

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

Audit of Accounts 2022/23 and Associated Matters

1. Purpose of Report

To approve the letter of representation and the process for the approval of the Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 and to receive the Audit Completion Report from the Council's external auditors following their work on these accounts.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to receive the Audit Completion Report for the year ended 31 March 2023 and RESOLVE that:

- 1. The updated Statement of Accounts 2022/23 and letter of representation as circulated be approved; and**
- 2. Delegation be given to the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Chair of this Committee, to approve any further changes required to the Statement of Accounts 2022/23.**

3. Detail

Further to earlier updates, the Council's appointed external auditors, Forvis Mazars, have almost concluded their work on the Statement of Accounts 2022/23. Forvis Mazars has published its Audit Completion Report, which is included at **Appendix 2**. It is pleasing to report that Forvis Mazars anticipate issuing an unqualified audit opinion on the 2022/23 accounts. A number of changes have been made to the draft accounts which includes figures relating to property valuations and income and expenditure. A brief summary is set out in **Appendix 1**.

The auditors are yet to complete their work in respect of the Value for Money conclusion for the year ended 31 March 2023. At the time of preparing their report, Forvis Mazars has not identified any significant weaknesses in the Council's arrangements that require it to make a recommendation.

The updated Statement of Accounts for 2022/23, including the amendments agreed with the auditors thus far, is included at **Appendix 4**. It is proposed that any further amendments to the accounts be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive to resolve, in conjunction with the Chair of this Committee.

In accordance with the regulations, the Council's letter of representation in respect of the 2022/23 accounts has to be approved by the Committee charged with governance. The draft letter is included at **Appendix 3**.

A representative from Forvis Mazars will be available at the meeting to introduce the Audit Completion Report and respond to any enquiries.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer were as follows:

The legislation in the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015) sets out the timescales for the production of the Council's accounts, including the dates of the public inspection period. The Statement of Accounts must be published by that date or as soon as reasonably practicable after the receipt of the auditor's final findings.

Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires the Council to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers (the Deputy Chief Executive) has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs, which include responsibility for preparing the Council's statement of accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

The Statement of Accounts is that upon which the auditor should enter his certificate and opinion which is prepared under the Local Government Finance Act 2003.

6. Human Resources Implications

Not applicable.

7. Union Comments

Not applicable.

8. Climate Change Implications

There are no climate change implications contained within the report.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

As there is no change to policy an equality impact assessment is not required.

11. Background Papers

Nil.