

Appendix 2

Overview of the Statutory Statement of Accounts 2020/21

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 2020/21 position when compared to 2019/20.
- 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 2020/21" ("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.
- 1.4. Please note that the Council is referred to as Southend-on-Sea Borough Council for the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts due to the period to which it relates. This has been updated to Southend-on-Sea City Council for the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts.

Format of the Accounts

2. Narrative Statement (Page 6)

- 2.1. The Narrative Statement provides context and background about Southend-on-Sea as a place and 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 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 2020/21.
- 2.3. The Narrative Statement shows a summarised revenue outturn position for the Authority, comparing the position against the approved budget set for 2020/21. This summarised information for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account has already been considered by Cabinet when they considered the 2020/21 Resourcing Better Outcomes Outturn report in June 2021.
- 2.4. The Narrative Statement also highlights the key indicators of the financial health of the Authority as at 31 March 2021, which include the levels of capital investment and borrowing, pensions status and the levels of financial reserves.

2.5. 2020/21 was dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic which had a fundamental impact on the governance, services and finances of the Council. Given the unprecedented challenges brought about by COVID-19, the Narrative Statement highlights the Authority's ongoing response to the pandemic and provides an updated financial assessment of 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 35)

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 37)

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 2021 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 43)

- 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, 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 2020/21.
 - 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 2020/21 Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement results in a surplus of £20.757M. A surplus or deficit is disclosed before any appropriations to and from reserves, including statutory mitigations. This compares with a surplus of £3.562M in 2019/20.
- 6.4. Although the net deficit on the provision of services has only increased by £1.8M, this includes many large movements from 2019/20 to 2020/21 within the individual lines above that total. This is due to the increased expenditure incurred by the Council as a result of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic being offset by the financial support that was provided by the Government. In accordance with the grant conditions and compensation arrangements £53.7M of the financial support was received by the Council to meet increased costs incurred as a result of the pandemic or passed on to eligible local residents and businesses where the Council had a direct influence over the basis, value and distribution of the grant. This expenditure and income is included within the relevant lines of the net deficit on the provision of services figures.

6.5. Principal reasons for this £17M 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 note 9 to the accounts, and include:

- an increase of £18M in the movement in asset values as a result of the rolling revaluation programme. 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.
- an increase of £28M 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.
- a decrease of £30M in the impact of notional pension adjustments in relation to changing actuarial views around demographic change and financial assumptions.

6.6. 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 44)

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>	32,711	140,115
<i>General Fund</i>	26,212	97,252
<i>HRA</i>	2,731	34,652
<i>Schools</i>	3,768	8,211
Capital Receipts	(2,558)	13,917
Major Repairs (HRA)	(72)	8,067
Capital Grants Unapplied	9,305	24,943
Total Usable Reserves	39,386	201,544

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

8. Balance Sheet (Page 45)

8.1. The Balance Sheet sets out the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2021. 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 (excluding infrastructure assets).** The value at which Property, Plant & Equipment (excluding infrastructure) assets are carried in the balance sheet has increased by a net £32M. The movement has been made up as follows:

	£000
Balance as at 1 April 2020	681,764
Capital Investment in year	38,998
Increases in Valuation*	72,869
Decreases in Valuation*	(54,015)
Depreciation in year	(13,838)
Disposals*	(840)
Transfers to infrastructure assets	(10,098)
Writing out of Forum 2 asset under construction	(1,138)
Balance as at 31 March 2021	713,702

* See the Unusable Reserves paragraph

The increases in valuation were as a result of upwards revaluations identified as part of the rolling revaluation programme and 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 movements mainly related to HRA assets.

8.3. **Infrastructure assets.** The value at which Infrastructure assets are carried in the balance sheet has increased by a net £14M. The movement has been made up as follows:

	£000
Balance as at 1 April 2020	102,465
Capital Investment in year	9,560
Depreciation in year	(5,151)
Impairments*	(68)
Transfers from Property, Plant & Equipment assets	10,098
Balance as at 31 March 2021	116,904

* See the Unusable Reserves paragraph

Accounting for subsequent expenditure on infrastructure assets has recently been subject to heightened focus nationally. In accordance with the guidance issued the useful lives of the various categories of infrastructure assets have been re-assessed by the Council's civil engineering team. The impact of these changes to the useful lives applied across all the infrastructure assets categories was to decrease the current year's depreciation by £4.366M. (£9.517M would have been recognised if the useful lives did not change and £5.151M has been recognised in the current year by applying the new useful lives.) The impact on future years will be recognised over the remaining life of the assets in line with the guidance issued.

- 8.4. **Short Term Investments.** Short term investments have decreased year on year by £9.5M. This should be viewed together with the movement in Cash and cash equivalents in paragraph 8.6 below.
- 8.5. **Short Term Debtors.** Short term debtors have increased year on year by £17M mainly due to increases in the allocation of the part of the Business Rates deficit to Central Government in line with statutory regulations.
- 8.6. **Cash and cash equivalents.** There has been an overall increase of £23M in cash and cash equivalents. These increased balances are mainly due to the increased receipts relating to COVID-19 grant support.
- 8.7. **Short Term Creditors.** Short term creditors have increased year on year by £34M due to increased receipts in advance and collection fund creditors relating to COVID-19 grant support.
- 8.8. **Other Long Term Liabilities - Pensions.** There has been a £25M increase 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 £170M. 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.
- 8.9. The net increase is attributable to the increase in scheme asset values being more than offset by an increase in scheme liabilities, as set out below:

	£000
Liability as at 1 April 2020	144,522
Increase in Assets	(132,561)
Increase in Liabilities	157,675
Liability as at 31 March 2021	169,636

- 8.10. The increase in assets arises from the returns on investment and employer and employee contributions being greater than the pension payments made to retired staff; the increase 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.

8.11. **Usable Reserves.** The movement in usable reserves is set out under paragraph 7.2 above.

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

	Increase / (Decrease)	Closing Balance
	£000	£000
Revaluation Reserve	33,057	292,394
Financial Instrument Revaluation Reserve	(352)	(1,190)
Pensions Reserve	(25,114)	(169,636)
Capital Adjustment Account	(11,805)	208,618
Deferred Capital Receipts	1,500	3,750
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	(14,599)	(7,828)
Short-term Accumulating Compensated Absences Reserve	(1,316)	(2,347)
Total Unusable Reserves	(18,629)	323,761

8.13. The Revaluation Reserve increased by a net amount of £33M 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.

8.14. The Pension Reserve movement is the contra entries for the movement in the Pensions Liability set out in 8.10 above.

8.15. The Capital Adjustment Account has decreased by a net of £12M 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.

8.16. Deferred Capital Receipts increased by £1.5M. This reflects the further drawdown of the junior loan facility by Porters Place Southend-on-Sea LLP.

9. Cash Flow Statement (Page 46)

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 inflow of £23M.

10. Notes to the Accounts (Page 47)

- 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 116)

- 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 2020/21 was as follows:

	£000
Balance as at 1 April 2020	3,502
Surplus / (Deficit) for year	nil
Balance as at 31 March 2021	3,502

- 11.3. Despite the nil change in the HRA revenue balance, the HRA actually generated a surplus after statutory adjustments of £0.4M. 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 123)

- 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 business 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 £28.4M was generated on the Fund during the year, after the distribution of prior year surpluses of £2.3M. This means there is now an accumulated deficit at the year-end of £21.1M, which comprises an accumulated surplus for Council Tax of £7.2M and an accumulated deficit for Business Rates of £28.3M. Southend's proportion of the net accumulated deficit is £7.8M.
- 12.3. The Council Tax surplus will be distributed in future years between the three principal precepting authorities, including Southend-on-Sea City Council. The Business Rates deficit was as a result of the Government's policy to provide financial support to businesses as part of the fiscal response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with those classified as Retail, Hospitality and Leisure or Nurseries being granted a 100% Business Rates holiday for 2020/21. This had the direct impact of greatly reducing the value of income collectable and created a large deficit on the Business Rates part of the Collection Fund. The deficit is allocated across the three principal precepting authorities and also Central Government. To compensate the Council an equivalent value of Section 31 grant was received from Government via the General Fund.

13. Group Accounts (Page 129)

- 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 £0.543M on a turnover of £12.9M, decreasing to a deficit of £0.116M once statutory pension adjustments are taken into account. Southend Care made a trading surplus of £0.693M on a turnover of £8.8M, decreasing to a surplus of £0.392M 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 £0.015M with no turnover but work in progress of £4.557M 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 146)

- 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 154)

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.

Annex 1 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council – Group Structure