

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
(MEETING JOINTLY IN PART WITH THE AUDIT COMMITTEE)

MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 26 July 2018

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Mrs Joan Lloyd (Chair), Philip Bibby CC, John Mead, Sarah Mead, Jeannette Thomas, Richard Henry and Tom Wren.

Start / End Start Time: 6.00pm
Time: End Time: 7.25pm

1 APPOINTMENT OF PERSON TO PRESIDE

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Maureen McKay be appointed to preside over the meeting which was held jointly with the Audit Committee.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ralph Raynor.

There were no declarations of interest.

3 2017/18 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Audit Committee and the Statement of Accounts Committee meeting jointly received a presentation from the Accountancy Services Manager on the Statement of Accounts 2017/18.

The Committees were advised of a typographical error on page 176 of the agenda pack. The figures in the left hand column of table HRA 4 should read 4921, 591 and 5512 and not 4921139, 590986 and 5512125 as shown.

The Committees were further advised that no changes had been made since the publication of the draft accounts.

A copy of appendix 2 to the report, the Letter of Representation was then circulated to Members.

The Committees were shown how the Council's accounts were constructed, with key points highlighted and identified.

In reply to a question concerning Right To Buy 'one for one receipts' the Committees

were advised that the amount held by the Council had accrued as the result of a higher than expected number of sales. It was confirmed that the sum had been earmarked for housing projects.

The issue of the disparity in the valuation of the swimming pool was raised and Members were advised of the process behind each of the valuations. The External Auditor confirmed that the difference in the valuations was not a material consideration for the accounts and did not affect the overall audit opinion of the accounts.

A Member requested that the Officers Remuneration table on page 160 of the agenda be amended in future years to make it clearer that the table included redundancy payments and didn't just relate to pay. Concerns were expressed that the information as currently presented could be misread as overstating the number of higher paid employees.

The Committees then considered the report from the Council's External Auditors EY.

The Committees were advised that all outstanding audit tasks had been completed and that EY had issued an unqualified audit opinion for both the Council's accounts and the Value for Money statement.

In reply to a question it was confirmed that an unqualified opinion was a positive result for the Council's accounts.

In reply to a further question the Committees were advised it was not usual practice to forward a copy of the External Auditor's report to Central Government.

At 18:50 hrs the Statement of Accounts Committee **RESOLVED** to adjourn until the rise of the Audit Committee.

The Statement of Accounts Committee reconvened at 19:15 hrs with Councillor Mrs Lloyd in the Chair.

The Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) advised the Committee that the Audit Committee had expressed no material concerns with the report or the recommendations therein, however they had commented about their preference for a consistent approach to the valuation of the swimming pool, the approach to the monitoring of savings and the assessment of risks to the Town Centre regeneration project.

The Committee accepted the Accounts and the comments of the Audit Committee.

The Chairman expressed her thanks to the Accountancy Services Manager, the Assistant Director (Finance & Estates) and her team and the External Auditors.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Annual Report to those charged with Governance for 2017/18 is approved.

2. That the Council's Letter of Representation is approved.
3. That the Financial Report including the Statement of Accounts 2017/18 is approved.
4. That the Annual Governance Statement is approved.

4 URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None.

5 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not required.

6 URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR