

Report to: Audit and Governance Committee



Date of Meeting 24 July 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Draft Statement of Accounts 2024/25 including Annual Governance Statement

Report summary:

The draft statement of accounts 2024/25 were made available on the [council's website](#) from 30 June 2025, in line with the statutory requirement for the unaudited accounts to be published by that date following sign off by the responsible financial officer, as set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended). The period of public inspection runs until the 11 August 2025.

The appointed auditors Grant Thornton LLP are due to commence the 2024/25 year end audit in October 2025 and an expected close out by December 2025.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

- 1) Note that the draft statement of accounts 2024/25 has been signed by the S151 Officer and is now brought to this Committee for comment.
- 2) Note that the audited statement of accounts 2024/25 will be presented to the Committee for approval following completion of the audit.

Reason for recommendation:

It is a legal requirement that the S151 Officer signs the draft statement of accounts by 30 June 2025 and certifies that it presents 'a true and fair view of the financial position of the authority at the end of the year to which it relates and of the authority's income and expenditure for that year'.

The draft statement of accounts has been brought to committee in order to give members opportunity to comment on them before final approval, which must take place before the 27 February 2026 deadline for publishing audited accounts. It is envisaged that the report on the audited accounts will detail any non-trivial amendments made as a result of the audit along with an amended statement of accounts (if necessary).

Officer: John Symes – Finance Manager, jsymes@eastdevn.gov.uk, 01395 517413

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Assets and Economy
- ☐ Communications and Democracy
- ☐ Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- ☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

- ☐ Environment - Nature and Climate
- ☐ Environment - Operational
- ☒ Finance
- ☐ Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☐ A supported and engaged community
- ☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
- ☐ Resilient economy that supports local business
- ☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services

Report in full

- 1.1 In recent years there has been an issue nationally with delays to the completion of local audits. As part of the government's measures to aid the recovery, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 were amended in 2024 to impose backstop dates for the publication of audited accounts. The backstop dates apply to the accounts for financial years up to 2027/28 and are progressively earlier each year. For the 2024/25 financial year the deadline for publishing the audited accounts is 27 February 2026.
- 1.2 In addition to imposing the backstop dates, the amendments to the regulations included a change to the date by which the public inspection period must commence. The amended regulations require the 30-working day period for the exercise of public rights for the statement of accounts to commence on or before the first working day of July. This effectively means the draft accounts must be signed off by the responsible finance officer and published by 30 June. This amendment also applies to the accounts for financial years up to 2027/28.
- 1.3 The statement of accounts is a complex document, and the layout and information provided are defined by statutory requirements.
- 1.4 The council's accounts are prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK (the Code), which is recognised by statute as representing proper accounting practice and meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
- 1.5 The narrative statement provides a summary of the revenue and capital financial performance for the year. Full details of the outturn position will also be reported in the revenue and capital outturn report to Cabinet.
- 1.6 The Annual Governance Statement is to be reviewed by the Committee alongside this report. The Statement was written by the Director of Finance. It includes a review of the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements and concludes that the existing

arrangements remain fit for purposes and help provide reasonable assurance of their effectiveness.

- 1.7 Our external auditors, Grant Thornton, will largely undertake their audit from October with a planned close out of December 2025. Therefore, their final audit opinion is planned to be submitted to Committee in early 2026. This will include the annual commentary on our arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in our use of resources.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal implications:

The legal position is detailed in the report and no further comment is required.