

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUDIT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	9 FEBRUARY 2023	REPORT NO:	CFO/61/22
PRESENTING OFFICER	GRANT THORNTON		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	GEORGIA JONES (GRANT THORNTON)	REPORT AUTHOR:	GEORGIA JONES (GRANT THORNTON)
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	N/A		
TITLE OF REPORT:	GRANT THORNTON (AUDIT) PROGRESS REPORT AND SECTOR UPDATE		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: AUDITOR PROGRESS REPORT AND SECTOR UPDATE
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Purpose of Report

1. The report details the progress of the Authority's Auditor, Grant Thornton, on delivering their responsibilities to the Authority in relation to 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial statements and value for money requirements.

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.
4. The 2022/23 Statement of Accounts must be completed by the Finance Department by the end of May 2023, and the Auditor must then complete their audit work and issue an audit findings report, so that the audited Statement of Accounts can be authorised for publication by 30 September 2023.
5. The Auditor must also 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. Although the Code of Audit Practice requires the VFM work to be completed by 30 September 2023, if this is not possible the Auditor must issue an audit letter setting out the reasons for the delay.
6. The attached Auditor's Progress Report covers the above and confirms;

- a) The audit of the 2022/23 financial statements is expected to be completed by required deadline, September 2023, but
- b) The 2022/23 VFM work will not be completed until December 2023.

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 qualifies the accounts or identifies 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
