

## AUDIT COMMITTEE 28 NOVEMBER 2024

### PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

#### Question from Mr Frank Oldaker:

From the latest draft S106 agreements it is now clear that a start on site will not occur before March 2026 - one year later than planned. This means the council funding of the scheme will inevitably increase which of course has significant implications for the overall council budget. Will an audit of the proposed financing of the scheme take place **before** any approval of the final business case?

#### Response:

The Full Business Case will go through the Council's usual internal channels before it is considered by Council or the DfT. The work of the Internal Audit function is to provide assurance that the Council's processes are operating satisfactorily not to double check individual calculations. External Audit also consider these factors when delivering their Value for Money opinion. In both these cases assurance has been provided on the Council's financial functions and budget processes and this has been reported through to the Audit Committee.

Details of the Internal and External audit work undertaken in relation to the North West Relief Road Project within the last 12 months are as follows:

- The Internal Audit review of the North West Relief Road project was finalised in January 2024. A follow up audit is due to be completed in Q4 2024/25, in line with the target implantation dates given for the recommendations.
- The Executive Director of Place has provided management updates to the Audit Committee in February and September 2024 to outline the steps taken to address the Internal Audit recommendations.
- Our External Auditors, Grant Thornton, have recently completed a review of the NWRR project and a key recommendation is included in the External Auditors report included later on the agenda for this committee in relation to that review. Management responses have been provided for the recommendations indicating the actions the project team intends to take to address them.

The final business case is due to be presented to Council in December 2024, an audit of the funding arrangements will not be undertaken before then as External Audit have already made recommendations in this regard.