

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 20 November 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Policy and Resources

TITLE: Annual Audit Letter 2013/14

PORTFOLIO: Resources

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present the Annual Audit Letter 2013/14 for approval.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Annual Audit Letter 2013/14 be approved.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Annual Audit Letter summarises the findings from the 2013/14 audit completed by Grant Thornton LLP, the Council's external auditors. It includes messages arising from the audit of the financial statements and the results of the work undertaken in assessing the Council's arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources.

3.2 A copy of the 2013/14 Annual Audit Letter is attached to the report. Grant Thornton will attend the meeting to present the Audit Letter and take questions.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Council is a publicly funded body and, as such, is required to receive and consider annual reports from externally appointed auditors. The external audit function makes an important contribution to the stewardship of resources and the corporate governance of public services.

4.2 The Annual Audit Letter provides an unqualified opinion on the Council's 2013/14 financial statements. It also provides an unqualified conclusion that the Council has adequate arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None identified.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**

6.2 **Employment Learning and Skills in Halton**

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The economic, efficient and effective use of the Council's resources is a major factor in delivering better and sustainable outcomes for local people and therefore contributes to all of the Council's priorities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The Annual Audit Letter states that no significant weaknesses were identified in the Council's internal control arrangements. However, the key risks identified through the audit process are reflected in the recommendations for improvement made in the report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None identified.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 There are none under the meaning of the Act.