

AUDIT COMMITTEE ASSURANCE STATEMENT

Governance & Audit Committee	29 November 2023
Report Author	Chris Blundell, Director of Corporate Services and S151 Officer
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Rob Yates, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Status	For Decision
Classification	Unrestricted
Previously Considered by	n/a
Ward	Thanet Wide

Executive Summary:

In accordance with auditing standards, the external auditor needs to establish an understanding of the management processes in place at the council. The Committee is asked to approve the content of the draft responses to the auditor.

Recommendation(s):

1. That the Committee notes and approves the responses to the letter from Grant Thornton as set out in Annex 1 and 2 of this report.
2. That this Committee, delegates future sign off these responses to the Chair of this Group in consultation with the S151 Officer.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal

This is a statutory requirement.

Risk Management

Risk management is as per the provisions of this annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy.

Corporate

Failure to undertake this process will impact on the council's compliance with the Auditing standards.

Equalities Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no equity and equalities implications arising directly from this report, but the council needs to retain a strong focus and understanding on issues of diversity amongst the local community and ensure service delivery matches these.

It is important to be aware of the council's responsibility under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and show evidence that due consideration had been given to the equalities impact that may be brought upon communities by the decisions made by council.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- Growth
- Environment
- Communities.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 To comply with international auditing standards our external auditor, Grant Thornton, need to establish an understanding of the management processes in place to detect fraud and to ensure compliance with law and regulation. The external auditor is also required to make enquiries of management as to their knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud.
- 1.2 The external auditor also needs to gain an understanding of how the Governance and Audit Committee maintains an oversight of the above processes.
- 1.3 The questions and proposed responses, which are required to come from the Chairman of the Committee, are attached at Annex 1 (21/22) and Annex 2 (22/23).

2 OPTIONS

- 2.1 The requirement to approve the Statement of Accounts is a statutory one and therefore no alternative action is recommended, as the Committee needs to be assured that the information submitted to the external auditor is sufficiently robust for their purposes.

Contact Officer: Chris Blundell, Acting Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer

Reporting to: Colin Carmichael, Interim Chief Executive

Annex List

Annex 1: Draft Governance and Audit Committee Assurance Statement (21/22)

Annex 2: Draft Governance and Audit Committee Assurance Statement (22/23)

Corporate Consultation Undertaken**Finance:** N/A**Legal:** Sameera Khan, Interim Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer