

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
AUDIT COMMITTEE – 24<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2017  
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT AND  
CULTURAL SERVICES)

**2016/17 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

**1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2016/17 is presented for approval by this committee following conclusion of the external audit.
- 1.2 The key changes to the accounting policies for the 2016/17 accounts were reported at the last committee and that a briefing on the Statement of Accounts was delivered to Members on 18 July 2017.
- 1.3 The contents of the accounts are largely determined by statutory requirements and mandatory professional standards as set out within The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (The Code) and the Service Reporting Code of Practice (SeRCOP) published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).
- 1.4 Overall the production of the accounts and final audit work has gone very well and that the 2016/17 accounts are presented with an unqualified opinion with no material changes to the accounts.
- 1.5 It is acknowledged that the Council is one of the first authorities in the country to conclude its audit process and present the final Statement of Accounts to the Audit committee for approval during July.
- 1.6 As previously reported to this committee, the statutory deadline for closure of the 2017/18 accounts will be brought forward by 2 months. For the 2017/18 accounts, the draft statement of accounts will need to be signed off by the S151 Officer by the end of May and the Audit Committee will need to approve the final audited accounts by the end of July. It is pleased to note that this timetable has been met a year earlier.

**2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That the Committee approve the audited Statement of Accounts for 2016/17 and the accounting policies within it, Appendix A, and the Chairman of this committee signs the Statement as approval.
- 2.2 That the Committee approves the letter of representation as set out in Appendix B and the S151 Officer as well as the Chairman signs the letter.

**Implications**

**3 Financial Implication(s)**

3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### **4 Link to Corporate Priorities**

4.1 I confirm that the subject of this report is linked to a statutory requirement, under Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

#### **5 Legal Implication(s)**

5.1 The Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) has the powers within the Council's financial procedure rules to amend and update the accounting policies; the role of the Audit Committee is to consider and approve the Council's Statement of Accounts.

5.2 There is a statutory requirement to publish the approved and audited Statement of Accounts by 30 September. However as outlined in paragraph 1.6, this timetable will be brought forward by 2 months from next year.

#### **6 Climate Change Implication(s)**

6.1 None

#### **7 Risk Management Implications**

7.1 There is a risk that the Statement of Accounts fails to meet regulatory and professional standards or timetables. The potential impacts include qualification of the Statement of Accounts and/or balances on accounts may be uncertain. Members should note that effective controls have been put in place (e.g. staff training) to minimise the likelihood of occurrence.

#### **8 Equality and Diversity**

8.1 There are no specific equalities issues. The Statement is made widely available and accessible

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Date                                      14<sup>th</sup> July 2017

#### **Background papers**

CIPFA – Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom  
(Guidance Notes for Practitioners 2016/17 Accounts)

CIPFA – Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2016/17

CIPFA SERCOP 2016/17 - Service Reporting Code of Practice

#### **List of Appendices**

Appendix A - Statement of Accounts 2016/17  
Appendix B - Letter of Representation