

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit and Procurement Committee held at 2.30 pm
on Monday, 17 February 2025

Present:

Members: Councillor R Lakha (Chair)
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor A Hopkins
Councillor A Jobbar
Councillor P Male
Councillor B Singh (Deputy Chair)

Employees
(by Service Area):

Finance and Resources B Hastie (Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer), P Baggott, P Helm, T Pinks, K Tyler

Law and Governance M Salmon

Apologies: Councillor M Ali

Public Business

53. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

54. Disclaimed 2023-24 Statement of Accounts

The Audit and Procurement Committee considered a report of the Director of Finance and Resources (Section 151 Officer) that sought approval for the disclaimed 2023/24 Statement of Accounts. Appendices to the report provided: the Coventry City Council's Statement of Accounts 2023-24; the External Auditor, Grant Thornton, Audit Findings Report 2023-24 for Coventry City Council; and the Draft Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Coventry City Council 2023-24.

In 2024, the Government passed legislation designed to address the backlog in the completion of local authority accounts. This legislation specified 'backstop' deadlines for the completion of audit work relating to particular financial years. The deadline for the Statement of Accounts 2023/24 was set as 28th February 2025. In the event of uncompleted audits, auditors would be required to issue either qualified opinions or disclaimers, as appropriate.

As a result of significant delays in the completion of the audit of the 2019/20 accounts, and subsequent disclaimed audits of the 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 accounts which were published on 10th December 2024 in line with specified backstop dates for these years, the draft Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 was published on 29th November 2024.

Grant Thornton provided an Audit Findings Report for the work carried out on the audit of 2023/24 accounts since 1st December 2024. They had also drafted disclaimed opinions for 2023/24 and proposed 'management letters of representation' for the Council to review.

The Audit and Procurement Committee was approving these accounts for publication on the Council's behalf. This followed an extension to the period of audit by Grant Thornton beyond the Council's initial deadline to complete and authorise the Statement of Accounts by the end of July 2025.

Members asked questions and received assurances at the meeting from officers and the external auditor, Grant Thornton, who attended the meeting, on matters that included: donations of heritage assets; group reserves adjustment due to a reclassification; disclosure issues; inclusion of pension strain figures in accounts; UKBIC – contingent liability; further detailed work on schools income and expenditure; IT audit findings; valuation of long-term investments; external auditors fee for 2023/24; and disclaimer requirement.

The Chair thanked the Council's finance officers and Grant Thornton for their positive working relationship and the hard work undertaken to address the completion of the 2023/24 accounts.

RESOLVED that the Audit and Procurement Committee:

- 1) Notes the details presented in the 2023/24 Audit Findings Report.**
- 2) Accepts the disclaimed opinions provided by the external auditor in relation to the 2023/24 accounts.**
- 3) Grants authorisation for the requested letter of representation for 2023/24, to be signed and returned to the external auditors.**

55. **Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.20pm)