

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUDIT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	08 FEBRUARY 2024	REPORT NO:	CFO/10/24
PRESENTING OFFICER	KEY AUDIT PARTNER AT GRANT THORNTON, GEORGIA JONES		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	GEORGIA JONES	REPORT AUTHOR:	GEORGIA JONES
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	N/A		
TITLE OF REPORT:	2022/23 AUDITOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (GRANT THORNTON)		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: AUDITOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
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Purpose of Report

1. The report details the outcome of the Auditor's findings in relation to 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) no significant weaknesses have been identified in the VFM arrangements; and
 - b) the auditor has substantially completed their audit of the financial statements and anticipate issuing an unqualified audit opinion following today's Audit Committee.

6. The Auditor identified one area of improvement within the VFM criteria with regard to the Authority setting out its mitigation strategies to manage the projected medium term funding deficit in more detail. Officers will set out mitigation strategies in more detail as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process.

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 and Health & Implications

11. If the Auditor had qualified the accounts the Authority would be expected to resolve those issues and reissue the Statement of Accounts, and its financial management reputation would be harmed.

Environmental Implications

12. Not applicable

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.*

13. The achievement of sound financial administration is essential if the Service is to achieve the Authority's vision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

NONE