

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUDIT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	06 JUNE 2024	REPORT NO:	CFO/30/24
PRESENTING OFFICER	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT, MIKE REA		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	MIKE REA	REPORT AUTHOR:	MIKE REA
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM		
TITLE OF REPORT:	MAZARS AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2023/2024		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: MAZARS AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT
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Purpose of Report

1. To present to Members, Mazars Audit Progress Report that outlines the Auditor's approach to auditing Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority's ('Authority') 2023/2024 financial statements.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members note Mazars Audit Progress Report 2023/2024 and the timing of the Authority's 2023/2024 audit of the financial statements.

Introduction and Background

3. The Authority is required to prepare a set of financial statements annually as required by the relevant codes and regulations. The deadline for the production of the unaudited financial statements is by the end of May in the following year.
4. The financial statements must then be audited by an independent auditor, who will then issue an opinion on the statements. Members will be aware that the Authority chose to opt into the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) national scheme for the appointment of the Authority's external Auditors. Mazars have been appointed as the Authority's external Auditor.
5. The Accounts and Audit (amendment) Regulations 2022 came into force on 22nd July 2022 and extended the deadline for the publication of final audited financial statements annually from 31st July to 30th September for the following 4 years. Therefore, the deadline for the publication of final 2023/2024 audited financial statements is 30th September 2024.

6. The audit deadlines for England have been subject to DLUHC consultation and the Authority is currently awaiting the outcome, therefore these deadlines may change in the near future. The proposed changes to the 2015 Regulations would require authorities to publish audited accounts by the following dates for financial years 2023/2024 to 2027/2028:

- 2023/24: 31 May 2025
- 2024/25: 31 March 2026
- 2025/26: 31 January 2027
- 2026/27: 30 November 2027
- 2027/28: 30 November 2028

However, at the time of writing the report, the regulations remain unaltered.

7. Mazars Audit Progress Report (attached to this report as Appendix A) has been provided by the external auditors, to detail the progress to date on the review of the statement of accounts.

Equality and Diversity Implications

8. There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

Staff Implications

9. There are no staff implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

10. The current regulations require the unaudited financial statements to be prepared by 31st May in the year following the end of the financial year, and the statements to be audited by 30th September. The audit accounts deadlines for England are subject to DLUHC consultation and may therefore change.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

11. The 2023/2024 external audit fee, £97,117 has been included within the budget.

Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

12. Failure to prepare the financial statements or have them audited within the statutory deadlines may have an adverse impact on the Authority's financial management reputation.

Environmental Implications

13. There are no environmental implications arising out of this report.

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.

14. The achievement of sound financial administration and value for money arrangements is essential if the Service is to achieve the Authority's vision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NONE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

DLUHC Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

PSAA Public Sector Audit Appointments