

Agenda Item:

Meeting: Audit Committee

Date: 27 July 2009

Subject: Bedfordshire County Council Statement of Accounts 2008/09

Report of: Director of Corporate Resources

Summary: This report presents the Bedfordshire County Council Statement of Accounts 2008/09 to the Audit Committee for approval.

Advising Officer: Clive Heaphy, Director of Corporate Resources

Contact Officer: Matt Bowmer, Assistant Director, Financial Services

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Audit Committee

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. That the Bedfordshire County Council Statement of Accounts 2008/09 is approved subject to audit.**

Reason for Recommendations: To fulfil the statutory duty to approve the Statement of Accounts and to facilitate the external audit process.

1. Background

- 1.1 It is a statutory requirement that the Bedfordshire County Council Statement of Accounts for 2008/09 is reported to Members by 31 July 2009. In normal circumstances, the Statement of Accounts would need to be approved by 30 June. However, with Local Government Reorganisation, a dispensation has been made by Statutory Order to Central Bedfordshire as the successor authority to approve the accounts a month later. In accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 and the Council's Constitution, the Statement of Accounts is required to be approved by this Committee.
- 1.2 The Statement of Accounts for 2008/09 is still subject to external audit validation in accordance with the requirements of the Audit Commission. The audit is anticipated to take place during August and September 2009 and the result of that audit will be reported to the Audit Committee in September 2009 and to Members via the external auditors Management Letter 2009.

1.3 A copy of the Statement of Accounts is attached as Appendix A.

2. Statement of Accounts 2008/09

- 2.1 The anticipated outturn position for the General Fund and the Capital Programme were reported to the Executive on 21 July 2009. At the time of writing, no further adjustments have been made to the General Fund Revenue Account or the Capital Programme. Should any adjustments prove necessary, these will be reported to this Committee.
- 2.2 The Statement of Accounts document has been produced in accordance with statutory requirements and CIPFA's Statement of Recommended Practice to which all local authorities must comply. Accordingly it is a fairly technical document that consolidates all of the Council's financial activity and cannot be compared to the relatively simplified budget model generally used for monitoring purposes as set out in the budget book.
- 2.3 The Committee's review of the financial statements, as set out in the CIPFA recommended practice, is to focus upon:
- the suitability of accounting policies and treatments
 - any changes in accounting policies and treatments
 - major judgemental areas, e.g. provisions such as earmarked reserves
- 2.4 The Statement of Accounts provides information in relation to accounting policies, disclosures, and balance sheet information.
- 2.5 Given the technical content of the Statement of Accounts document, it would be appreciated if possible, that any queries of detail that Members may have, could be made to the Director of Corporate Resources or Assistant Director, Financial Services, in advance of the meeting.
- 2.6 As part of the external audit, the accounts will be made available for public inspection between 27 July and 21 August 2009.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The Statements of Accounts of the demised authorities are an essential part of corporate governance and accountability and provide the starting point for the robust financial standing and sound financial management of the new authority, which are essential to the Council delivering its initial corporate objectives and priorities:

- (i) Supporting and caring for an ageing population
- (ii) Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people
- (iii) Managing growth effectively
- (iv) Creating safer communities
- (v) Promoting healthier lifestyles

Financial:

None

Legal:

None

Risk Management:

None

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None

Equalities/Human Rights:

None

Community Development/Safety:

None

Sustainability:

None

Appendices:

Appendix A - Bedfordshire County Council Statement of Accounts 2008/09

Background Papers:

Various Closure of Accounts Working Papers

Location of papers: Borough Hall, Bedford