

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUDIT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	9 FEBRUARY 2023	REPORT NO:	CFO/60/22
PRESENTING OFFICER	GRANT THORNTON		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	GEORGIA JONES (GRANT THORNTON)	REPORT AUTHOR:	GEORGIA JONES (GRANT THORNTON)
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	N/A		
TITLE OF REPORT:	2021/2022 AUDITOR'S (GRANT THORNTON) ANNUAL REPORT		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: AUDITOR'S ANNUAL REPORT ON MFRA
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Purpose of Report

1. The report details the outcome of the Auditor's findings in relation to the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts and the Authority's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness (VFM) in its use of resources.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members note the contents of the Auditor's report.

Introduction and Background

3. The Authority is required to prepare annually a set of financial statements, the Statement of Accounts, as required by the relevant codes and regulations. These statements must then be audited by an independent auditor, who will then issue an opinion on the statements. An unqualified opinion would mean the statements have been prepared in accordance with the codes and regulations and reflect a true and fair view of the financial position for that year.
4. In addition the Auditor is required to consider the Authority's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness (VFM) in its use of resources, and consider if there were any significant weaknesses in those arrangements.
5. The attached Auditor's Annual Report covers the above and confirms;
 - a) The audit of the financial statements has been completed and the draft unqualified opinion reported to Audit Committee on 27 September has not changed or any issues since that report have been identified, and

b) No significant weaknesses have been identified in the VFM arrangements.

6. The Auditor identified one area for improvement within the VFM criteria with regard to the monitoring of externally managed contracts in 2021/22, however officers had put in place measures to improve the arrangements during 2022/23.

Equality and Diversity Implications

7. Not applicable.

Staff Implications

8. Not applicable.

Legal Implications

9. Not applicable.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

10. Not applicable.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

11. If the Auditor had qualified the accounts of identified significant VFM weaknesses, the Authority would be expected to resolve those issues and re-issue the Statement of Accounts and/or make the necessary changes to the current VFM processes.

Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.*

Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.*

12. The achievement of sound financial administration and VFM arrangements is essential if the Service is to achieve the Authority's mission.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS
