

Meeting:	Audit & Governance Committee
Meeting date:	31/07/2024
Report of:	Director of Finance (S151 Officer)
Portfolio of:	Councillors Lomas and Baxter (job-share), Executive Members for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion

Audit and Governance Committee Report: Statement of Accounts 2023/24

Subject of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present for information the draft 2023/24 Statement of Accounts before they are audited.

Policy Basis

2. The production of the Council's statement of accounts results from all of the council's business processes and helps support the administration's key commitments and priorities as outlined in the Council Plan 2023-2027.

Recommendation and Reasons

3. Audit & Governance Committee note the draft pre-audit statement of accounts, for the financial year ended 31 March 2024.

Reason: To ensure that, in line with best practice, Members have had the opportunity to review the draft pre-audit Statement of Accounts.

Background

4. The Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015) requires Local Authorities to publish draft Accounts by 31st May. Due to delays in prior year audits the majority of Local Authorities across the country signalled they would not meet this earlier deadline. At York Council, our draft Accounts were published on 7th June and were available for inspection on 10th June.
5. The Council has to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts and present them to Audit & Governance Committee. Members are not being asked, at this stage, to approve these draft pre-audit accounts. The Chief Financial Officer has signed the draft accounts, and the audited accounts will be brought back to this Committee later in the year for approval on behalf of the Council.
6. Following the authorisation of the Chief Finance office, the accounts have been available for public inspection for a period of 30 working days from 10th June until 19th July. During this period local government electors for the area are able to exercise their rights to question the auditor about the accounts. At the time of writing, 47 questions about the accounts had been received from 3 local residents.
7. Mazars are the Council's external auditors and they expect to issue a report and opinion by the end of November 2024.
8. The pre-audit Statement of Accounts 2023/24 has been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK and is produced in line with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) which are the accounting standards used across the world making Local Authorities' Accounts more comparable with the private sector and worldwide.
9. The first section of the accounts (the Narrative Report) explains the main information included in the accounts, gives an overview of the Council and provides further information about the most significant matters reported in the accounts, along with an analysis of the pressures and risks that may impact on future financial performance.

10. The accounts also include the Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS), following the annual review of the governance framework and processes. Any significant control issues are identified within the AGS.

Conclusion

11. The production and publication of the statement of accounts is a statutory requirement that provides members and interested parties with the chance to see the full financial position of the Council.
12. Bringing the statement of accounts to audit & governance provides an opportunity for Member led debate and compliance with defined best practice. It is an important part of member involvement in corporate governance that scrutiny is undertaken of the Council's accounts.

Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this Report.

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Report approved:	Yes
Date:	11/07/2024

Annexes

A – Explanation of core statements

B – Draft Statement of Accounts 2022/23

Abbreviations used in this report:

IFRS – International Financial Reporting Standards

CIPFA – Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

IAS - International Accounting Standard

AGS – Annual Governance Statement