

## Audit Committee

28 February 2014

Final Accounts Timetable for the year  
ended 31 March 2014



---

**Don McLure, Corporate Director Resources**

---

### Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with the Final Accounts Timetable for 2013/14. This timetable details the deadlines for key actions to complete the Statement of Accounts in line with statutory deadlines.
- 2 The report is presented in accordance with paragraph 4.2.3 of the Committee's operational terms of reference which requires it **'to maintain an understanding of internal and external reporting requirements'**.
- 3 The key dates taken from the Final Accounts Timetable are attached at Appendix 2.

### Background

- 4 The 'Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011' introduced a two stage approval process for the Statement of Accounts; the first stage is in June each year. The Regulations require that the responsible financial officer, by no later than 30 June, signs and certifies that the Statement of Accounts presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the County Council for the year to 31 March previous, subject to the views of the External Auditor.
- 5 The second stage, as set out in the Regulations, requires that on or before the 30 September, approval needs to be given to the Statement of Accounts by resolution of a committee, which for Durham County Council is the Audit Committee. This approval will take into account the views of the External Auditor. This is done so that the Statement of Accounts can then be published.
- 6 In order to ensure that the County Council can meet these statutory deadlines, the process of 'closing the accounts' must be closely managed and monitored.
- 7 The Annual Governance Report (AGR) for 2010/11 produced by External Audit recommended that the County Council

“Ensure closedown arrangements are managed against a close down plan, clearly identifying roles, responsibilities and target dates.”

- 8 The Final Accounts timetable is therefore a combination of the implementation of External Audit’s recommendations and a tool for the effective management and monitoring of the final accounts process.

### **The Timetable**

- 9 Each year the timetable is compiled in Strategic Finance with input from services to ensure that deadlines are achievable and will lead to completion of a Statement of Accounts for signing by the Section 151 Officer by 30 June. New and amended processes are considered for the impact on the achievement of dates, as well as reference to the previous year’s problems and meeting of deadlines.
- 10 Strategic Finance monitors the achievement of the dates in the timetable throughout the period February to September. Although every effort is made to meet every deadline set, there will inevitably be some delays that will lead to some of the deadlines being missed.
- 11 Strategic Finance will follow up all delays and missed deadlines to ensure that the overall timetable will be achieved, and identify improvements that can be made to the next year end process.
- 12 Final Accounts Monitoring Meetings are also held each week during April to May to ensure that practitioners apply accounting procedures consistently; best practice is shared; there is a shared understanding of any difficulties or delays that are happening, and to disseminate updated information quickly and consistently. These meetings are not shown in the timetable, but happen each Thursday.
- 13 This was the process that was in operation for the closedown of the 2011/12 and 2012/13 Accounts, both of which successfully produced the Statement of Accounts in line with the statutory deadline. However, there were still improvements to be made.
- 14 The production of the working papers were of particular concern in the AGR for 2011/12 and the deadline for the production of these has been included in the timetable. The working papers were much improved in 2012/13 and the Balance Sheet items have been reconciled during the current financial year on a monthly basis. The working papers continue to be an area where improvements can be made.
- 15 The main area for improvement is having enough time to complete an effective analytical review of the Statement of Accounts. Being able to do this should reduce the number of errors. Time for undertaking an analytical review has been built into this timetable.

## **Recommendations and reasons**

- 16 Members are asked to note the key dates in the Final Accounts Timetable for 2013/14 detailed in Appendix 2.

---

**Contact: Ian Herberson Tel: 03000 261861**

---

---

## **Appendix 1: Implications**

---

### **Finance –**

There are no direct financial implications arising for the Council as a result of this report, although by implementing the timetable, we are demonstrating efficient arrangements for the proper administration of the County Council's financial affairs and will meet the statutory deadline for the production of the Statement of Accounts.

### **Staffing -**

None

### **Risk -**

This report requires no decision and so a risk assessment has not been carried out

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty -**

None

### **Accommodation -**

None

### **Crime and Disorder -**

None

### **Human Rights -**

None

### **Consultation -**

None

### **Procurement -**

None

### **Disability Issues -**

None

### **Legal Implications -**

None

## Appendix 2: Key dates from the Final Accounts Timetable

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Proposed completion date</b>
Final Accounts Timetable and Guidance Notes issued to key personnel	Strategic Finance	Mon 10 Feb 2014
Meet with External Audit to establish the need for Group Accounts	Strategic Finance	Fri 14 Mar 2014
All cash posted up to and including 31 March	Financial Services – Revenues and Benefits	Mon 31 Mar 2014
Final Postings by Benefits Section	Financial Services – Revenues and Benefits	Mon 31 Mar 2014
Last creditors paysheet for 2013/14	Financial Services – Revenues and Benefits – Creditors	Mon 31 Mar 2014
All stock checks completed at 31 March	Services	Mon 31 Mar 2014
All amounts banked by 31 March to be receipted in Oracle	Services	Mon 31 Mar 2014
Sending out of Related Party Declarations for Members and Senior Officers	Resources – Democratic Services	Tues 01 Apr 2014
Last Monthly Salaries and Wages for 2013/14 information processed into ledger	Payroll / Strategic Finance	Fri 04 Apr 2014
Details of Related Party Declarations for Members and Senior Officers returned to Democratic Services	Members / Senior Officers	Thu 17 Apr 2014
All Bank Reconciliations to 31 March completed	Strategic Finance	Wed 30 Apr 2014
Service Ledgers finalised and final reports produced and net revenue outturn for each Service Grouping notified to Strategic Finance	Financial Services / Strategic Finance	Thu 15 May 2014

<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Proposed completion date</b>
Draft Statement of Accounts completed	Strategic Finance	Fri 13 June 2014
Analytical Review of service balance sheets and outturn to Strategic Finance	Financial Services	Fri 13 June 2014
Draft Statement of Accounts to External Audit for Technical Review	Strategic Finance	Fri 20 June 2014
Chief Financial Officer to sign the Statement of Accounts	Strategic Finance / Corporate Director Resources	Fri 27 June 2014
Statement of Accounts to External Audit	Strategic Finance	Tue 01 July 2014
Start of Statement of Accounts Audit	External Audit	Tue 01 July 2014
Start of Inspection Period (to be confirmed)		Mon 07 July 2014
Cabinet – Overall Outturn Report considered	Strategic Finance	Thu 17 July 2014
End of Inspection Period (to be confirmed)		Fri 25 July 2014
Appointed day for Audit (to be confirmed)		Mon 28 July 2014
Audit Committee Meeting to consider report on the Statement of Accounts	Audit Committee	Thu 31 July 2014
End of Statement of Accounts Audit – provisional	External Audit	Fri 12 Sept 2014
Audit Committee Meeting – approval of Statement of Accounts – Statutory deadline date	Strategic Finance	Tue 30 Sept 2014
Publication of Accounts – Statutory deadline date	Strategic Finance	Tue 30 Sept 2014