

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL****AUDIT COMMITTEE****(MEETING JOINTLY IN PART WITH THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS  
COMMITTEE)****MINUTES****Date: Wednesday 23 September 2015****Time: 6.00 p.m.****Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage****Present:** Councillors: M McKay (Chair), R Broom L Chester,  
D Cullen, G Lawrence and J Lloyd CC.**Independent  
Member:** B Mitchell**Also Present:** T Blackman, A Ayre and I Murray (Grant Thornton)**Started:** 6.00 p.m.**Ended:** 6.45 p.m.**1. APPOINTMENT OF PERSON TO PRESIDE**

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Mrs J Lloyd be appointed to preside over the part of the meeting that was held jointly with the Statement of Accounts Committee.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Gardner and A McGuinness.

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. 2014/2015 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

The Audit Committee and the Statement of Accounts Committee meeting jointly received a presentation from the Assistant Director Finance and the Accountancy Service Manager on the Statement of Accounts 2014/15 and a report on the External Auditor's Audit Findings from the Council's Auditors, Grant Thornton.

The Committee was advised of a number of typographical errors in the report and the accompanying Statement of Accounts.

- The second sentence of paragraph 4.2.1 of the report should read 'However of this increase only £19.6 million relates to useable or cash reserves' and not 'However of this increase of £16.6 million....'
- The second sentence of paragraph 4.2.3 of the report should read 'The Council's useable reserves increased by £19.6 million' and not 'The Council's useable reserves increased by £16.6 million'
- The third bullet point of paragraph 4.2.3 of the report should read 'There was also an increase in revenue reserves and the surplus of the HRA increased to £4.328 million' and not 'There was also an increase in revenue reserves and the surplus of the HRA increased to £2.136 million'
- The labelling for the revenue balances section of the pie chart on page 20 of the Statement of Accounts should show a figure of £2,459,022 and not £2,189,816 as shown.

The Committees were then shown how the Council's accounts were constructed, with key points highlighted and major variances against forecasts explained.

The Committees were advised that although the accounts might appear to present the Council's finances as healthy there remained an underlying requirement to identify and realise savings opportunities.

Members thanked the Officers for a clear and concise presentation.

**Note** – *At this point in the meeting the Statement of Accounts Committee **RESOLVED** to adjourn until the rise of the Audit Committee.*

A Member thanked the Officers for producing a document that could be easily read and understood by members of the public.

The Council's External Auditors, Grant Thornton, advised the Committee that they had found two instances in the accounts where the Council had used discretion in its judgment with respect to the valuation of its housing stock and to the listing of two properties in the assets for sale register. The External Auditors had been in agreement with the views taken by the Council in these cases.

The Committee was advised that the outstanding confirmation request from the Bank of Scotland (paragraph 4.3.4 of the report refers) had been received.

The Audit Committee expressed no material concerns on the report or the recommendations therein.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Report to those charged with Governance for 2014/15, the Council's Letter of Representation and the Financial Report including the Statement of Accounts 2014/15 be recommended to the Statement of Accounts Committee.

**4. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS.**

None.

**5. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Not required.

**PART II**

**6. URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

**Chair**