

AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 30th May, 2023
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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Present:	Councillor Paul Waring (Chair)		
Councillors:	Holland	Stubbs	Butters
Apologies:	Councillor(s) Burnett-Faulkner, Whieldon, Brockie and Talbot		
Substitutes:	Deputy Mayor - Councillor Barry Panter		
Officers:	Daniel Dickinson	Service Director - Legal & Governance /Monitoring Officer	
	Sarah Wilkes	Service Director - Finance / S151 Officer	
	Craig Turner	Finance Manager	
Also in attendance:	Councillor Stephen Sweeney	Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth	

1. **APOLOGIES**

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th April 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **PROPOSED ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

The Finance Manager (Deputy S151 Officer) introduced the proposed accounting policies to be applied in the production and presentation of the statement of accounts.

As required by the Code of Practice assumptions about the future and any critical judgments made in applying the accounting policies were to be disclosed as a note to the statement of accounts along with other major sources of estimated uncertainty. These could be viewed in the report's appendices.

Members asked questions and responses were provided as follows:

- Were the policies based on good practices, a set of legal requirements, or both? – The policies were based on the Code of Practice, the Accounts and

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Audit Regulations 2015 and the Local Government Act section 151 relevant to financial administration.

- Given that the proposed policies applied in preparing the 2022-23 accounts, was the committee asked to approve them retrospectively rather than in advance? – The finance team had been guided by the set of rules and practices referred to above and changes in those had been identified; the policies were an up to date version of the guidance used.

Resolved:

1. That the proposed Accounting Policies that would form part of the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts be approved.
2. That the Council's assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty that would form part of the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts be approved.
3. That the ability to make further changes to the proposed Accounting Policies to reflect the release of new or updated guidance if applicable be delegated to the Service Director for Finance (Section 151 Officer).

[Watch the debate here](#)

5. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022/23

The Service Director for Finance (S151 Officer) presented the report relating to the Annual Governance Statement for the year 2022-23 to be approved and included with the statements of accounts under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Continuous improvement was sought and the team was currently working on a Project Register that would gather capital and revenue projects all in one place with links to corporate priorities and information such as project owner, start dates and source of funding. This would be a complete guide to everything the Council was working on and would help with governance.

Questions were asked and responses were provided as follows:

- Would the register be made available to the relevant scrutiny committee? – Indeed committee members would be able to view the register.
- What was the good governance framework referred to in paragraph 2.1? – The framework was a self-assessment tool providing feedback on executive leadership approaches.

Resolved: That the Committee approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23.

[Watch the debate here](#)

6. DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Finance Manager (Deputy S151 Officer) presented the draft Statement of Accounts to be published by the 1st of June. The external audit would then be carried out and completed by the 11th September meeting.

The Chair expressed his satisfaction and wished to thank the finance team for the excellent job done to get the accounts ready despite shorter deadlines.

The difference between usable and unusable reserve was also clarified in response to a question from a member, unusable reserve being unavailable to spend over the course of the financial year.

Resolved:

1. That the General Fund outturn and key issues in respect of the Council's financial position as at 31 March 2023 be noted.
2. That the draft Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 be approved for publication and audit.

[Watch the debate here](#)

7. UPDATED FINANCE AND CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

The Service Director for Legal & Governance presented the Updated Finance and Contract Procedure Rules previously submitted to the Council.

The Deputy Leader complimented the legal team on the quality and the readability of the document.

Resolved: That the new Finance and Contract Procedure Rules as set out in the appendix be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

8. WORK PROGRAMME

Resolved: That the work programme be noted.

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9. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

**Councillor Paul Waring
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 7.21 pm