

ITEM: 7

REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY AUDIT COMMITTEE

DATE: 8 November 2018

REPORT TITLE: EXTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2018

AUTHOR: MALCOLM COE – DIRECTOR OF INVESTMENT AND CORPORATE SERVICES (S151 OFFICER)

Purpose of Report

- 1 To consider the External Auditor's Annual Audit Letter for the year ending 31 March 2018 attached to this cover report.

Issues for Consideration

- 2 The External Auditor provided the detailed findings from their audit work carried out at the West of England Combined Authority for the year ended 31 March 2018 in their Audit Findings Report, presented to the Audit Committee on 12 July 2018.
 - 2.1 The Annual Audit Letter at Appendix 1 summarises the key findings arising from this work and is intended to provide a commentary on the results of their work to the Authority and external stakeholders and to highlight issues they wish to draw to the attention of the public.
 - 2.2 The Annual Audit Letter was published on the Authority's website in August 2018 and contains the key findings from the Audit Opinion on the Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2018 and the Value for Money conclusion. The External Auditor can provide a fuller verbal briefing at the meeting.

Consultation:

- 3 Consultation has been carried out with the appointed internal audit provider (Audit West).

Public Sector Equality Duties:

- 4 The public sector equality duty created under the Equality Act 2010 means that public authorities must have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 4.1 The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:
- Removing or minimizing disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
 - Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- 4.2 The general equality duty therefore requires organisations to consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services, including policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.
- 4.3 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

Finance Implications:

- 5 The External Audit Plan supports the statutory audit requirements for the Annual Accounts and the fee for this work is agreed by Public Sector Auditor Appointments Ltd. The financial implications of the Audit Fee are already contained within existing corporate budgets.

Legal Implications:

- 6 The work that the External Auditors carry out on the 2018/19 accounts is completed based on the requirements set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and under the Code of Audit Practice published by the National Audit Office.

Advice given by: Shahzia Daya – Director of Legal Services

Human Resources Implications:

- 7 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

Advice given by: Alex Holly – Head of Human Resources

Recommendation:

- 8 The Audit Committee is asked to note the Annual Audit Letter and updates provided by the External Auditor.**

Report Author: Malcom Coe – Director of Investment and Corporate Services

West of England Combined Authority Contact:

Any person seeking background information relating to this item should seek the assistance of the contact officer for the meeting who is Ian Hird / Tim Milgate on 0117 332 1486; or by writing to West of England Combined Authority, 3 Rivergate, Temple Way, Bristol BS1 6ER; email: democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk