

**To:** Council

**On:** 30 September 2021

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**Report by:** Director of Finance & Resources

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**Heading:** Update on Audited Annual Accounts 2020/21

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**1. Summary**

- 1.1 The Council's unaudited Annual Accounts for 2020/21 were presented to the Council on 24 June 2021 and submitted for audit by the statutory deadline of 30 June 2021.
- 1.2 Local flexibility in the timescales for approval of the audited annual accounts has been provided under the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 and this was highlighted in the June report to Council.
- 1.3 The audited Annual Accounts 2020/21 are expected to be completed for approval by 30 November 2021.
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**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Council is asked to:
- (a) note the revised deadline for the Council's audited accounts;
  - (b) agree that the meeting of the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 1 November 2021 be rescheduled to 15 November 2021; and
  - (c) note that a special meeting of the Council will be called on or before 30 November 2021 to approve the audited accounts; or in the event the audit of the accounts is not complete, note that the audited accounts will be presented to the 16 December 2021 Council meeting.
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### 3. **Background**

- 3.1 On 4 March 2021, the Scottish Government published the Local Authority (Capital Finance and Accounting)(Scotland) (Coronavirus) Amendment Regulations 2021, outlining the impact of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2021 on existing statutory regulations for the approval and publication of the annual accounts.
  - 3.2 Under this guidance, the Council must aim to approve the 2020/21 audited accounts for signature no later than 31 October 2021; however, provisions of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 allow a delay to this until a date that is 'reasonably practicable'.
  - 3.3 The Council's appointed auditor, Audit Scotland, considers 30 November to be a reasonably practicable date and have indicated their intention to work towards this date for completion of their audit activity; allowing the audited accounts of the Council and its Group and the associated Annual Audit Report to be authorised and published by 30 November 2021.
  - 3.4 This timescale also applies to the Common Good Funds and Coats Observatory Trust audited accounts and report.
  - 3.5 Under the Council's scheme of delegation, the audited accounts are normally presented to the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board prior to being presented to Council. In order to allow the Council to comply with the revised audit dates, it is proposed that the meeting of the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board scheduled on 1 November 2021 is rescheduled to 15 November 2021 in order to allow sufficient time for completion of the audit process.
  - 3.6 Thereafter, it is proposed that a special meeting of the Council is called on an appropriate date, but no later than 30 November 2021, for the purpose of approving the audited accounts.
  - 3.7 In the event the audit process is not complete within the timescales outlined above, it is proposed that the audited accounts would be presented for approval to the Council meeting scheduled on 16 December 2021.
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## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – approval of the audited accounts is a key step in evidencing good financial governance and allows the Council to comply with national financial regulations.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none arising from this report.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – none arising from this report.
4. **Legal** – the recommendations in the report will allow the Council to comply with the relevant regulations governing the annual accounts approval process.
5. **Property/Assets** – none arising from this report.
6. **Information Technology** – none arising from this report.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** – none arising from this report.
8. **Health & Safety** – none arising from this report.
9. **Procurement** – none arising from this report.
10. **Risk** – none arising from this report.
11. **Privacy Impact** – none arising from this report.
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – none arising from this report.
13. **Climate Risk** – none arising from this report.

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**Author:** Alan Russell, Director of Finance & Resource

**Background Papers:** [The Local Authority \(Capital Finance and Accounting\) \(Scotland\) \(Coronavirus\) Amendment Regulations 2021](#)