



AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Tuesday 22 September 2020

SUFFOLK COASTAL DISTRICT COUNCIL AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2018/19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Council's Chief Finance Officer to sign the Accounts by no later than 31st May following the end of the financial year, certifying that they "present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at 31st March 2019 and of its income and expenditure for the year ending on that date".
2. The external auditors try to issue their audit opinion by 31st July. However, the audit of accounts was not completed by 31st July 2019, because of lack of external audit resources and staff turnover. Completion was then further delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council has put out a notice of late publication of the audited accounts on its website to this effect.
3. The audit work has now been concluded, and EY are finalising their Partner review before issuing an unqualified audit opinion on the Suffolk Coastal 2018/19 Statement of Accounts. The issue of the Value for Money opinion for the year has been delayed as result of an objection to the accounts which is yet to be concluded.
4. The Audit & Governance Committee is requested to approve the Suffolk Coastal District Council Audited Statement of Accounts for 2018/19.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
Wards Affected:	All Wards in East Suffolk
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Maurice Cook Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources
Supporting Officer:	Simon Taylor Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer 01394 444570 simon.taylor@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Council's Chief Finance Officer to sign the Accounts by no later than 31st May following the end of the financial year, certifying that they "present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at 31st March 2019 and of its income and expenditure for the year ending on that date".
- 1.2 The Council's accounts for the year ended 31st March 2019 have been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2018/19 (the Code) issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). In England and Wales, the local authority Code constitutes "proper accounting practice" under the terms of section 21(2) of the Local Government Act 2003
- 1.3 The audit of accounts was not completed by 31st July 2019, because of lack of external audit resources and staff turnover. Completion was then further delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council has put out a notice of late publication of the audited accounts on its website to this effect
- 1.4 The audit work has now been concluded, and EY are finalising their Partner review before issuing an unqualified audit opinion on the Suffolk Coastal 2018/19 Statement of Accounts. The issue of the Value for Money opinion for the year has been delayed as result of an objection to the accounts which is yet to be concluded.

2 SUFFOLK COASTAL DC FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2018/19

- 2.1 Cabinet on 8th July 2019 received a Draft Outturn report providing an overview of the Council's financial performance for 2018/19 in respect of the General Fund, reserves, the capital programme and the Collection Fund.
- 2.2 Key financial information to highlight from the Draft Outturn report was:
 - The General Fund outturn position was a surplus of £639k and this was transferred to the in-year savings reserve, in addition to a planned transfer of £1.3m.
 - The total balance on the Council's General Fund earmarked reserves was increased by £2.4m to £33.1m and the General Fund balance was maintained at £4m.
 - The 2018/19 capital programme expenditure for the General Fund was £6.7m. The programme was underspent by £2.2m, mainly due to rephrasing of projects to 2019/20.

3 AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2018/19

- 3.1 The Suffolk Coastal Audited Statement of Accounts 2018/19 is attached as Appendix A.

4 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK STRATEGIC PLAN?

- 4.1 The publication of Audited Statement of Accounts is a statutory requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The Statement of Accounts demonstrates the Council's governance and value for money,

helping to achieve the critical success factors and planned actions set out in the Strategic Plan, and the audit process provides external assurance of this.

5 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Included in Sections 2 and 3.

6 OTHER KEY ISSUES

6.1 None.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 None.

8 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

8.1 The consideration and approval of the Statement of Accounts is a statutory requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	That the Committee review and approve the Suffolk Coastal DC Audited Statement of Accounts for 2018/19.
2.	That should any further minor amendments be required the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee, be given delegated authority to make these changes.

APPENDICES	
Appendix A	Suffolk Coastal DC Audited Statement of Accounts for 2018/19

BACKGROUND PAPERS - none
