

STANDARDS COMMITTEE
4 September 2003

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2002-03

Purpose of the Report

1. The County Council is required to produce and approve an annual Statement of Accounts.

Background

2. Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 the Council, or an appropriate committee, must approve the Statement of Accounts, by 30 September following the end of the financial year.
3. The regulations require the Statement of Accounts to be published, following the audit, by 31 December.

Main Considerations for the Council

4. The Statement of Accounts is intended to give electors, those subject to locally levied taxes and charges, members of the authority, employees, and other interested parties clear information about the authority's finances. It should answer such questions as:-
 - What did the authorities services cost this year?
 - Where did the money come from?
 - What were its assets and liabilities at the year-end?
5. The format and content of the Statement of Accounts are closely specified by the CIPFA Accounting Code of Practice. Despite the desire to inform, the need to comply with this Code, and the complexity of some of the balance sheet transactions reported, mean that much of the statement will appear obscure to those who are not familiar with local authority accounts.

The Statement of Accounts 2002-03

6. The Statement of Accounts presents the financial transactions of the Wiltshire County Council for the financial year 2002-03. The decision to approve these accounts for audit has no impact on future financial planning decisions for the County Council, but is a historic view of the transactions and balance sheet for the year.
7. The regulations require, for the first time in 2002-03, that a statement of internal control is presented and approved as part of the Statement of Accounts. This requires the Treasurer to confirm that the systems and procedures in place are sufficient to ensure that assets are safeguarded. This statement can be found on page 6 of the accounts.
8. The full Pension Accounts for 2002-03 are being published separately, as part of the Pension Fund Annual Report. However, a summary can be found on pages 43 to 46 in the County Council's Statement of Accounts.
9. The Statement of Accounts must be signed by the County Treasurer before presentation to the Standards Committee. Once they are approved by the committee the chairman should also sign them. This is a new requirement from the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003.

10. The Audit Commission auditors are already reviewing the accounts and associated working papers, and will continue their audit. The final Statement of Accounts will be presented to the full council on the 11 November 2003, where the Auditor has the opportunity to bring material amendments to the notice of members.
11. The Statement of Accounts will also be made available for public inspection and comment on the 10th December in accordance with the Audit Commission Act 1998.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

12. None identified.

Risk Assessment

13. The statement of accounts quantifies, provides for or notes any potential financial risks to the authority, and therefore the assessment of risk is implicit throughout the document.
14. In addition, the quality and timeliness of the production of the accounts forms part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment for the authority. By complying with prescribed timescales and accounting codes of practice the quality of the accounts is maintained.

Financial Implications

15. Since producing the final outturn report to Cabinet, an amendment to the accounts has been undertaken in relation to an overprovision of creditors. This has the effect of increasing general balances by £0.253 million.
16. There are no other implications arising from the production of the accounts.

Reasons for Proposals

17. The proposals in the report arise from the statutory requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003.

Proposals

18. To approve the draft Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2003.
19. To agree that the Chairman of the Standards Committee should sign the accounts for 2002-03.

MIKE PRINCE
County Treasurer

Unpublished documents relied upon in the production of this report: NONE