

Report to the Audit & Governance Committee



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Date of meeting: 27th July 2023

Portfolio: Finance, Qualis Client & Economic Development

Subject: Draft Statement of Accounts 2022/23

Responsible Officer: Andrew Small (01992 564278)

Democratic Services: Laura Kirman (01992 564243)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To note the Draft Statement of Accounts 2022/23 (**Appendix A**) prior to the completion of the external audit process.

Executive Summary:

The Executive Director & Section 151 Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Council's annual Statement of Accounts. The Statements are prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 ('the Code') and are based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs). The Statements are also required to give a "true and fair view" of the Council's financial position as at 31st March 2023, and the income and expenditure for the year then ended,

The Council is required to make the accounting records and related documents available for inspection each year in the exercise of the rights of interested persons under Section 26 of the Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014 and Section 15 of the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015.

The inspection period for the financial year ending 31st March 2023 was due to commence on 1st June 2023 and run for a period of 30 working days from this date. However, it has not been possible for the Council to commence the inspection period as, in line with most councils nationally, Epping Forest District Council continues to experience major audit delays and the Statement of Accounts 2020/21 have not yet been finalised, and the audit of the Statement of Accounts 2021/22 has yet to commence.

However, in the interests of transparency, the Council published an *uncertified* draft Statement of Accounts 2022/23 on the Council website on 2nd June 2023 (presented at **Appendix A**), which the Committee is asked to note.

The audited Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 will be presented to the Committee at a future meeting (date to be determined). This will provide an opportunity for the Committee to scrutinise, and approve, the Statements prior to the issue of the Committee Chair's signature.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To enable the robust scrutiny the Council's annual Statement of Accounts 2022/23 in accordance with generally accepted good practice.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The local government financial reporting and audit regime exists within in a tightly regulated framework. For the accounting period 2022/23, this includes the:

- Local Government Act 1972 (Section 151)
- Local Government Act 2003 (Section 21(2))
- Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (various); and
- Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener (SCG) Implications:

None.

Background Papers:

Epping Forest District Council's *draft* Statement of Accounts 2022/23 (published 2nd June 2023).

CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 ('the Code').

Risk Management:

There are a number of areas of risk embedded throughout the Statement of Accounts, which have been individually addressed and treated in accordance with guidance and professional judgement.