

**NORTH LONDON WASTE AUTHORITY**

**REPORT TITLE:** UPDATE ON AUDIT 2019/20

**REPORT OF:** FINANCIAL ADVISER

**FOR SUBMISSION TO:** AUTHORITY MEETING

**DATE:** 22 APRIL 2021

**SUMMARY OF REPORT:**

This report provides an update of the ongoing audit of the 2019/20 statement of accounts and advises on changes to the timetable to produce the 2020/21 and 2021/22 statements of accounts.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Authority is recommended to note the contents of this report

**SIGNED:** Jon Rowney, Financial Adviser

**DATE:** 12 April 2021

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the audit of the 2019/20 statement of accounts, which has not yet been completed.
- 1.2. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require that the Authority produces a statement of accounts for each year which meets set requirements. The timetable for the production and audit of the 2019/20 financial statements was amended by The Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus)(Amendment) Regulations 2020. These changed the deadline for publishing draft accounts from 31 May 2020 to 31 August 2020 and the subsequent deadline for Audit of the statement was changed from the 31 July 2020 to 30 November 2020.
- 1.3. For the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial statements, the Government have recently published The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021. The regulations have extended the timetable for the production and audit of the statements.

## **2. 2019/20 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

- 2.1. Although the pandemic had a negative impact on resources within the Finance team, the draft accounts were submitted to the Mazars, the external auditors by the end of August and published on the Authority's website. The resourcing of the Finance team has recently been addressed with the appointment to the Deputy Head of Finance role.
- 2.2. At the Authority meeting on 3 December, Members were advised that the audit had commenced but that progress had been slowed by the lockdown and continued remote working. As a result, and in accordance with regulation 10, paragraph 2a of the Accounts And Audit Regulations 2015, a notice was published on the Authority website (a link is provided below) stating that the audit had been delayed and that some work remained outstanding.  
  
<https://www.nlwa.gov.uk/ourauthority/financial-statements>
- 2.3. Audit work has continued in the intervening period and the Head of Finance has had regular meetings with the auditors to ensure that the audit is completed, and any issues are resolved. Both the auditors and Authority officers are aiming to have completed the 'fieldwork', the substantive review of documents and records, that would normally be undertaken face-to-face at the Authority's office, by the end of April. At the point of writing this report, no significant issues have been raised and the only amendments relate to the presentation of items in the statements.
- 2.4. The Audit Committee usually meets once a year to approve the statutory accounts. No meeting is currently scheduled to approve the 2019/20 statements. A meeting will be arranged as soon as is reasonably practicable, once the audit report is available.

### **3. TIMETABLE FOR THE PRODUCTION OF THE 2020/21 AND 2021/22 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

- 3.1. The Government has published The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021. The regulations have amended the date that the Responsible Financial Officer – the Authority’s Financial Adviser - must commence the period for the exercise of public rights. This is the date that the accounts must be made publicly available. The date has changed from Tuesday 1 June 2021 to Monday 2 August 2021, an extension of 2 months. This is however, shorter than the extension provided in 2020.
- 3.2. Similarly, the date by which the Authority must approve the accounts, following the audit, has been amended from 31 July to 30 September.
- 3.3. These changes will be taken into consideration when setting the date for the audit committee to review the 2020/21 statement of accounts. The changes to timetable also apply to the preparation of the 2021/22 financial statements.

### **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. The Authority must provide the opportunity for public scrutiny of accounting records as part of the accounts and audit process and the needs of the requestor will be taken onto consideration as part of this process.

### **5. COMMENTS OF THE LEGAL ADVISER**

- 5.1. The Legal Adviser has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no comments to add.

#### **List of documents used:**

The Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus)(Amendment) Regulations 2020

The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021.

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