



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

20 January 2025

Notes of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 23 January 2025

Report of the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee

Members Present: Cllr R Bell in the Chair

Cllrs L Mavin, A Batey and A Forster (IP)

Apologies were received from Cllr A Anderson and B Kellett

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 23 January 2025.

Audit Strategy Memorandum Year Ended 31 March 2024

2. Members were updated on the planned work carried out by External Audit for 2023/24 which covered audit opinion, fraud, internal control and value for money.

Issue of Audit Certificate on the 2023/23 Statement of Accounts

3. Members were provided with the signed audit certificate for 2022/23.

Forecast of Outturn for 2024/2025 to 31 December 2024 (Quarter 3)

4. Members were provided with an indication of the services revenue and capital financial outturn position based on expenditure and income to 31 December 2024.

5. Based upon expenditure and income to 31 December 2024, the forecast revenue outturn position to the 31 March 2025 is an underspend of £0.816M (2.30%).

Short-Term Investments and Long-Term Borrowing

6. Members were provided with details of the short-term investments and long-term borrowing for quarter 3.

Revenue and Capital Budgets 2025/26 and Medium-Term Financial Plan

7. Members received details of the provisional local government finance settlement for 2024/25. Members were informed that the Authority's funding from government will decrease by £0.412M (2.9%) in 2025/26.
8. Members were asked to consider the draft revenue and capital budgets and draft medium-term financial plan and agree on a firm recommendation on the level of council tax to the meeting of the Fire Authority on 17 February 2025.
9. Members noted the budget pressures and risks identified as part of the budget setting process and **considered** the proposed council tax increase for 2025/26. Following a vote, it was **agreed** to recommend an increase of 4.23% (£5 for a Band D property) to the Fire Authority meeting on 17 February 2027.
10. The committee requested that a lobbying letter be sent to Government in response to the consultation on changes to the fire funding formula.

Recommendation

11. Members are requested to note the report.