

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 30 October 2023

PRESENT: Councillor M Gannon (Chair)
Councillor(s): C Donovan and R Beadle

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on the 27 October 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

5 AUDIT COMPLETION REPORT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2022/23

Consideration has been given to Mazars Audit Completion Report 2022/23, including the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

The key messages are follows;

- Audit Opinion – At the time of issuing the report, and subject to satisfactory conclusion of the remaining audit work, Mazars anticipate issuing an unqualified opinion, without modification, on the financial statements. However, this is subject to the conclusion of matters in relation to pensions.
- Identified misstatements – the auditor's work identified a number of misstatements that have been discussed with management. A summary of the identified misstatements is set out in the report.
- Value for Money – at the time of issuing the report, Mazars anticipate having no significant weaknesses in arrangements to report in relation to the arrangements that the Council has in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
- Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) – the timetable for the Council's submission for 2022/23 has been published. Audit work will commence once the return is complete.
- Wider Powers – the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires the auditor to give an elector, or any other representative of the elector, the opportunity to question them about the accounting record of the Council and to consider any objection to the accounts. No questions or objections have been received.

The report also includes a draft Letter of Representation to Mazars to be approved by the Committee prior to being signed by the Strategic Director, Resources and Digital following the issue of the audit opinion.

The Statement of Accounts is materially consistent with the 2022/23 revenue and capital outturn reports considered by Cabinet on 20 June 2023. Along with minor adjustments and presentational changes, the following significant findings and misstatements to the Statement submitted for audit on 31 May 2023 have been identified through the audit process. These are outlined in Mazars Audit Completion Report.

None of the changes to the Statement of Accounts impact on the revenue and capital outturn positions reported to Cabinet, nor do they affect the position of any usable reserves. Management have assessed the identified unadjusted misstatement as not being material, either individually or in aggregate to the financial statements, and does not plan to adjust.

Mazars gave an update at the meeting on issues raised within its Audit Completion Report.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the contents of Mazars Audit Completion Report and updates given at the meeting be noted.
 - (ii) That the issue of the Letter of Representation by the Strategic Director, Resources and Digital on behalf of the Council be approved, subject to confirmation of the final position on misstatements and outstanding work.
 - (iii) That the Statement of Accounts 2022/23 be approved for publication.
 - (iv) That the Strategic Director, Resources and Digital, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, be given delegated powers to authorise the Statement of Accounts for issue, subject to the satisfactory outcome of the outstanding issues and receipt of the audit opinion from Mazars.

Chair.....