



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

CONSIDERATION OF THE COUNCIL'S UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS, ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT, AND AUDITED ACCOUNTS

REPORT BY HEAD OF FINANCE AND ESTATES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform Council Executive of the provisions of the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014, to seek approval for the proposed arrangements for the consideration of the unaudited accounts, annual governance statement and audited accounts, as set out in section D3 below, and to seek approval for the required changes to the council's Scheme of Administration.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Executive:

- (1) approves the proposed arrangements as set out in section D3 of this report;
- (2) approves the required changes to the council's Scheme of Administration as set out in section D3 of this report.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Being honest, open and accountable. Making best use of our resources.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 set out requirements for the consideration of the council's unaudited accounts, annual governance statement, and audited accounts.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None.
VII Consideration at PDSP	None required.
VIII Other consultations	Committee Services Manager, Audit and Risk Manager, Corporate Finance Manager.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Introduction

The Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations were laid before the Scottish Parliament on 7 July 2014 and come into force from the financial year 2014/15. The regulations include a number of provisions in relation to the consideration of the unaudited accounts, annual governance statement, and audited accounts.

D.2 Requirements

The annual accounts must be submitted to the auditor no later than 30 June immediately following the financial year to which they relate. This is current practice and will continue unchanged.

The Council, or a committee whose remit includes audit or governance, must meet to consider the unaudited annual accounts. The statutory date for this is 31 August however best practice is to do this by 30 June.

The Council, or a committee whose remit includes audit or governance, must approve an annual governance statement. The annual governance statement forms part of the accounts and it would therefore be sensible for it to be approved at the same meeting that considers the unaudited accounts.

The Council, or a committee whose remit includes audit or governance, must meet to consider the audited annual accounts and approve the accounts for signature by 30 September immediately following the financial year to which they relate. Current practice is for Council to meet to consider and note the signed audited accounts. Council also considers the auditor's annual report to members on the audit and refers this to the Audit and Governance Committee, and this practice will continue unchanged.

D3 Proposed Arrangements

It is proposed that the unaudited annual accounts will be considered by the Audit and Governance Committee by 30 June each year following the year to which they relate. At this meeting the Audit and Governance Committee will also be asked to approve the annual governance statement.

The audited annual accounts will be approved for signature by Council by 30 September each year following the year to which they relate.

In accordance with the requirements of the regulations, the proposed arrangements will commence for the 2014/15 annual accounts. The following changes to the council's Scheme of Administration will be required to enable these arrangements to take effect.

West Lothian Council

Remove from section A remit and powers: "to receive the certified abstract of the Council's accounts" and replace with: "to approve the annual audited accounts for signature".

Audit and Governance Committee

Add to section A remit and powers: "to consider the unaudited annual accounts" and "to consider and approve the annual governance statement".

E. CONCLUSION

The proposed arrangements will enhance the council's governance arrangements, and ensure compliance with the provisions of the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Appendices/Attachments: None.

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