

EXTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE OF THE 2021/22 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Committee name	Audit Committee
Officer reporting	James Lake, Head of Pensions, Treasury & Statutory Accounts
Papers with report	EY update London Borough of Hillingdon EY update London Borough of Hillingdon Pension Fund
Ward	All

HEADLINES

The attached reports summarise EY's current progress on the audit of the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts including the Pension Fund Accounts. The first report summarises the Council's main financial statements and the second the Pension Fund accounts.

At the July meeting an aspirational target of the 29 September 2022 was proposed to complete the audit of the accounts. This was an ambitious deadline, being two months ahead of the statutory deadline of the 30 November 2022, and although the audit has progressed well it has not been possible to meet the early target date.

Furthermore, a national issue regarding the accounting of infrastructure assets is still unresolved and both EY and the Council await further information which could result in an amendment to accounting standards by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy or statutory override by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities.

Subject to property valuation, which is reliant on separate specialist work, and a suitable outcome relating to the infrastructure issue, EY are working towards completing the audit by the 30 November 2022, albeit the aforementioned items add an element of risk.

Committee should note that at the time of writing, the Pension Fund audit was materially complete and there were no unadjusted differences to report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee notes the progress of 2021/22 external annual audit.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Proposed scale fees detailed in the original audit plan for the London Borough of Hillingdon include the PSAA agreed scale fee of £121,096 plus an extra scale fee of £82,728 which is

currently being discussed with the PSAA.

For the London Borough Pension Fund agreed scale fees are £16,170 with an additional scale fee of £28,290.

These additional scale fees are being considered by the PSAA as part of the national consideration of EY's fee proposals. The Corporate Director of Finance will also consider these fees in line with benchmarking information and in consultation with EY.

An allowance for increased fees has been made within the Council's statement of accounts.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government delegated statutory functions (from the Audit Commission Act 1998) to PSAA on a transitional basis under powers contained in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. In Hillingdon, EY have been appointed by the PSAA to carry out this function. Other legal implications are included in the body of the report.

The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2022:

4B Paragraph (1) applies in relation to the publication of documents relating to the financial year beginning in 2021 as if for "31st July" there were substituted "30th November"

6A Paragraph (2)(b) applies in relation to the audit of accounts relating to the financial year beginning in 2021 as if for "but not later than 31st July" there were substituted "but not later than 30th November".

BACKGROUND PAPERS

See appendices