

Report to Audit Committee

Subject: External Audit Progress Report (Mazars)

Date: 16 September 2025

Author: Chief Finance Officer & Section 151

1 Purpose of Report

To inform Members of the progress of the External Audit for the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts.

Recommendation:

1. Note the External Audit progress Reports attached at Appendix 1 as presented by Mazars.

2 Background

It is a requirement that the Council's financial statements are audited on an annual basis and that in addition the auditors undertake all work necessary to support their conclusion on value for money.

Due to the Fraud identified in July 2022 and the governments statutory backstop arrangements the Councils external auditors Mazars issued disclaimed audit opinions for its Statement of Account for the years 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24.

The attached report sets out the current position with the external audit for the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts.

3 Proposal

Members note the current position on the progress report and note the likelihood that the Council will not be able to return to an unqualified audit opinion prior to Local Government reorganisation.

4 Financial Implications

At the July Audit Committee recommended that Council approve an additional £88,549 for the External Audit scale fees for 2024/25. Theis fee increase was

based on a full External Audit being carried out by Mazars but did not include the re-building assurance work that would have been needed to form an opinion of opening balances. The likelihood that Mazars will now not carry out a full in-depth audit on some areas may have an impact on the final audit fee that will be charged. There is a possibility that the fee will be at a reduced rate, once we have some clarity of the final fee it will be brought to the attention of the Audit Committee. At a future meeting.

5 Legal Implications

None arising directly from this report, The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 mandates that Local Authorities in the UK must have external audits. It outlines the framework for audits of local authorities, including the requirement to appoint an external auditor.

6 Equalities Implications

There are no equalities implications directly arising from this report.

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

There are no carbon reduction/environmental sustainability implications arising from this report.

8 Appendices

Appendix 1 – External Audit Progress Report

Statutory officer Approval:

Approved by: Chief Financial Officer

Date: 05/09/2025

Approved by: Monitoring Officer

Date: 05/09/2025

