

Bolsover District Council

**Meeting of the Audit Committee
on 26th September 2024**

Statement of Accounts 2023/24

Report of the Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer

Classification	This report is public
Contact Officer	Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer Theresa Fletcher

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

To update the Committee on the latest position regarding Local Audit Delays.

To present for the Committee's approval, the draft (unaudited) Statement of Accounts for 2023/24, circulated as **Appendix 1**.

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

Update to the Local Audit Delays

- 1.1 Members may recall that at the March 2024 Audit Committee, I gave a report on 'Local audit delays – consultation and proposals for the future.' The proposals within the report were dependent on legislation being passed. The timing of the general election meant the legislation didn't get taken through parliament.
- 1.2 On the 30th of July, a letter was received from Government advising of an intention to lay secondary legislation when parliamentary time allows, to provide an initial backstop date of 13th December 2024 for financial years up to and including 2022/23, this is a change from the original proposal which was 30th of September 2024. As I mentioned in the March report, this doesn't affect us as our 2022/23 accounts have already been audited and signed off by our auditors.
- 1.3 The backstop date for last financial year 2023/24, has been changed to 27th of February 2025, rather than 31st of May 2025, and for the financial year 2024/25 it has changed from 31st of March 2026 to 27th of February 2026. I am hopeful that this means our 2023/24 accounts will be audited and signed off by our auditors before the end of this current financial year.

- 1.4 In addition, subject to parliamentary approval, for financial years 2024/25 to 2027/28, the date by which we have to publish our draft (unaudited) accounts will change from 31st of May to 30th of June each year.

2023/24 Outturn

- 1.5 The outturn position for the Council for 2023/24 was reported to Members at the Finance and Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee and Executive, during July 2024.
- 1.6 In summary, there was a net under spend on general fund of £1.281m. This was made up of a net under spend of expenditure and the over achievement of income.
- 1.7 The position on the HRA was a net cost of services under spend of £0.222m, adjusting to £0.007m under spend after interest and depreciation were taken into account.

2023/24 Statement of Accounts

- 1.8 **Appendix 1** to this report is the Council's draft (unaudited) Statement of Accounts for 2023/24. Due to circumstances outside of our control, the statutory deadline for publishing our draft accounts of 31st of May 2024, was missed this year. External information was finally received at the end of June, and the draft (unaudited) Statement of Accounts was published on the 3rd of July.
- 1.9 Our external auditors Forvis Mazars are due to start our 2023/24 audit at the beginning of October. It is therefore possible that changes to the attached Statement of Accounts will be requested.
- 1.10 Given the possibility that issues raised may require the Statement of Accounts to be amended, it is recommended that delegated powers be given to the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Chair or Deputy Chair of this Committee to agree any final changes to the Council's Statement of Accounts 2023/24. It should be noted that the only changes made under these delegated powers will relate to amendments agreed with the Council's external auditors Forvis Mazars.

2. Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The external audit process for 2023/24 is due to commence at the beginning of October 2024. It is anticipated that the outcome of the audit will be reported to those charged with governance by the external auditor in the first months of 2025.

3 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 3.1 There are no alternative options for consideration.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Committee approves the Statement of Accounts in respect of 2023/24.

2. That delegated powers are granted to the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Chair or Deputy Chair of this Committee to agree any changes agreed with the Council's external auditors Forvis Mazars, which may be necessary to ensure the completion of the Statement of Accounts by 27th of February 2025.

Approved by the Portfolio Holder - Cllr Clive Moesby, Executive Member for Resources

IMPLICATIONS.

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details:

There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details:

The process has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. It should be noted that the Council is required to complete and approve the audited Statement of Accounts by the end of July under normal circumstances, but the deadline has been extended as discussed within the report.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Environment:

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.

Details:

Not applicable to this report.

Staffing: Yes No

Details:

There are no human resource issues arising directly out of this report.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards, or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p>Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	No
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p>	No

<p>District Wards Significantly Affected</p>	All
<p>Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	Details:

<p>Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, and Environment.</p>

DOCUMENT INFORMATION	
Appendix No	Title
1	Bolsover District Council – Draft (unaudited) Statement of Accounts 2023/24

<p>Background Papers</p>
<p><i>(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive you must provide copies of the background papers).</i></p>
<p>None</p>