

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM - BOOTLE TOWN HALL,
TRINITY ROAD, BOOTLE, L20 7AE
ON 12 FEBRUARY 2025**

PRESENT: Councillor Robinson (in the Chair)

Councillors Johnson, Maher, McNabb, Neary, Pugh,
Shaw and Spring

46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Roche, Conalty and his substitute Byrom.

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests or personal interests were received.

48. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2023/2024

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial which presented the final audited Statement of Accounts for 2023/2024, including the updated Annual Governance Statement, for consideration and approval, and also to consider the Grant Thornton’s Interim Auditor’s Annual report and their Audit Findings report. The proposed “Letter of Representation” document to be provided by Sefton to Grant Thornton was attached to the report for approval.

The following appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix A – Statement of Accounts 2023/24
- Appendix B – Grant Thornton – Interim Auditor’s Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024
- Appendix C – Grant Thornton – The Audit Findings for Sefton Council – year ended 31 March 2024
- Appendix D – Letter of Representation - year ended 31 March 2024

The Service Manager – Finance presented a Financial Reporting briefing to the Committee which covered:

- Year-End Process 23/24
- Outturn
- Statement of Accounts

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- Format of the Accounts
- Income and Expenditure Statement
- Balance Sheet
- Notes to the Financial Statements
- Collection Fund
- Group Accounts
- Narrative Statement

Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following issues arising from the briefing:

- High needs deficit
- Internal borrowing
- Capital grant allocation
- Reserve figures

The Council's External Auditors, Grant Thornton, presented a briefing to the Committee which covered:

- External audit team for 2023/24 audit
- Key Audit Deliverables
- Key findings from the statement of accounts audit
- Value for Money arrangements
- Key findings from the review of the arrangements in respect of Value for Money

Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following issues arising from the report

- Procurement waivers

RESOLVED:

- (1) the Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 be approved, subject to the final completion of the audit;
- (2) authority be delegated to the Chair of the Committee to approve the final Statement of Accounts, on behalf of Audit and Governance Committee, following completion of the audit, should any changes be required to the current version approved by the Committee;
- (3) the updated Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24, as set out at section 11 of the Statement of Accounts within the report, be approved;
- (4) the comments of Grant Thornton within their Interim Auditor's Annual report and their Audit Findings report be noted;
- (5) the Letter of Representation be approved, subject to completion of the audit, and the Chair of the Committee and the Executive

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Director of Corporate Services and Commercial be authorised to sign it on the Council's behalf; and

- (6) authority be delegated to the Chair and the Executive Director – Corporate Services and Commercial to sign on the Council's behalf a revised Letter of Representation should the approved version need to be updated following the completion of the audit.