

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

6 February 2015

EXTERNAL AUDITOR - AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

Report of the Director of Finance

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To enable the Committee to consider and comment upon the external auditors' (Mazars) regular Audit Progress Report covering the period up to February 2015.
- 1.2 The report will be presented by Gavin Barker, the Council's Senior Engagement Manager.
- 1.3 The reports are a regular feature on this agenda and are aimed at providing updates of the progress made by our external auditor in meeting and fulfilling their role and responsibilities to the Council.
- 1.4 Members will be pleased to note that the auditors have now completed all audit work in respect of the financial year 2013/14. However planning is now well under way for the 2014/15 audit of accounts and other audit work to be carried out for the council. Their Audit Strategy Memorandum, which sets out their overall approach and the key risks identified in respect of their opinion on the financial statements and value for money conclusion, will be presented to members at the next Committee meeting.
- 1.5 The report also sets out 2 updates of fraud related matters. These include 'Protecting the Public Purse – 2013/14 Fraud Briefing for Sunderland City Council' with more detailed information included in Appendix 1 to the report. There is also a separate briefing provided on the 2012/13 National Fraud Initiative (Appendix 2 provides more detail). These items form the majority of the progress report on this occasion and will be the subject of a joint briefing by Mazars and the Council's Internal Auditors (which will be the next item on the agenda).
- 1.6 The report also usefully highlights one emerging issue that may be of interest to members in their role on the Audit and Governance Committee, in respect of the quality and timeliness of local public body financial reporting for 2013/14. This is set out on page 7 of their report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report and that a separate briefing will take place on the matters referred to in 1.5 of this report as the next item on the agenda.

