

DECISION MAKER Audit and Risk Management Panel	DATE 19 June 2023	ITEM NO: 9
TITLE External Audit Plan	WARD (S) All	
CHIEF OFFICER Director of Finance	CABINET MEMBER Finance, Resources and Social Value	
DECISION CLASSIFICATION Non-exempt Non-Key	IS THE FINAL DECISION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT TO BE MADE AT THIS MEETING? Yes	

I Decisions Required

This report makes the following recommendations to the decision-maker:

- 1.1 To note the 2023/24 external audit plan for the authority (Appendix A).
- 1.2 To note the 2023/24 external audit plan for the Pension Fund (Appendix B).

2 Links to Our Greenwich Missions

2.1 This report relates to all of the Council's agreed missions as follows:

- People's health supports them in living their best life
- People will not experience discrimination
- Those in financial need can access the right support, advice and opportunities to improve their situation
- Children and young people can reach their full potential
- Everyone in Greenwich is safer, and feels safer
- People in Greenwich have access to a safe and secure home that meets their needs
- It is easier, safer and greener to move around the borough and the rest of London
- Development delivers positive change to an area for existing and new communities.
- Neighbourhoods are vibrant, safe and attractive with community services that meet the needs of local residents

- Greenwich plays an active role in tackling the climate crisis and improving environmental sustainability, in line with our commitment of being carbon neutral by 2030
- Everyone has the opportunity to secure a good job
- Town centres, high streets and shopping parades are vibrant, prosperous, well-maintained places that meet the needs of local people
- Our economy attracts new high value businesses whilst strengthening its foundations
- The voluntary, community and socially motivated sectors in Greenwich are strengthened and able to provide more support to the most in need
- Our Council is better at listening to communities, and communities feel they are heard
- We develop networks with communities, key partners and businesses to meet need and address challenges together
- We design our services around the needs of our residents
- Our Council is an adaptive organisation, enabling it to navigate the increasing number of challenges it faces while remaining financially sustainable
- Our Council works in the most efficient and effective ways possible
- Our Council is a great place to work, with a diverse workforce who have the right skills and are motivated and empowered to deliver

3 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 3.1 This audit plan for the authority and the Pension Fund is provided by the external auditors, Forvis Mazars. Forvis Mazars were appointed the external auditor in March 2024. The report details forecast fees, work undertaken so far and proposals in respect of ongoing and future work.
- 3.2 Forvis Mazars has followed its risk assessment procedures to obtain an understanding of management processes in several areas. This report shares the information provided by the Council's management to help inform this risk assessment.

4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 The audit plans set out for the benefit of those charged with governance an overview of the planned scope and timing of the audits, as required by International Standard on Auditing (UK & Ireland) 260.

- 4.2 The documents help to understand the consequences of the auditors' work, discuss issues of risk, the concept of materiality and identify any areas where the Panel may request the auditor to undertake additional procedures. It also helps the auditor gain a better understanding of the authority and its environment.
- 4.4 The auditors are required to perform their audits in line with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and in accordance with the Code of Practice issued by the National Audit Office (NAO). Auditor responsibilities under the Code are to:
- give an opinion on the authority's financial statements
 - satisfy themselves that the authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
 - give an opinion on the Pension Fund's financial statements.
- 4.5 The auditors are responsible for performing the audits, in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland), which is directed towards forming and expressing an opinion on the financial statements that have been prepared by management with the oversight of those charged with governance. The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or those charged with governance of their responsibilities for the preparation of the financial statements which give a true and fair view.

5 Report

- 5.1 The contents of the audit plans provided by Forvis Mazars have been discussed with management.
- 5.2 The audit plans for the authority and the Pension Fund details forecast fees, work undertaken so far and proposals in respect of ongoing and future work (Appendix A and Appendix B).

6 Available Options

- 6.1 Option 1 – To note the 2023/24 audit plans and audit risk assessment for the authority and Pension Fund.

Option 2 – Do nothing.

7 Preferred Option

7.1 Option 1.

8 Reasons for Recommendations

8.1 This document provides an overview of the planned scope and timing of the statutory audit of the Royal Borough of Greenwich and associated risk assessment for the authority and Pension Fund to those charged with Governance.

9 Consultation Results

9.1 No consultation is required and none has taken place

10 Cross-Cutting Issues and Implications

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Legal	The report raises no specific legal issues.	
Finance	This report has been prepared by the Director of Finance and has no other financial implications	Hitesh Jolapara, Interim Assistant Director of Finance & Deputy s151 Officer 10 June 2024
Equalities	Decision-makers are reminded of the requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty (s149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or	Hitesh Jolapara, Interim Assistant Director of Finance & Deputy s151 Officer 10 June 2024

	low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no apparent equality impact on end users. In addition, given the nature of the report the decision required this report makes no direct contribution to the Council's Equality and Equity Charter and the Council's Equality Objectives 2020-2024.	
Climate Change	This report does not make any direct contribution to the Greenwich Carbon Neutral Plan agreed by Cabinet 18 November 2020	Hitesh Jolapara, Interim Assistant Director of Finance & Deputy s151 Officer 10 June 2024
Risk Management	Key risks attaching to the proposals in this report, together with applicable mitigating actions have been considered and detailed in the Background section above. The identified risks will continue to be monitored and managed in line with the Council's risk management Toolkit.	Hitesh Jolapara, Interim Assistant Director of Finance & Deputy s151 Officer 11 June 2024

11 **Appendices**

11.1 The following documents are to be published with and form part of the report:

Appendix A: Royal Borough of Greenwich Audit Plan 2023/24

Appendix B: Royal Borough of Greenwich Pension Fund Audit Plan 2023/24

12 **Background Papers**

None

Report Author: Hitesh Jolapara – Interim Assistant Director of Finance &
Deputy s151 Officer

Tel No. 020 8921 4292

Email. hitesh.jolapara@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Reporting to: Hitesh Jolapara – Interim Assistant Director of Finance &
Deputy s151 Officer

Tel No. 020 8921 4292

Email. hitesh.jolapara@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Damon Cook - Director of Finance

Tel No. 020 8921 3508

Email. Damon.Cook@royalgreenwich.gov.uk