

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	AGC/23/20
MEETING	AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	29 SEPTEMBER 2023
SUBJECT OF REPORT	REVISED FORWARD PLAN 2023-24
LEAD OFFICER	Clerk to the Authority
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That, subject to any additions/amendments as indicated at the meeting, the Revised Forward Plan for 2023-24, as appended to this report, be approved.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The appendix to this report sets out a revised Forward Plan for submission of items to meetings of this Committee during the next (2023-24) municipal year.</p> <p>The external auditor, Grant Thornton, has indicated that work on the audit of financial statements for the 2022-23 financial year would not commence until late August 2023. This, in turn, will result in a delay in submission of the financial statements for approval to late January/February 2024 and thus, the forward plan has been revised to reflect this change.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Nil.
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS	Not applicable.
APPENDICES	A. Revised Forward Plan 2023-24
BACKGROUND PAPERS	The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2022

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1. The current Terms of Reference for this Committee provide that it has responsibility for, amongst other things:

- internal and external audit arrangements for the Authority (including approval of annual financial statements);
- Standards arrangements (Members' Code of Conduct);
- Corporate Risk Register;
- the Authority's arrangements under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 (including annual reporting); and
- receipt of an annual report from the Authority's Local Pensions Board.

1.2. A revised Forward Plan, as included at Appendix A to this report, sets out proposed reporting arrangements for these items to meetings of the Committee during the 2023-24 Municipal Year.

2. **FACTORS CONSIDERED IN THE REVISED FORWARD PLAN**

Financial Statements

2.1. The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2022 require, amongst other things:

- for the final (i.e. following the public consultation period) 2022-23 financial statements to be approved by the Authority (or Committee thereof) and published by no later than 30 September 2023 (Regulations 9(2) and 10(1)[as amended]);
- for any certificate or opinion issued by the local auditor on the financial statements to be published by the same date (Regulation 10(1)(a)[as amended]); and
- for the Annual Governance Statement (for this Authority, this is incorporated into the Annual Statement of Assurance) to be published by the same date (Regulation 10(1)(b)[as amended]).

2.2. Regulation 10(2) provides that, in the event that the audit of accounts has not been concluded by 30 September, the Authority must publish as soon as is practicable a notice on its website indicating that it has not been possible to publish the relevant documents by 30 September, the reasons for this and to publish the documents together with the auditors opinion as soon as reasonably practicable after receipt of the opinion.

2.3. For the previous (2021-22) financial year, it was not possible to publish the final financial statements and auditors opinion by the designated date as a result of capacity issues faced by the external auditors. Consequently, it was necessary to publish a notice in accordance with Regulation 10(2).

- 2.4. To seek to avoid this in the forthcoming municipal year, the Forward Plan was prepared on the basis of two dates (in September and November 2023) at which approval the final financial statements could be undertaken. At the July meeting of the committee, the external auditor indicated that the 2022-23 audit of financial statements would not commence until late August 2023 which would result in a delay in submission of the final, audited accounts to late January/early February 2024.
- 2.5. As a result, it has been necessary to find an alternative date for the Committee's January 2024 meeting to enable sufficient time for the submission of the final accounts for 2022-23 for approval as reflected in the Appendix attached to this report.

Proposed Dates of Meetings

- 2.6. The dates set out for meetings in this Forward Plan have been approved by the Authority at its Annual General Meeting on 12 June 2023 but the amended January 2024 date will be published by the Clerk to the Authority in accordance with delegated power.

EMMA JACKMAN
Clerk to the Authority.