

Appendix 2

Overview of the Statutory Statement of Accounts 2019/20

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This overview summarises the contents of the accounts and draws Members' attention to the reasons for any significant variances in the 2019/20 position when compared to 2018/19.
- 1.2. The content and format of the Statement of Accounts have been prepared in accordance with "The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20" ("the Code") published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).
- 1.3. The style of presentation and content of the Statutory Statement of Accounts are prescribed by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, together with the Code, as are the explanatory notes accompanying each of the major financial statements. There has not been any significant change to reporting requirements under the code as in previous years. There has not been any need to restate the previous year's financial statements, other than to re-present the income and expenditure figures to reflect the changes made to the portfolio structure of the Council between the two years.

Format of the Accounts

2. Narrative Statement (Page 7)

- 2.1. The Narrative Statement has been expanded from the Strategic Report of previous years to try and provide more context and background about Southend-on-Sea as a place. It highlights some of the key challenges for the area and the ambition and priorities for the Authority. It summarises information about the Council's achievements and overall performance against its corporate priorities. It also outlines the principal risks, financial challenges and uncertainties that the Authority faces.
- 2.2. The Narrative Statement sets out to provide a brief simple guide to the most significant matters reported in the Accounts. Any significant change impacting on the finances of the Authority or change in accounting requirements would be highlighted here. The purpose of the Narrative Statement is not to comment on the policies of the Authority, rather to provide a factual financial commentary for Southend-on-Sea for 2019/20.
- 2.3. The Narrative Statement shows a summarised revenue outturn position for the Authority, comparing the position against the approved budget set for 2019/20. This summarised information for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account has already been considered by Cabinet and the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee when they considered the 2019/20 Resourcing Better Outcomes Outturn report in June and July 2020, respectively.
- 2.4. The Narrative Statement also highlights the key indicators of the financial health of the Authority as at 31 March 2020, which include the levels of capital investment and borrowing, pensions status and the levels of financial reserves.

- 2.5. Given the unprecedented challenges brought about by Covid-19, the Narrative Statement highlights the Authority's initial response to the pandemic and attempts to summarise the potential implications in terms of the current and future financial landscape but also the impact on local service provision and delivery. Overall, the Narrative Statement has been designed to be self-contained and to provide a more 'reader friendly' high-level story to complement and supplement the more detailed financial statements.

3. Statement of Responsibilities (Page 28)

- 3.1. This sets out the respective responsibilities of the Authority and the Executive Director (Finance and Resources) in relation to the production of the Statement of Accounts. The Council is responsible for making arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs, which it does through its Chief Finance Officer. It is also required to manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of its resources, to safeguard its assets and to approve the Statement of Accounts.
- 3.2. The Executive Director (Finance and Resources) is required to produce the Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practice, and to certify that they present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council.
- 3.3. The approval of the Statement of Accounts, as witnessed by the Chair of Audit Committee is also incorporated here.

4. Auditor's Report (Page 30)

- 4.1. The external auditors will provide an independent opinion as to whether the statement of accounts presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council at 31 March 2020 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended. The proposed report is included elsewhere on this agenda.

5. The Accounting Statements

- 5.1. The main statements are:
- Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – a summary of the resources generated and consumed by the authority in the year in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the ultimate amount falling to be met by taxation;
 - Movement in Reserves Statement – showing how the authority's usable and unusable reserves have moved during the year, including adjustments made as a result of statutory regulation and mitigations;
 - The Balance Sheet; and
 - The Cash Flow Statement.
- 5.2. Each of these core financial statements is discussed in turn below in sections 6 to 9.

6. Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (Page 35)

6.1. This statement is fundamental to the understanding of a local authority's activities, in that it reports the net cost for the year of the functions for which the authority is responsible, and demonstrates how that cost has been financed from general government grants and income from local taxpayers. It brings together expenditure and income relating to all of the Council's activities, including the HRA. It also includes grant income due in support of capital.

6.2. The statement is split into three distinct sections:

- Net Cost of Services which summarises the cost of each of the different services, net of any associated specific grants and income. The service costs have been adjusted so that they reflect the true economic pension cost of current and past service. The cost of services also includes charges for the use of assets through depreciation and impairment. Where capital expenditure takes place that does not deliver a fixed asset, so called revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute, then this too, alongside any associated grant income, also gets charged here. Services are presented in portfolio groupings, making the statement more recognisable for Members and the public. The portfolios are those relating to 2019/20.
- The second section contains items of income and expenditure that relate to the authority as a whole rather than to an individual service. Amongst other things, this section contains further accounting adjustments for pensions, this time to reflect the performance of the fund, precepts paid to Leigh Town Council, and the payment of a proportion of the Councils' sale of council house receipts over to the Government. It also includes the interest payable and receivable by the Council and the principal sources of financing, that is government grants (including capital grants) and precepts. When added to the net cost of services, this section results in the surplus or deficit on provision of services.
- The final section shows other income and expenditure arising from essentially balance sheet activities, thereby resulting in the Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure for the year.

6.3. For this authority the 2019/20 Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement results in a surplus of £3.562M. A surplus or deficit is disclosed before any appropriations to and from reserves, including statutory mitigations. This compares with a surplus of £10.706M in 2018/19.

6.4. Principal reasons for this £7M year on year movement relate to changes in asset values and actuarial assumptions on the value of the pension fund. These movements are set out in notes 6 and 9 to the accounts, and include:

- a decrease of £33M in the loss in asset values following no academisation of schools in 2019/20, compared to the academisation of 5 primary schools and 1 secondary school in 2018/19;
- a decrease of £19M in the movement in asset values as a result of the rolling revaluation programme, with upwards revaluation of £6M in

2018/19 of various assets (including theatres, parks and pier assets) and downwards revaluation of £13M in 2019/20 of various assets (including Investment Properties and Heritage Assets). The gains/losses in asset values can vary widely depending on the prevailing market conditions and the assets being valued each year as part of the rolling programme;

- a decrease of £16M in the indexation adjustments which result from the market review undertaken by the external valuers at each year-end to ensure the carrying amount of relevant assets is not materially different from their current value; and
- a decrease of £10M in the impact of notional pension adjustments in relation to changing actuarial views around demographic change and financial assumptions.
- £5M of Covid-19 support grant received and recognised in 2019/20;

6.5. It is relevant for Councillors to remember that all of the notional movements are reversed out within the Movement in Reserves Statement, and that the actual position the Council ended the year with was a balanced outturn with no draw on general reserves.

7. The Movement in Reserves Statement (Page 36)

7.1. This statement shows in summarised form how the Council's usable and unusable reserves have moved during the year, through any surplus or deficit on the provision of services and other income and expenditure, and by other adjustments driven by regulations, such as the reversal of depreciation.

7.2. The statement therefore shows the "bottom line" increases or decreases in the Council's usable reserves, as summarised below.

	Increase / (Decrease) £000	Closing Balance £000
General Fund	-	11,000
Housing Revenue Account	-	3,502
Earmarked Reserves, <i>of which</i>	721	107,404
<i>General Fund</i>	1,622	72,288
<i>HRA</i>	(469)	31,921
<i>Schools</i>	(432)	3,195
Capital Receipts	2,746	16,475
Major Repairs (HRA)	777	8,139
Capital Grants Unapplied	3,016	15,638
Total Usable Reserves	7,260	162,158

7.3. The Movement in Reserves statement is supported by notes 19 and 20 to the accounts.

8. Balance Sheet (Page 37)

8.1. The Balance Sheet sets out the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2020. The statement shows the balances and reserves at the Authority's disposal, its long-term indebtedness, and the long-term and net current assets employed. The significant movements on the balance sheet are described below.

8.2. **Property, Plant & Equipment.** The value at which Property, Plant & Equipment assets are carried in the balance sheet has increased by a net £12M. The movement has been made up as follows:

	£000
Balance as at 1 April 2019	772,362
Capital Investment in year	41,442
Increases in Valuation*	4,888
Decreases in Valuation*	(11,610)
Depreciation in year	(21,251)
Disposals*	(1,386)
Transfers	(216)
Balance as at 31 March 2020	784,229

* See the Unusable Reserves paragraph

The increases in valuation were mainly as a result of an indexation increase applied to the council dwellings and other land and buildings to reflect the increase in value between the valuation date and the balance sheet date. The decreases in valuation were as a result of downwards revaluations identified as part of the rolling revaluation programme, a review carried out at the balance sheet date, and as a result of the regular review of the fixed asset register. The decreases related to various assets including newly constructed Council Dwellings, schools, libraries and exhibition centres.

8.3. **Heritage Assets.** The value at which Heritage Assets are carried in the balance sheet has decreased by a net £9M. The movement has been made up as follows:

	£000
Balance as at 1 April 2019	37,743
Capital Investment in year	3,636
Increases in Valuation*	64
Decreases in Valuation*	(11,044)
Depreciation in year	(491)
Balance as at 31 March 2020	28,908

The decreases in valuation were mainly as a result of the valuation of the pier structure which is a reflection of the high maintenance costs that it requires.

- 8.4. **Long Term Investments.** There has been an overall decrease of £0.8M due to the decrease in value of long term monies invested in property funds.
- 8.5. **Long Term Debtors.** This primarily represents the value of deferred payments in respect of Adult Social Care provision, and loans to South Essex College and to Porters Place Southend-on-Sea LLP for the Better Queensway regeneration project.
- 8.6. **Cash and cash equivalents.** There has been an overall decrease of £4M in cash and cash equivalents. This is mainly due to £55M of capital expenditure and £50m of external borrowing being undertaken towards meeting the Council's overall capital financing requirement.
- 8.7. **Short term Borrowing.** Short term borrowing has decreased year on year by £7M reflecting the repayment of a PWLB loan that was repayable in the year.
- 8.8. **Long term Borrowing.** Long term borrowing has increased year on year by £50M. This is due to external borrowing being undertaken to finance the capital investment programme.
- 8.9. **Other Long Term Liabilities - Pensions.** There has been a £7M decrease in the Council's pension liability, which is the amount by which future liabilities to pay pensions exceed the assets available. The total liability stands at £145M. Statutory arrangements for the funding of the deficit, whereby the deficit will be made good by increased employer contributions over the remaining working life of employees, as assessed by the scheme's actuary, means that the financial position of the Council in this regard remains healthy.
- 8.10. The net increase is attributable to both a decrease in scheme asset values and a decrease in scheme liabilities, as set out below:

	£000
Liability as at 1 April 2019	151,806
Decrease in Assets	30,034
Decrease in Liabilities	(37,318)
Liability as at 31 March 2020	144,522

- 8.11. The decrease in assets arises from the returns on investment and employer and employee contributions being less than the pension payments made to retired staff; the decrease in liabilities arises principally from a change in the financial assumptions used by the actuary and somewhat by the demographic assumptions around mortality rates, plus the inherent difference between the growth in new liabilities from current scheme membership and the discharge of liabilities to existing pensioners. Note 37 to the accounts sets out full details of the movement in the pension scheme.
- 8.12. **Usable Reserves.** The movement in usable reserves is set out under paragraph 7.2 above.

8.13. **Unusable Reserves.** These comprise the following reserves:

	Increase / (Decrease) £000	Closing Balance £000
Revaluation Reserve	(17,755)	259,337
Financial Instrument Revaluation Reserve	(1,292)	(838)
Pensions Reserve	7,284	(144,522)
Capital Adjustment Account	9,043	220,423
Deferred Capital Receipts	750	2,250
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	(1,632)	6,771
Short-term Accumulating Compensated Absences Reserve	(96)	(1,031)
Total Unusable Reserves	(3,698)	342,390

8.14. The Revaluation Reserve decreased by a net amount of £18M as a result of the amounts identified for revaluation by the rolling programme or other sources and by an exercise to apply an indexation uplift to the council dwellings and other land and buildings, which were permitted by the accounting code to be applied to the reserve. This was offset by amounts written out of the reserve relating to disposals of non-current assets.

8.15. The Pension Reserve movement is the contra entries for the movement in the Pensions Liability set out in 8.11 above.

8.16. The Capital Adjustment Account has increased by a net of £9M due to a combination of the following: charges for depreciation and revaluation gains and losses and impairment losses on non-current assets; disposals of non-current assets and the capital financing applied in the year.

8.17. Deferred Capital Receipts increased by £0.8M. This reflects the loans to Porters Place Southend-on-Sea LLP, referred to in 8.5 above.

9. Cash Flow Statement (Page 38)

9.1. This Statement summarises the inflows and outflows of cash arising from transactions with third parties for both revenue and capital purposes. The statement shows that there has been a net cash outflow of £3.6M.

10. Notes to the Accounts (Page 40)

- 10.1. The notes provide additional information and explanation behind the main statements, to aid understanding of presented figures.
- 10.2. The notes start by setting out the Accounting Policies. The Council's accounting policies set out the technical methodologies for accounting for a wide variety of issues within its accounts. The notes are then grouped together as they support their respective primary statement.
- 10.3. There is a series of notes (notes 6 - 8) in support of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that explains the transition from the "normal" view of the Council's accounts as set out in our budgeting format, to the statutory format required in our year end accounts. Essentially it shows how statutory adjustments relating mainly to pensions, assets and capital are overlaid to produce the statutory accounts. This set of notes also provides a complete subjective breakdown of the income and expenditure account, and a detailed breakdown of the level of fees, charges and other income generated by each Portfolio, that is not reported elsewhere in the accounts.

11. Housing Revenue Account and Notes (Page 102)

- 11.1. The Housing Revenue Account is a record of revenue expenditure and income relating to the Council's own housing stock (the Landlord Function). Although strictly part of the overall General Fund, the HRA has a tight ring-fence around it that allows no general discretion to transfer sums into or out of the HRA. Expenditure and income relating to other housing functions, such as support to registered social landlords, rent rebates and homelessness, are chargeable to the General Fund.
- 11.2. Like the General Fund, the format of the HRA creates an Income and Expenditure Account, and a reconciling Statement of Movement on the HRA Balance. The movement on the Housing Revenue Account Balance for 2019/20 was as follows:

	£000
Balance as at 1 April 2019	3,502
Surplus / (Deficit) for year	nil
Balance as at 31 March 2020	3,502

- 11.3. Despite the nil change in the HRA revenue balance, the HRA actually generated a surplus after statutory adjustments of £4.0M. Rather than increase the main revenue reserve, this has been set aside into HRA earmarked reserves, principally to fund future capital investment.

12. Collection Fund (Page 110)

- 12.1. This account reflects the statutory requirement for billing authorities such as Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to maintain a separate Collection Fund,

which shows the transactions of the billing authority in relation to non-domestic rates and the Council Tax, and illustrates the way in which these have been distributed to preceptors and the General Fund.

12.2. A deficit of £2.8M was generated on the Fund during the year, after the distribution of prior year surpluses of £2.9M. This means there is now an accumulated surplus at the year-end of £7.3M. This sum will be distributed between the three principal precepting authorities, including Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, and in the case of Business Rates to Central Government also, in future years. Southend's proportion of the accumulated surplus is £6.8M.

13. Group Accounts (Page 116)

13.1. The group accounts that merge the accounts of Southend Borough Council, its wholly owned companies South Essex Homes Ltd and Southend Care Ltd, 50% of its Joint Venture Porters Place Southend-on-Sea LLP and its eight Trust Funds, follow the same format as the council's own statements.

13.2. South Essex Homes made a trading surplus of £0.494M on a turnover of £12.1M, increasing to a surplus of £1.616M once statutory pension adjustments are taken into account. Southend Care made a trading surplus of £0.325M on a turnover of £8.0M, falling to a deficit of £0.487M once statutory pension adjustments are taken into account. Both companies have financial guarantees from the Council to underwrite these losses to enable them to continue to be regarded as going concerns.

13.3. Porter Place Southend-on-Sea LLP made a trading loss of £0.009M with no turnover but work in progress of £1.835M was recognised as a current asset.

13.4. The other companies and trusts that the Council has control over are immaterial to the overall group and have therefore not been consolidated.

13.5. A full list of owned companies, joint ventures and trusts are shown in Annex 1 to this Appendix.

14. Members Allowances (Page 133)

14.1. A schedule of allowances paid to Members and Co-opted Members is included in compliance with the requirement to publish these annually

15. Annual Governance Statement (Page 142)

15.1. The Annual Governance Statement is a corporate document, signed by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council. It is separately considered by this Committee elsewhere on this agenda, and is incorporated into the Statement of Accounts prior to publication.