

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Audit & Corporate Governance Committee **DATE:** 13 December 2018

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WARD(S): All

PART I **INFORMATION**

REVIEW OF CLOSURE OF ACCOUNTS 2017/18

1 Purpose of Report

The 2017/18 Statements of accounts were signed on the 15th November 2018. The statutory deadline was 31 July 2018. The Audit Completion Report submitted by BDO our external auditors outlined the audit matters that had been discovered during the audit. Whilst some of the reasons for the late closure of accounts were due to new audit issues that were not raised until the end of the audit it is clear that whilst some improvements have been and continue to be made there remain some deficiencies in the closure of accounts processes.

The completion report submitted on the 15th November was not significantly different to the report submitted to Audit and Corporate Governance Committee on 18th July 2018.

This report outlines the issues raised in the completion report and shows the steps that have been taken since the end of the 2017/18 closure of accounts to ensure that the deficiencies are removed from future audits.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Committee note the work done to date to improve the closure of accounts process.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

The report indirectly supports all of the strategic priorities and cross cutting themes. The maintenance of good governance within the Council to ensure that it is efficient, effective and economic in everything it does achieve through the improvement of corporate governance and democracy by ensuring effective management practice is in place.

3b **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The report helps achieve the Five Year Plan outcomes by contributing to the Council's financial planning and ensuring the five outcomes are adequately resourced.

4 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

Detailed within the report

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The law relating to Whistleblowing is contained in the Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998)

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no identified need for an EIA arising from this report.

5 **Supporting Information**

5.1 **Background**

5.1.1 The Closure of Accounts process was brought forward this year. The deadline to submit a signed copy of the statement of accounts was 31st May this year compared to 30th June in previous years. Despite the very late closure of the 2016/17 accounts this deadline was met.

5.1.2 In order to achieve this deadline additional resources in terms of both personnel and technology have been brought in to meet both the tight timeframe and also ensure improvements were made in the processes.

5.1.3 A great deal of progress has been made in a short space of time but as we reported back in July 2018 there were undoubtedly going to be areas where further improvement was required for 2018/19 and beyond. I did report then that these items were going to be highlighted in the BDO report but we committed to beginning the 2018/19 closure at that point.

5.1.4 The attached appendices outline the issues raised and the steps we have taken and continue to take to ensure that we learn the lessons from previous audits and make significant progress and improvements moving forward.

7 **Conclusion**

7.1 The progress made to date and the planned programme of work highlighted in the report be noted.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Post Audit Review

Appendix 2 – Review of findings and Recommendations

9. Background Papers

Held within the Finance Department.