

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**(MEETING JOINTLY IN PART WITH THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS  
COMMITTEE)**

**MINUTES**

**Date: Thursday 21 September 2015**

**Time: 6.00 p.m.**

**Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage**

**Present:** Councillors: M McKay (Chair), J Gardner (Vice-Chair)  
H Burrell, L Chester, G Lawrence and G Snell.

**Independent  
Member:** B Mitchell

**Also Present:** N Harris (EY)

**Started:** 6.00 p.m.

**Ended:** 7:00 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.

A copy of appendix 4 to the report, a letter from Wilks, Head and Eve regarding the valuation of Ridlins Athletics Track and amended pages 26, 27, 32, 33, 44, 45, 105, 114 and 115 of the accounts were then circulated to Members.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Broom and D Cullen.

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. 2016/2017 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 2016/17.

The Committee was advised that following the external audit, which was completed after the Statement of Accounts had been produced, the outturn positions for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Accounts remained unchanged.

In addition the Committee was advised that two new disclosure notes had been introduced, that external valuer Wilks Head and Eve had been engaged to undertake a full review of the General Fund asset valuations and that the triennial pension fund had been carried out as at 31 March 2016.

In reply to a Member question the Assistant Director Finance and Estates agreed that in future SOA reports reference would be made to the governance and assurance for the figures stated for pension fund assets and liabilities.

Members expressed concerns that the presentation of the accounts made them difficult to understand, especially for non-public sector accountants and members of the public. In reply the Committee was advised that the format of the accounts was largely mandated by statute however both the External Auditor and the Assistant Director Finance and Estates undertook to feedback Members' concerns and make representations on their behalf to their respective professional bodies.

Members requested that more detail be provided in the Statement of Accounts. In reply the Committee was advised that detail was provided in the notes to the Accounts and that the Council's Budget Book and the quarterly monitoring reports produced for the Executive provided further detail.

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

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

In reply to a Member question the Assistant Director Finance and Estates undertook to provide an explanatory note about the ring fencing of the Housing Revenue Account reserve.

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

The Committee was 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.

The External Auditor requested that thanks be recorded in the Minutes to the Accountancy Services Manager and her team for their assistance in compiling the report.

It was noted that the report had been produced earlier than in previous years as a 'dry run' for 2018 when statute would require filing of the Council's accounts to be brought forward. The Chair requested that thanks be recorded to all parties for meeting this earlier deadline. The Chair welcomed this prompt reporting and hoped that it would continue into 2018.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual Report to those charged with Governance for 2016/17, the Council's Letter of Representation, the Financial Report including the Statement of Accounts 2016/17 and the Annual Governance Statement be recommended to the Statement of Accounts Committee for approval.

**4. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS.**

None.

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

Not required.

**PART II**

**6. URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

**Chair**