

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Report to: Audit Committee

Date: 11th March 2024

Subject: Statement of Accounts 2022/23, including Pension Fund Accounts and Annual Governance Statement.

Report Author: Christopher Harris – Head of Corporate Accountancy, Systems and Tax

Responsible Director: Sukvinder Kalsi, Director of Finance

SUMMARY

This report presents the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham's 2022/23 Statement of Accounts, including the Pension Fund Accounts and Annual Governance Statement for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To approve the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement which is included in the Statement of Accounts (Appendix 1).
 2. To approve the Statement of Accounts for 2022/23, including the Pension Fund Accounts (Appendix 1).
 3. To note the content of the external auditor's 'Audit Findings Report' (ISA260), including the auditor's findings, recommendations and the Council's response to those recommendations (Appendix 2).
 4. To approve the 2022/23 management representation letters (Appendices 3 and 4).
 5. To approve the Pension Fund Annual Report 2022/23 (Appendix 5).
 6. To note that the accounts remain 'unaudited' until final sign-off by the external auditor.
 7. To delegate authority to the Chair of the Audit Committee, in consultation with the Director of Finance to approve any further adjustments to Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 which may be required as part of the completion of the audit work.
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Wards Affected: All

H&F Values

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The Statement of Accounts details the authority's financial activity for the year and forms the cornerstone of fiscal responsibility and control together with the attainment of value for money.

Financial Impact

This report presents the annual accounts for approval and is wholly of a financial nature.

Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications in relation to this report. The accounts are prepared and audited in accordance with The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended). In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended), the Council's audited year end Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement must be approved by the Audit Committee.

Angela Hogan, Chief Solicitor (Contracts and Procurement) 1st March 2024

Contact Officer(s):

Name: Christopher Harris

Position: Head of Corporate Accountancy, Systems and Tax

Telephone: 020 8753 6440

Email: Christopher.Harris@lbhf.gov.uk

Name: Angela Hogan

Position: Chief Solicitor (Contracts and Procurement)

Telephone: 07919227585

Email: angela.hogan@lbhf.gov.uk

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

None

Statement of Accounts 2022/23

1. The 2022/23 Statement of Accounts, for approval by the Audit Committee, is attached at Appendix 1.

2. The Narrative Statement at the beginning of the Statement of Accounts gives an outline of the Council's financial activity during 2022/23.
3. The Council's external auditor for the year is Grant Thornton UK LLP (GT).
4. It should be noted that the accounts remain 'unaudited' until the audit opinion is formally signed and dated by GT and the audit remains open until final certification. The accounts are therefore subject to change until that point. In the event of any further changes, it is requested that these be approved by the Chair of the Committee, in consultation with the Director of Finance and any significant changes will be notified to Committee.

Report to those charged with governance (ISA260)

5. The external auditor is required to prepare a Report to those Charged with Governance (ISA260). This report summarises the findings and recommendations associated with this year's audit in respect of the Financial Statements.
6. This report is attached (at Appendix 2) and will also be presented to the Committee by the auditor.
7. The auditor also asks the Committee and management for written representations about the financial statements and governance arrangements. To that end, Members are asked to consider and approve the draft letters of representation (Appendices 3 and 4).

Pension Fund

8. The Council's Statement of Accounts incorporates the annual accounts for the Pension Fund and GT's Report to those Charged with Governance (ISA260) includes commentary on the audit of the Pension Fund accounts.
9. The Pension Fund Annual Report is attached at Appendix 5. This report includes reports on the various aspects of the operation of the Pension Fund – investments, administration and funding, as well as the Pension Fund financial statements. The Committee is required to approve the Annual Report, so that it can be published once the audit is complete.
10. The Pension Fund Annual Report remains subject to the finalisation of audit work.

Reason for decision

11. The Audit Committee is required to approve the Council's audited year-end Statement of Accounts in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended).

Supplementary updates

12. The external auditor issued an unqualified opinion on the 2021/22 Accounts on 22 February 2024. These accounts had previously been reviewed by the Audit Committee in September 2023 and there are no significant differences to report between the previous Committee version and the final accounts (i.e. the net position on the main statements and usable reserves position remains unchanged).
13. The external auditor has provided an audit progress report and sector update. This is included elsewhere on the agenda and will be presented to the Committee.

LIST OF APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Annual Statement of Accounts 2022/23 (including Pension Fund)

Appendix 2 – Grant Thornton UK LLP Audit Findings Report (ISA260) (Main Financial Statements and LBHF Pension Fund) 2022/23

Appendix 3 – Draft Letter of Representation 2022/23 – LBHF Main Accounts

Appendix 4 – Draft Letter of Representation 2022/23 – Pension Fund

Appendix 5 – Pension Fund Annual Report 2022/23