

Chairman - Councillor M G Dodson

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

R A James

A Nixon

D P Rouxel

J Thorley

Also present:- Councillor J M Pert

Officers in attendance:-

T Clegg - Chief Executive

C Forrester - Deputy Chief Executive - Resources and Section 151  
Officer

J Dean - Democratic Services Officer

#### **AAC1 Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2025 as published on 7 April 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

#### **AAC2 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K M Aspin (substituted by Councillor R A James), R P Cooke, P A Leason, A M Loughran (substituted by Councillor J Thorley) and A R McNaughton (substituted by Councillor A Nixon).

#### **AAC3 Stafford Borough Council External Audit Plan - Year Ended 31 March 2024**

Received the report of Azets highlighting the key elements of their proposed audit strategy and providing an overview of the planned scope and timing of the statutory external audit of the Council for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The Deputy Chief Executive - Resources and Section 151 Officer was pleased to report the removal of the Section 24 Notice representing significant progress for the Council and confirmed that statement of accounts reporting was now up to date.

The Chairman of the Committee welcomed these major steps forward and thanked Officers for their efforts in this area of work.

RESOLVED:- that in accordance with the powers delegated to the Committee the External Audit Plan for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 be received.

**AAC4 Statement of Accounts 2023/24**

Considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive - Resources and Section 151 Officer reporting on the process for the approval of the statement of accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2024.

Chris Forrester detailed the content of paragraphs 3 and 5 of the report, confirming that the Council was compliant with all associated legislation. Continuing, the 'flow' of information through the associated appendix 1 was demonstrated enabling Mr Forrester to confirm that the Council's finances were in a robust position.

Members duly voted on the recommendations as set out, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that in accordance with the powers delegated to the Committee:-

- (a) the following be noted;
  - (i) the Statement of Accounts 2023-24 (as detailed in appendix 1 of the report);
  - (ii) the findings of the External Auditor (as set out in agenda item 3(c)); and
  - (iii) the impact of the audit backlog legislation.
- (b) the Management Representation letter, as included at appendix 2 of the External Auditor's Audit Completion Report be approved and signed by the Chairman on behalf of the Committee.

**AAC5 Stafford Borough Council Audit Completion Report**

Received the report of Azets summarising the approach and outcomes arising from the audit for those charged with Governance.

The Deputy Chief Executive - Resources and Section 151 Officer was pleased to report that all associated work relating to this matter was completed in good time before reviewing the executive summary as set out on pages 122-125 of the agenda.

The Chief Executive responded to a question relating to the potential impact of Local Government Reorganisation on the Council's financial position by noting that it was too early to gauge at this early stage of the process.

Upon request Chris Forrester provided an update regarding recruitment within the Finance Department.

RESOLVED:- that in accordance with the powers delegated to the Committee the Audit Completion Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 be received.

CHAIR