



Update on 2020/21 audit

The purpose of this note is to update the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee on the progress in finalising the 2020/21 audit.

2020/21

Work on finalising the 2020/21 audits of the main Council's accounts and of the Pension Fund was suspended during the NHS audit period. This recommenced, albeit later than planned due to a number of significantly overrunning audits including, critically, ones involving Essex County's senior audit team.

Our intention was to finalise remaining issues with the audit to enable reporting at the additional 27 November 2023 meeting of the AGSC. However, as part of the final quality review process it was identified that it would be necessary to obtain further schools bank confirmations.

This exercise is underway, and requests sent. Some information has already been returned, but the timeline for turnaround from the bank most commonly used by the schools has not yet (at the time of drafting) been confirmed. If the information is received before Christmas, work can be done on that information, but not in time for this to be reviewed, subject to final quality review and the results captured and reported through an Audit Completion Report. Consequently, we anticipate now reporting in late January 2024, to allow for this to be completed and for Committee reporting lead times to be complied with.

The actions necessary to address the schools banks issue has diverted senior team resources from finalising some other outstanding issues, including the final conclusion on the infrastructure issue, so

The key outstanding issues are:

- Additional schools bank confirmations, referred to above
- Completion of quality review processes:
 - Final technical and External Quality Control Review sign-offs
- Resolution of the infrastructure issue:
 - Final audit file documentation of the analysis undertaken by the Council in support of the weighted Useful Economic Lives determined and applied, and quality reviews and sign-off of this.
- Use of Resources:
 - The field work has been completed, but is subject to review
 - We are intending to issue the draft report to officers before Christmas (i.e. during week commencing 18 December 2023)

David Eagles, Partner and Engagement Lead
For and on behalf of **BDO LLP**, Appointed Auditor

8 December 2023