AUDIT - AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT 2022/23****Purpose of the Report**

1. To note the external auditors' Audit Findings Report 2022/23.

Statement of Accounts 2022/23

2. The deadline for publishing the draft Statement of Accounts 2022/23 was 31 May 2023. Nottinghamshire County Council's and Nottinghamshire Pension Fund's Statement of Accounts 2022/23 were published onto the Council's website on 31 May 2023, well ahead of the deadline.
3. As reported to Governance and Ethics Committee in January 2023, the deadline for publishing the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts with the auditor's opinion was 30 September 2023. Due to widely acknowledged difficulties being experienced in the Local Authority audit sector however, the Authority's Statement of Accounts were not able to be approved by this target date. In fact, only 1% of all local government bodies received an auditor's opinion by the target date.
4. At the Governance and Ethics Committee meeting held on 10 January 2024 approval was delegated to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Chair of Governance and Ethics Committee, to approve the Statement of Accounts 2022/23 on completion of all external audit work. It is anticipated that the Statement of Accounts will have been approved and published on the Council's website prior to this meeting. Prior to publication, the Chairman and S151 Officer will have signed the Statement of Approval and the letters of representation.

Audit Results

5. The statutory audit of the Statement of Accounts 2022/23 has been undertaken by Grant Thornton. The Audit Findings Reports 2022/23 for both the County Council and the Pension Fund have been completed and can be seen in the appendices to this report. It is expected that Andrew Smith (Director – Grant Thornton) will talk through the report and take any questions at this meeting.
6. The statement of accounts is one of the key documents prepared by the Council to demonstrate good governance and value for money. This provides information about the County Council's financial position, performance and cash flows and consequently, shows the results of the stewardship and accountability of elected members and management for the resources entrusted to them, which is of paramount importance in the use of public funds.

Other Options Considered

7. The external auditors are required by statute of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to report their Audit Findings Report to the Council.

Reason for Recommendation/s

8. To provide information to Members on the External Auditors' Audit Findings Report 2022/23.

Statutory and Policy Implications

9. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

10. That the Committee notes the external auditors' Audit Findings Report 2022/23.

Nigel Stevenson

Service Director – Finance, Infrastructure and Improvement

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Nigel Stevenson

Service Director (Finance, Infrastructure and Improvement)

Constitutional Comments (KK 19/02/2024)

11. The recommendations fall within the delegation to Governance and Ethics Committee under its terms of reference.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All