

REPORT TO: Audit and Governance Board

DATE: 18 March 2026

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Finance

PORTFOLIO: Corporate Services

SUBJECT: Informing the External Audit Risk Assessment

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present the response to the annual letter from Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditors, regarding their year-end audit of accounts work.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That;

(i) the proposed responses shown in the Appendix be approved;

(ii) the responses be provided to the Council's External Auditors.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 International Auditing Standards require the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton, to seek an understanding of how those charged with governance within the Council (ie. the Audit and Governance Board) gain assurance regarding management processes and arrangements, in the context of the year-end audit of accounts.

3.2 The Appendix presents draft responses to a number of questions contained in a letter from Grant Thornton, which it is proposed to provide to assist with the year-end audit of accounts.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

There are no direct implications for the Council's priorities.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The responses to the questions in the Appendix set out the arrangements that the Council has in place to manage the risk of fraud and to ensure that the Council complies with relevant laws and regulations.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None.

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

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.