

	Governance & Audit Committee 7 September 2021		Item 10
Report of	Assistant Director – Corporate and Improvement		
Title	Revised timetable to finalise the audit of the Statement of Accounts 2020/21		
Wards affected	Not applicable	Author	Paul Cook ☎ 505861 Mark Jarvis

1 **Action required**

- 1.1 To note the revised timetable for 2020/21 statement of accounts.

2 **Recommendations**

- 2.1 To note the revised timetable.
- 2.2 To note the requirement to issue a public notice for late publication of the Statement of Accounts

3 **Background**

- 3.1 The 2015 Accounts and Audit Regulations have been amended by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2021. The effect on the statutory timetable is set out below.

Element	Normal Arrangement	2020/21 Accounts
Approval of accounts and publication by the Council	Not later than 31 July	Not later than 30 September
Public Inspection	Period to include the first 10 working days of June	Must commence on or before the first working day of August

- 3.2 Following discussions with BDO – the Council's external auditors – the Council closed its accounts 7 weeks before the statutory deadline. This has enabled finance resources to be focused on the budget challenges ahead and allow the external auditors to start the audit at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.3 The draft statement of accounts was signed by the Head of Finance 11 June 2021 and published on the Council's website.
- 3.4 The 30 working days period for public inspection commenced after the approval of the Annual Governance Statement by 22 June Governance and Audit Committee. Public inspection has been undertaken electronically.

- 3.5 BDO have undertaken some audit work but have stated will not be able to give their audit opinion and use of resources judgment by the planned date of 7 September 2021 Governance and Audit Committee.
- 3.6 The timetable must therefore be revised to achieve the November Governance and Audit Committee. This will regrettably lead to late publication of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts and corresponding audit opinion.
- 3.7 In accordance with Regulation 10 (2) of the accounts and Audit Regulations, the Section 151 officer will be required to issue a Late Publication Notice on the Council's website.

4 BDO comments / Progress

- 4.1 Following liaison meetings with our external auditors, progress on the current audit has been provided by BDO:
- Planning work substantially completed
 - Majority of the system work has been completed
 - Some samples have been selected for detailed testing
 - The audit team will be on-site virtually from the 6th of September for five weeks with the view to provide the audit completion report in time for November committee.

5 Strategic Plan reference

- 5.1 The Council's expenditure is aligned to the Strategic Plan.

6 Financial implications

- 6.1 Within this report

7 Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 Future years' statements of accounts will reflect the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and its commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. The environmental and sustainability implications of individual programmes will be thoroughly assessed with reference to the definition of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

8 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 8.1 Equality and diversity issues for individual projects are assessed in line with agreed policies and procedures including production of Equality Impact Assessments where appropriate.

9 Risk management implications

- 9.1 As set out in the statement of accounts

10 Other standard references

- 10.1 There are no direct Publicity, Human Rights, Community Safety or Health and Safety implications as a result of this report.

11 Background papers

11.1 Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

11.2 Accounts and Audit Regulations 2021

11.3 Draft Statement of Accounts 2020-21