

Joint Audit and Governance Committee



Listening Learning Leading



Report of Head of Finance/Chief Accountant (Capita)

Author: William Jacobs/Simon Hewings

Telephone: 01235 422480/01235 422499

Textphone: 18001 01235 422480/18001 01235 422499

E-mail: [William.jacobs@southandvale.gov.uk/](mailto:William.jacobs@southandvale.gov.uk)

simon.hewings@southandvale.gov.uk

Wards affected: all

South Cabinet member responsible: Jane Murphy

Tel: 07970 932054

E-mail: jane.murphy@southoxon.gov.uk

To: Joint Audit and Governance Committee

DATE: 25 September 2017

Vale Cabinet member responsible: Robert Sharp

Tel: 01367 710549

E-mail: robert.sharp@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Statement of accounts 2016/17

Recommendation(s)

(a) That the statement of accounts for South Oxfordshire District Council for 2016/17 be approved as amended and signed by the chairman of this meeting of the committee and by the co-chairman from South Oxfordshire District Council

(b) That the statement of accounts for Vale of White Horse District Council for 2016/17 be approved as amended and signed by the chairman of this meeting.

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the processes involved in the production of the statements of accounts for both councils and to approve the final versions for 2016/17.

Strategic Objectives

2. South – unqualified final accounts helps us demonstrate our strong financial position.
3. Vale – unqualified final accounts helps us demonstrate that we run an efficient council.

Background

4. The head of finance approved the 2016/17 statements of accounts for external audit of South Oxfordshire District Council on 27 June 2017 and Vale of White Horse District Council on 23 June 2017, ahead of the required deadline of 30 June. The audit of those statements has now been completed. Following an informal training session for members of this committee, revised statements are now presented to the committee for approval.
5. As reported to the committee the statutory deadline of 30 June is being brought forward to 31 May next year. As part of the preparations for that change, a target deadline of 26 May was set for this year's accounts. This year the draft accounts were presented to the Head of Finance earlier than in previous years, but we still need to look closely at our processes to ensure that we are ready for the earlier deadline next year.
6. The team's progress was generally ahead of the previous year's performance, particularly in respect of collection fund and capital accounting. In addition, Word/Excel templates introduced the previous year worked very well this year and saved a lot of time. However, meeting the target deadline was de-prioritised in favour of meeting the statutory deadline to facilitate the following:
 - Verification of the revenue outturn position for the impact of the Five Councils' Partnership;
 - Work on the implementation of Integra;
 - Accountancy support to two elections during the closedown period.

In future years there will be less opportunity to accommodate one-off work requests during the period when the statement of accounts is being completed.

7. As with the previous year, sign-off took place after considerably more checking of the accounts than had been undertaken in previous years. Feedback from the external auditors confirms that their checking revealed very few minor errors (e.g. consistency/cross casting).
8. Looking ahead to next year's accounts, the team are already looking at areas of year end work that could be brought forward, such as capital accounting, to enable the earlier deadline to be met. It will also become critical that deadlines set that rely on information being received from council officers and other third parties are met.

Financial Implications

9. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

10. Approval of the amended statement of accounts by the committee fulfils the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015.

Risks

11. None

Other Implications

12. None

Conclusion

13. The audit of the 2016/17 statements of accounts is now substantially complete and, following their approval they can be published.

This page is intentionally left blank