

Agenda Item No

9 (a) - (c)

Report To:

Audit Committee

Date:

15 March 2016

Report Title:

External Auditor Reports:

- a) 2014-2015 Grant Certification Letter**
- b) 2015 - 2016 Audit Plan Update**
- c) 2015 - 2016 Audit Committee Update**

Report Author:

Lisa Robertson (Engagement Manager, Grant Thornton UK)
Paul Naylor (Deputy Chief Executive), covering summary

Summary

This is a covering summary to three reports from Grant Thornton UK, external auditor to the Council. Elizabeth Olive (Engagement Lead) and Lisa Robertson (Engagement Manager) will be attending from Grant Thornton and will introduce the reports and take questions.

The first report presents the certification letter following completion of the audit of the housing benefit grant claim. The grant claim was significant (£36.7million) and following further sample testing the auditors made no amendment or qualification to the claim.

The second report updates the committee on the auditor's work and plans for the current financial year's financial audit. It highlights some key areas of focus for the auditor and the assurance testing to be applied and of approaches to materiality, risk identification, and the value for money assessment. The report also summarises the auditor's interim findings where no matters of concern are identified for reporting.

The third report is another in the series of general updates from the auditor. This update includes references to a number of recent publications of topical interest to members and officers. Of particular note is a reference to guidance having been recently issued by CIPFA concerning the new requirement for 'auditor panels' for when councils have the ability to procure their own external audit. The Committee will receive a full report on this issue at its next meeting. Note that

for this council a decision to appoint an external auditor must be taken and awarded by no later than 31 December 2017.

Key Decision: Not applicable

Affected Wards: None specifically

Recommendations: **The Committee is asked to note and consider the three reports attached from our external auditor, Grant Thornton Uk plc:**

i) to note the 2014-2015 grant certification letter

ii) to note the 2015-2016 audit plan update

iii) to note the Audit Committee Update

Policy Overview: External audit is a statutory requirement and the work of the auditors, including the advice papers received fulfils an important role in the council's governance and ongoing development.

Financial Implications: None arising

Other Material Implications: The matters referred to in Grant Thornton's national reports (see the Audit Committee Update) will help to inform officers' future work and reports, and members' decisions over the coming months.

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