

EAST SUSSEX FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Meeting Scrutiny & Audit Panel

Date 27 April 2023

Title of Report External Audit Planning Report and Scale Fee 2022/23

By Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer

Lead Officer Helen Thompson / Rumana Rafiq Ullah
EY LLP

Background Papers None

Appendices 1. External Audit Planning Report (EY)

Implications (please tick ✓ and attach to report)

Any implications affecting this report should be noted within the final paragraphs of the report

CORPORATE RISK		LEGAL	✓
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
FINANCIAL	✓	POLITICAL	
HEALTH & SAFETY		OTHER (please specify)	
HUMAN RESOURCES		CORE BRIEF	
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT			

PURPOSE OF REPORT To present the external auditor's planning report for the audit of the 2022/23 financial accounts and the external audit scale fee for 2023/24.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY The attached external audit planning report (Appendix 1) sets out the work that the Authority's external auditors, Ernst & Young LLP (EY), intend to carry out in order to audit the Authority's 2022/23 accounts and form their judgement on the Authority's value for money arrangements. EY has not identified any specific risks relating to the Authority's accounts.

The audit scale fee for the Authority is £30,815 an increase of £7,125 from the previous year in line with PSAA's revised fee scales published in November 2022. However the Panel will be aware that the actual scale fee is likely to be higher as a result of additional work undertaken by EY in relation to the expanded VFM opinion and increased regulatory

requirements. It is difficult therefore to give an estimate of the likely final scale fee for the audit of the 2022/23 accounts, but we have budgeted for £100,000 including a further tranche of grant from DLUHC (£13,507 received in 2022/23) to reflect the increase in audit costs under the new PSAA contract. The total audit fee for the 2021/22 accounts was £40,781.

In February the Government asked for views on the deadline for category 1 authorities to make draft accounts available for public inspection (31st May), following [the Accounts and Audit \(Amendment\) Regulations 2021](#), which extended the deadline for the 20/21 and 21/22 accounts to 31st July. In the Authority's response to this consultation we highlighted the dependencies we face on information provided by third parties, for example the Authority's actuary and billing authorities to produce our draft accounts. We also noted the dependency on the auditors of East Sussex Pension Fund to provide the relevant assurances to EY to allow the external audit to be completed by the 31 September deadline.

The Government believes it is important that all category 1 authorities endeavour to return to a normal financial reporting timetable as soon as possible and consequently, has decided not to extend the deadline and expects category 1 authorities to continue to meet the existing 31 May deadline in line with their statutory requirements. The deadline will be kept under review going forward. The Authority plans to publish its draft accounts by the 31 May deadline and to bring the audited accounts to Scrutiny & Audit Panel on 28 September for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is recommended to:

- (i) Approve the external audit planning report for 2022/23
 - (ii) Identify any further information or reassurance they require from the Authority's external auditors, or any matters which they wish to raise with them.
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