

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

2nd February 2018

REPORT AUTHOR: Jane Thomas, Head of Financial Services

SUBJECT: Closure of Accounts

REPORT FOR: Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Committee will be aware that the Statement of Accounts for 2016/17 were issued an unqualified audit opinion by the Auditor General and approved by the Audit Committee on the 22nd September. The accounts were then published on the public website before the statutory deadline of 30th September 2017.
- 1.2 The closure of accounts process and completion of the Statement of Accounts for 2016/17 was delivered under a project management approach. The approach has been adopted for 3 years and has led to continued improvements both to the quality of the draft financial statements and the information available to support them. This was recognised within the ISA260 report presented by Wales Audit Office to Committee on 22nd September 2017.
- 1.3 The project management approach will continue for the 2017-18 closure of accounts and look to build on the improvements made in previous years.

2 Project Update

- 2.1 The project team has met monthly and will continue to do so until March when the frequency of meetings will be reviewed.
- 2.2 Members of the project team and finance staff have fed into the post project review. Project meetings have given consideration to the issues raised and improvements have been built into the plan for 2017-18. The outline project plan was presented at the December team meeting alongside the on-going risk register.
- 2.3 Changes to the Code of Practice are not excessive for 2017-18, in comparison to previous years, and Authorities are being encouraged to review the accounts to make them more accessible. Officers are aiming to eliminate notes, where there is not a statutory requirement to publish and they are not material.
- 2.4 An initial meeting with WAO earlier this month discussed items that could be improved upon from last year and also issues that are on the horizon for 2017-18. These discussions included identifying what can be done early with the intention

of providing information earlier to WAO for auditing. As timescales are brought forward, the audit period between the draft version of the Accounts being issued and being publishing will be reduced by a month.

Proposed statutory dates for the Statement of Accounts

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Draft Version	30 June 18	15 June 19	15 June 20	31 May 21
Published Version	30 Sept 18	15 Sept 19	15 June 20	31 July 21

2.5 Officers feeding back from the Wales Audit Office (WAO) facilitated Early Closing event, which was open to all Welsh Authorities, highlighted common experiences among Authorities in terms of quality assurance, working papers and shared good practice. Improving the quality assurance and working papers, areas highlighted as improved but needing further work in the ISA260, are being incorporated in to the plan especially relating to those notes highlighted in the report.

2.6 The systems team are currently providing housekeeping training to E-procurement users. This should reduce the number of manual adjustments that are required to be entered at the year end. Training on the evidence required to be provided to audit is also scheduled into the plan.

2.7 Officers have booked on CIPFA hosted training days in late January and early February for both the Statement of Accounts and Pension Fund accounts.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
That Audit Committee notes the contents of the report.	To continue the improvement in accounts closure and that the continuing use of project management principles is endorsed for the closure and audit of the 2017/18 accounts.

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