

Report to Audit Committee

Subject: External Audit Draft Annual Report (Mazars)

Date: 9 December 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 Draft Annual Report attached at Appendix 1 as presented by Mazars.
2. Note the recommendations set out in each section in the report.

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.

In usual circumstances where an auditor has given an unmodified opinion on the previous financial statement, the auditor can rely on that previous assurance to form an opinion on the current year's statements, as no such assurance was given for the previous statement of accounts its not possible to rely on this assurance. As a result of this it is anticipated that a further disclaimed opinion for 2024/25 accounts will be given prior to the backstop date of 27th February 2026.

The Auditors have carried out their work on the Value for Money Assessment, and whilst a number of recommendations have been made they have found that there are no identified risks of significant weakness and no actual significant weaknesses identified.

3 Proposal

Members note draft annual report and the recommendations set out in the report for officers to deliver.

4 Financial Implications

There are no Financial implications arising from this report.

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 Auditors Draft Annual Report

Statutory officer Approval:

Approved by: Chief Financial Officer

Date: 28/11/2025

Approved by: Monitoring Officer

Date: 28/11/2025

