



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Audit and Governance Committee

23 November 2020

Report Title:	Approval of the Statement of Accounts
Cabinet Portfolio	Finance and Governance
Cabinet Member	Councillor Martin Bond
Exempt Report	No
Reason for Exemption	N/A
Key Decision	No
Public Notice issued	N/A
Wards Affected	All Wards
Report of	Cath Fogarty Executive Director of Corporate Services cathfogarty@sthelens.gov.uk 01744 673202
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Borough priorities

Please mark **X**

Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	
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for any priority supported by this report NB Use Section 4 - Background Information to explain how each selected priority is supported	Promote good health, independence and care across our communities	
	Create safe and strong communities for our residents	
	Support a strong, diverse and well-connected local economy	
	Create a green, thriving and vibrant place to be proud of	
	Be a modern, efficient and effective Council	X

1. Summary

- 1.1 To provide an update note in relation to the Council's Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2019-2020 and note the requirement for formal approval to be considered at a further meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee.

2. Recommendations for Decision

Members are requested to note the current position in relation to the Council's Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2019-2020, which remains subject to the completion of the audit process and provision of the Audit Findings Report final audit opinion.

3. Purpose of this Report

- 3.1 The production of the Council's Statement of Accounts is a statutory requirement. This report provides reports members with an update in relation to the Council's Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2019-2020 and the process for approval.

4. Background / Reasons for the recommendations

4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 prescribe the statutory arrangements and deadlines for the production and approval of local authority statement of accounts. The deadlines are such that the responsible financial officer must, no later than 31 May immediately following the end of a year, sign and date the Statement of Accounts, and certify that it 'presents a true and fair view' of the financial position of the body at the end of the year to which it relates and of that body's income and expenditure for that year.

Thereafter, no later than 31 July in the year immediately following the end of the year to which the Statement of Accounts relates, the Council must:-

- (i) consider the Statement of Accounts;
 - (ii) following that consideration, approve the Statement of Accounts by way of resolution;
- and

(iii) following approval, ensure that the Statement of Accounts is signed, dated and published, together with any certificate, opinion or report issued, given or made by its Auditor.

- 4.1.2 Due to the unprecedented nature of the Covid-19 crisis, emergency legislation was passed in April 2020 to extend the timetable for local authorities to prepare their draft 2019-2020 Statement of Accounts to 31 August 2020, and the deadline for the publication of Statements of Accounts, together with any certificate or opinion of the appointed auditor, to 30 November 2020.
- 4.1.3 The preceding item on the agenda reported that whilst Grant Thornton, as the Council's appointed external auditors have substantially completed their audit of the financial statements, they have advised that there are a number of matters that remain as outstanding which would prevent them from finalising the Audit Findings Report and subsequently providing their certificate or opinion at this point in time. That report also advised that, as such, it will be necessary for an additional meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee to be scheduled to receive and consider a final Audit Findings Report.
- 4.1.4 It follows that formal member approval of the Council's 2019-2020 Statement of Accounts will need to be considered at the additional meeting.
- 4.1.5 For member consideration, the current draft Statement of Accounts, incorporating all matters raised in the current draft Audit Findings report (as per the previous item on the Committee agenda) are provided at Appendix A. No material adjusting items have been identified as part of the audit to date.
- 4.1.6 For information, work on a presentational version of the (to be) published Statement of Accounts is ongoing in readiness for that publication.

5. Community Impact Assessment

- 5.1 The Community Impact Assessment identified no specific key implications.

6. Consideration of Alternatives

- 6.1 None.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Approval of the 2019-2020 Council's Statement of Accounts will be sought at an additional meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee.

8. Implications

8.1 Legal Implications

- 8.1.1 The production of the Council's Statement of Accounts is a statutory requirement.

8.2 Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications

8.2.1 Social Value

8.2.1.1 N/A

8.2.2 Sustainability and Environment

8.2.2.1 N/A

8.2.3 Health and Wellbeing

8.2.3.1 N/A

8.2.4 Equality and Human Rights

8.2.4.1 N/A

8.3 Customers and Resident

8.3.1 The Statement of Accounts reports the Council's financial position and income and expenditure for the financial year 2019-2020.

8.4 Asset and Property

8.4.1 N/A

8.5 Staffing and Human Resource

8.5.1 None

8.6 Risks

8.6.1 None

8.7 Finance

8.7.1 None

8.8 Policy Framework Implications

8.8.1 None

9. Background papers

9.1 None

10. Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Statement of Accounts 2019-2020