

10 January 2024**Agenda Item: 8****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – FINANCE, INFRASTRUCTURE
AND IMPROVEMENT****STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2022/23****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval for Committee to delegate responsibility to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Governance and Ethics Committee, to approve the Statement of Accounts 2022/23 on completion of all external audit work.

Statement of Accounts 2022/23

2. The deadline for publishing the draft Statement of Accounts 2022/23 was 31 May 2023. Nottinghamshire County Council's and Nottinghamshire Pension Fund's Statement of Accounts 2022/23 were published onto the Council's website on 31 May 2023. Less than a third of local authorities achieved this draft account publication deadline.
3. The deadline for publishing the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts with the auditor's opinion was 30 September 2023. Due to widely acknowledged difficulties being experienced in the Local Authority audit sector however, the Authority's Statement of Accounts were not able to be approved by this target date. In fact, only 1% of all local government bodies received an auditor's opinion by the target date.
4. The Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton, are continuing with their audit work and it is expected that the Statement of Accounts 2022/23 will be in a position to be signed off by the end of January 2024. In an effort to get the accounts signed off at the earliest possible convenience, and not wait until the next Committee meeting at the end of February, it is proposed that the responsibility to approve the audited Statement of Accounts 2022/23 is delegated to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Governance and Ethics Committee. Also, at that stage, the Audited Statement of Accounts 2022/23 will be published in the Council's website.

Audit Results

5. The statutory audit of the Statement of Accounts 2022/23 is being undertaken by Grant Thornton. At the time of this Committee report's publication, the external auditors are continuing with their audit work. It is expected that Andrew Smith (Director – Grant Thornton) will provide a verbal update on their progress to date at this Committee meeting.

6. It is expected that the Audit Findings Report 2022/23 will be presented to Committee in February 2024.
7. The statement of accounts is one of the key documents prepared by the Council to demonstrate good governance and value for money. This provides information about the County Council's financial position, performance and cash flows and consequently, shows the results of the stewardship and accountability of elected members and management for the resources entrusted to them, which is of paramount importance in the use of public funds.

Statutory and Policy Implications

8. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

9. That the Committee delegates responsibility to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of Governance and Ethics Committee, to approve the Statement of Accounts 2022/23 on completion of all external audit work.

Nigel Stevenson

Service Director – Finance, Infrastructure and Improvement

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Nigel Stevenson

Service Director (Finance, Infrastructure and Improvement)

Constitutional Comments (GR 21/12/2023)

10. Pursuant to the Nottinghamshire County Council Constitution this Committee has the delegated authority to receive this report and make the recommendation contained within it

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All