

REPORT TITLE: EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2024/25

17 JULY 2025

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Neil Cutler, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Contact Officer: Liz Keys Tel No: 01962 848226 Email: LKeys@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

This report details the indicative 2024/25 Audit Strategy and Annual Audit Fees proposed by the council's external auditors, Ernst & Young LLP (EY).

The indicative fee £172,922 for the 2024/25 audit work is at the level of the scale fees set by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) for each audited body that has opted into its national auditor appointment scheme.

The auditors have submitted a proposal for a scale fee variation of £69,265 in relation to their work on the 2023/24 accounts, this is subject to approval by PSAA.

The auditors disclaimed their opinion on the 2022/23 accounts, the final fee has not been notified and will be subject to approval by PSAA.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Audit and Governance Committee:

1. Notes the external auditor's Audit Strategy for 2024/25 and the impact of the disclaiming of the 2023/24 audit opinion.
2. Approves the indicative 2024/25 annual audit fee.

IMPLICATIONS:1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

None

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 The planned scale fee for the audit of the 2024/25 accounts is £172,922. The scale fee set by PSAA (Public Sector Audit Appointments) has increased from the 2023/24 scale fee of £157,826. The scale fees have increased for additional work in relation to changes in audit requirements and adjustments for inflation of 3.4%.

2.2 The auditors have submitted a proposal for a scale fee variation of £69,265 in relation to their work on the 2023/24 accounts, this is subject to approval by PSAA.

2.3 The auditors disclaimed their opinion on the 2022/23 accounts, the final fee has not been notified and will be subject to approval by PSAA.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Audit and Accounts Regulations 2015 require the council to publish the annual Statement of Accounts, the narrative statement and the annual governance statement, together with any external audit opinion by a specified date. The publication deadline for the 2024/25 Annual Financial Report is 27th February 2026.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

None

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

None

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

None required

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

None

8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

None.

9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

None required

10 RISK MANAGEMENT

None

11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

None, this is an external report.

12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 This is a statutory requirement therefore there are no other options to be considered.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Previous Committee Reports:

None

Other Background Documents:

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – EY Audit Planning Report year ending 31 March 2025