

REPORT TITLE: AUDITOR VALUE FOR MONEY REPORT 22/23

29 FEBRUARY 2024

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Cutler – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

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WARD(S): ALL

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to communicate the key issues arising from the external auditor's value for money work to all councillors and external stakeholders, including members of the public.

The council's external auditor EY has now presented their interim Value for Money (VfM) Report for 2022/23, which is appended to this report. The auditor did not identify any significant weaknesses in the Council's VFM arrangements and confirmed that no significant risks were identified during the audit.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Committee:
  - i. Takes the opportunity to discuss the contents of the report and raises any issues with the external auditors;
  - ii. Confirms its acceptance of the auditor's report; and
  - iii. Notes that it is likely that the auditors will issue a disclaimer opinion on the 2022/23 financial statements.

## 1 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 1.1 The interim Value for Money report for the year ended 31 March 2023 summarises the findings from the work the external auditor undertook. It sets out risks identified and the findings from their detailed assessment including a commentary on the three reporting criteria and a summary of the arrangements in place. EY's report is appended in full to this paper.
- 1.2 The auditor did not identify any significant weaknesses in the Council's VfM arrangements and confirmed no significant risks were identified during the audit.
- 1.3 The auditor will summarise their final view of the value for money arrangements as part of the Auditor's Annual Report once the audit report has been issued for 2022/23.

### **2022/23 audit and opinion on the financial statements**

- 1.4 Only 1% of local authorities met the target for publishing audited financial statements by the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2023. The Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLHUC) have issued guidance aimed at clearing the audit backlog, and all financial statements relating to the 2022/23 financial year or earlier years must be published by 30th September 2024, requiring the auditors to issue an opinion to reflect the assurance that they have been able to acquire before that date.
- 1.5 Our understanding is that there will be no further work planned on the council's 2022/2023 financial statements; it is therefore likely that the auditors will issue a disclaimer opinion on the statements although the wording has yet to be discussed and agreed.

## APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Value for Money report for the year ended 31 March 2023.