



**Governance and Audit
Committee**

21th January 2025

Subject: Audited Statement of Accounts 2023/24

Report by:

Director of Corporate Services (S151)

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

The 2023/24 Statement of Accounts are presented for Scrutiny and adoption.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1) That Members review the attached Statement of Accounts and confirm that there are no concerns arising from the Financial Statements that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.**
- 2) That Members approve the Statement of Accounts for 2023/24.**
- 3) That Governance & Audit Committee permit the Section 151 Officer and the Chairman of this Committee to certify the letter of representation to our Auditor, KPMG.**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None Arising from this report

Financial: FIN/67/25/PD

The audited Statements of Accounts 2023/24 has been prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices and the requirements of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). This is intended to provide for comparable accounts across all accounting boundaries, public and private, national and international.

The Actual Outturn for 2023/24 reported a surplus of £1.004m, of which £0.813m relates to budget provision for projects which have approval for carry forward as they span financial years. This leaves a £0.191m surplus which has been transferred to reserves.

Capital Investment in the year totalled £5.303m.

In respect of Usable Reserves, the Council remains in a healthy position with balances detailed below:

- General Fund working balance totals £3.402m, (£4.682m 2022/23)
- General Fund Earmarked reserves total £20.047m, (£19.340m 2022/23)
- Capital receipts total £1.460m (£1.117m 2022/23)
- Capital Grants unapplied £3.577m (£3.018m 2022/23)

A number of financial performance ratios are contained within the report which illustrate that the Council remains in a healthy financial position.

Staffing: None arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights: None arising from this report.

Data Protection Implications: None arising from this report.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities: None arising from this report.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations: None arising from this report.

Health Implications: None arising from this report

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Code of Practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24.

Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom – Guidance notes for practitioners 2023/24 Accounts.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015.

Papers are located in the Financial Services section, Guildhall.

Risk Assessment:

None arising from this report

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e., is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

X

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

X

No

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 (Appendix A) has been prepared under the International Financial Reporting Standards based Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (the Code).

Following the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 the Council's Draft Statement of Accounts (subject to audit) must be certified by the Chief Finance Officer and published before the 31 May. Following completion of the external audit the Council must formally approve the accounts before the 31 July. However, due to a change in the regulations for 2023/24, the audited accounts must be published by 28 February 2025.

- 1.2 The Committee is therefore presented with the Audited Statement of Accounts, which was approved for issue to the Auditor, KPMG, by the Director of Corporate Services (S151 Chief Finance Officer) on 31 May 2024.

- 1.4 This Committee is responsible for the approval of the Statement of Accounts and any material amendments recommended by the external auditors.

- 1.5 Members of the Governance and Audit Committee have been provided with specific training on the Statement of Accounts to enable them to meet these requirements.

- 1.6 The Statement of Accounts has been combined with the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) as in previous years whereby the Council publishes one document, clearly identifying that these are separate statements.

- 1.7 The External Auditor (KPMG) commenced their audit 1st July 2024 and have now concluded their audit. There was one adjusted misstatement that had been picked up by the Council's finance team as part of their due diligence work of £76k relating to Housing Benefits which has now been adjusted for in the financial statements on the grounds of materiality. The auditors have identified two changes which have been made to the draft accounts. The first being a change in asset valuations due to pieces of land being redesignated in the local plan. The second being a change in pension fund valuation due to the use of 'an asset ceiling' in an updated report from the actuary. There is a separate report on this agenda in relation to the External Audit Completion Report – ISA 260 which provides further details on these items.

- 1.8 Whilst the Statement of Accounts, has been available for inspection by the electorate from 3rd June 2024 to 12th July 2024 no such requests have been made.

2 Financial Performance Indicators 2023/24

- 2.1 Taking information from the main Statements within the Accounts i.e., the Income and Expenditure Account, the Movement in Reserves and the Balance Sheet, the following financial performance indicators have been derived and are provided in the table below, providing a view of the Council's financial stability and health.

RATIOS

Performance Indicators	2022/23	2023/24
Liquidity Ratio	1.24%	1.28%
<i>A ratio of above 1 indicates the Council can meet its short-term obligations</i>		
Working Capital (net current assets) £000's	4.088	5.323
<i>The difference between current assets and current liabilities. Indicating the Council has sufficient current assets to meet its current liabilities</i>		
Working Capital (as a percentage of Actual Net Revenue Expenditure)	27.12%	31.84%
<i>Working Capital as a percentage of Actual Net Revenue Expenditure shows if the Council has adequate net current assets to enable continued operations should the need arise</i>		
General Fund and Earmarked Reserves as % of Actual Net Revenue Expenditure	1.59%	1.41%
<i>This indicator measures the level which the Council could continue to operate without using grant and tax income by utilising its reserves. It should be noted that reserves are set aside to mitigate risks and fund investments. If the use of reserves were to be used to support the revenue budget this would significantly impact on the Council's ability to deliver its corporate plan.</i>		
Total Liabilities as a % of Total Assets	50.26%	42.49%
<i>This indicator provides assurance the Council can meet all its liabilities from its assets</i>		
Percentage movement in Net Pension Fund Liability	-356.03%	15.41%
<i>The ratio reflects the movement increase/(decrease) in pension liability. The movement reflects changes in the actuarial assumptions of such factors as expected rate of return on investments, mortality, future inflation (including pay awards and pension increases). This can have a significant impact on the balance sheet.</i>		
Pension Fund Liabilities as a % of Actual Net Revenue Expenditure	-58.34%	62.51%
<i>Whilst the Pension Liability may not be of an immediate concern it does have an impact on the level of contributions the Council is required to make to repay the pension deficit.</i>		
Percentage change in Council Tax Base	2.93%	2.08%
<i>1% growth in the Tax Base generates approximately £77,000</i>		

- 2.2 The Council remains in a healthy position with good levels of reserves and the ability to meet its liabilities. The pension fund is not a concern as the deficit level has reduced significantly over the last two years.

3 The Statement of Accounts

The Audited Statement of Accounts 2023/24 is attached at Appendix A. The main elements of which are detailed below.

3.1 Expenditure Funding and Analysis (Note 7 to the accounts)

This is a statement which details the net expenditure utilised by our service Clusters which (chargeable to the General Fund) when added to the statutory accounting adjustments i.e., capital charges, pensions. This then reconciles to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account.

3.2 Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES)

This Statement records the day-to-day expenditure incurred in providing services and includes salaries and wages, other running costs and financing costs and income due from fees and charges and government grants. This statement also shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, but such “accounting costs” do not form part of the amount required to be raised through Council Tax. In 2023/24 there was a surplus on the Provision of Services totalling £2.519m (£1.841m surplus in 2022/23).

3.3 Movement in Reserves Statement (MIRS)

This Statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Council, analysed into ‘usable reserves’ (i.e., those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other reserves. The (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services line shows the true economic cost of providing the Council’s services, more details of which are shown in the CIES. These are different from the statutory amounts required to be charged to the General Fund Balance for Council Tax setting.

The Councils usable reserves total £28.486m (£28.157m 2022/23).

3.4 Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Council. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Council. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e., those reserves that the Council may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the Capital

Receipts Reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt). Usable Reserves total £28.486m (£28.157m 2022/23). The second category of reserves is those that the Council is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the MIRS Statement line 'Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations.' Unusable Reserves total a surplus of £13.948m (surplus of £15.685m 2022/23) which gives a net balance sheet position of £42.434m, (usable reserves exceed unusable reserves).

3.5 **Cash Flow Statement**

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities.

The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Council are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Council. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Council's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e., borrowing) to the Council. There has been an overall increase in cash of £2.561m (decrease of £1.344m 2022/23).

3.6 **Notes to the Accounts**

The Notes to the Accounts include additional information including the accounting policies, material items of income and expense and explanations of elements contained within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet.

3.7 **Other Financial Statements**

The Collection Fund is a statutory fund set up under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. It includes the transactions of the charging Authority in relation to Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax and illustrates the way in which the fund balance is distributed to preceptors and the General Fund.

4 Going Concern

4.1 This is to confirm that in publishing the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts, Management has assessed the Going Concern for West Lindsey District Council and have not identified any material uncertainty which prevent us from applying this principle.

4.2 The main factors underpinning this assessment are.

- The Council's current financial position – the Council has delivered a balanced revenue outturn position for 2023/24 and has maintained adequate levels of reserves, which meet the minimum risk assessed level.
- The Council's projected financial position – the Council set a balanced budget for 2023/24 with the requirement to deliver ongoing efficiency savings over the medium term. The Council is developing a Programme to achieve the required savings and this is subject to ongoing review and development to ensure that required savings are delivered. The council has developed a number of financial resilience indicators which demonstrate that over the medium term the Council has enough resources to mitigate any projected deficits over the medium term.
- The Chief Finance Officer has made a formal statement on the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves, as contained within the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- The Council's cash flows are managed on a regular basis to ensure that there are enough funds to meet its financial commitments. The Council has adequate financial resources to meet its immediate financial obligations. The Council could access additional financing from the UK Debt Management Office, should it be required.
- The Council's Governance Arrangements – there is a robust governance framework in place which includes the statutory elements such as the Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer, and the Section 151 officer in addition to the current political arrangements (see the AGS)
- The external regulatory and control environment – Local authorities operate in a highly legislated and controlled environment. In addition to the legal framework and central government controls, there are factors such as the role of the external auditor and compliance with best practice such as that published by CIPFA. The provisions in the Code on the going concern requirements reflect the economic and statutory environment in which local authorities operate. These provisions confirm that, as authorities cannot be created or dissolved without statutory prescription, it would

not be appropriate for their financial statements to be prepared on anything other than a going concern basis.

5 Amendments to the Statement of Accounts since 31 May 2024.

- 5.1 The auditors have identified two changes which have been made to the draft accounts. The first being a change in asset valuations due to pieces of land being redesignated in the local plan. The second being a change in pension fund valuation due to the use of 'an asset ceiling' in an updated report from the actuary.
- 5.2 There was one adjusted misstatement that had been picked up by the finance team during their due diligence process for £76k relating to Housing Benefits which has now been adjusted for in the financial statements on the grounds of materiality.
- 5.3 There are also a small number of presentational changes to the Statement of Accounts.
- 5.4 The Statement of Accounts that were originally certified by the Chief Finance Officer and published have now been updated accordingly.
- 5.5 There have been no events after the reporting period to declare.

6 Summary

- 6.1 The Statement of Accounts 2023/24 is attached at Appendix A.
- 6.2 Following the certification of the accounts on 31 May 2024 by the Director of Corporate Services (S151 Officer) our auditors (KPMG) have carried out their final accounts audit.
- 6.3 It is recommended that Members having considered the Statement of Accounts and confirm that there are no concerns arising from the Financial Statements that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.
- 6.4 Members are requested to approve the Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 and permit the Director of Corporate Services (S151 Officer) and the Chairman of this Committee to certify the letter of representation to KMPG now the audit has been completed.