



Meeting	Service Leadership Team Performance and Resources Board	Agenda Item No.	4k 13
Meeting Date	9 March 2021 31 March 2021		
Report Author	Austin Page, Finance and Compliance Manager		
Presented By	Neil Cross, S151 and Chief Finance Officer		
Subject	Year End Accounts Closure 2020-21 - Timetable		
Type of Report	Information		

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the board are asked to note the 2020-21-year end accounts closure timetable.

OVERVIEW

This purpose of this paper is to inform the Board of the 2020-21-year end accounts closure timetable and to enable discussion as required.

BACKGROUND

The Authority has key deadlines to adhere to as part of the 2020-21-year end accounts closure process.

On 9 March and following consultation, the Government laid regulations that will amend the draft and final accounting deadlines for principal local authorities, police and fire bodies.

The regulations will amend the draft and final accounts publication deadlines for relevant bodies from 1 June and 31 July to 1 August and 30 September.

This is effective for 2 years, i.e. 2020-21 and 2021-22 and the position will be reviewed at that time.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS TIMETABLE

Annual Accounts Key Events	2020-21
Procurement of asset valuation	10th March
Agreement of carried forward reserves - Strategic Board	15th March
Instructions sent to valuer	31st March
Interim audit testing visit	3rd to 19th March
Draft Annual Governance Statement presented to Joint Audit Committee (papers due 18th March)	26th March
Draft Narrative statement	April
Accounting entries - completed 1st cut Accounts	Mid May
S151 & Strategic Head of P&R - Review of Accounts	Mid May
Review of Accounts by Service Leadership Team	Late May
Review of Final Outturn by Performance & Resources Board	25th May
Preparation of Decision Sheet for publication (Statutory Officers Meeting)	15th June
Audit Fieldwork Starts	21st June
Review of Accounts by Audit Committee (issue decision sheet to PFCC)	25th June
Publication of unaudited accounts (decision sheet required)	30th June
Review timescales for next Audit Committee meeting (1 st October)	August
Final Audit completed - Grant Thornton (dates to be advised)	Mid-August
Final Account & Audit Finding Review (Commissioner / S151 / Strategic Head of P&R)	Mid-August
Audit close out meeting - Audit findings report (Audit Completion)	Mid-August
Audit report received from Grant Thornton	September
Preparation of Decision Sheet for publication	1st September
Sign off and publication of audited accounts (decision sheet required)	25th September
Letter of representation signed	25th September
Audit letter and certificate issued	30th September
Presentation of the audited accounts to the audit committee for consideration	1st October
Publish completion of audit notices	1st October

OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

Some alternative options have been considered in terms of dates, but the ones proposed above appeared most reasonable.

BENEFITS AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

This timetable has been produced to ensure that there is a plan to complete the audit within the required statutory deadlines.

There is a risk that some of the dates on this timetable could move. The Board should note that the audit fieldwork is scheduled to commence on 21st June, however this could be delayed by Grant Thornton if they experience delays in NHS audits which precedes the audit of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. In preparing this timetable, this has been taken in consideration for the setting of certain dates.

The progress on the audit timetable will be within the monthly Financial Report, which is shared at the Performances and Resources Board.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising as a result of this report.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The audit will be managed in an equitable and fair manner which does not unduly impact on any particular group.

WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

The timetable will be circulated to all members of the Service with direct involvement in the audit process.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The audit timetable ensures that Essex County Fire and Rescue will adhere to these deadlines.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no Health and Safety implications.