

**BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Governance Committee**  
**Decision Report**  
**Thursday 25 April 2024**

**1. Review of Out-turn Against Probable 2023/24**

**Recommendation**

**The Governance Committee resolve to confirm the financial situation following the completion of the accounts for 2023/24.**

**Ward**

Not ward specific.

**Risk Management**

To provide the required updates to reflect the financial standing of the Council.

**Objective**

To ensure compliance with the Governance arrangements in place as outlined within the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

**Report**

**Review of Out-turn Against Probable 2023/24**

During the process of preparing the final accounts for 2023/24, a comparison was carried out between the Probable, as prepared at the time the budget was being considered, and the Out-turn. Although the Out-turn reflects a lower level of net expenditure of some £59k, this is within 4.2% of the Probable Budget.

The reduced out-turn is mainly brought about by a decrease in expenditure for the:

Governance Committee (£8k) which is mainly a further reduction in Staff costs, and additional investment income.

Increase in expenditure

Environment Committee (£5k) which is mainly 4k allotment expenditure following the repair of water mains at the Bolam site.

Decrease in expenditure

Community Development Committee (£56k) which is mainly due to a £34k reduction on grants paid and further reductions on the provision of events.

The Council have balances of £1,114,983 as at 31 March 2024,

Shown on:

Appendix A is a summary by Committee and

Appendix B is the situation regarding the Council's Reserves

## **2. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24**

### **Recommendation**

**The Committee resolve to approve the documents listed in connection with the Annual Governance and Accountability return 2023/24 prior to approval by the Council before submission to the External Auditor:**

### **Ward**

Not ward specific.

### **Risk Management**

To provide the required documents to reflect the financial standing of the Council in order for the External Auditor to give their independent opinion.

### **Objective**

To ensure compliance with the Governance arrangements in place as outlined within the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

### **Report**

The key sections within the Annual Return for 2023/24 have been prepared and are attached. These documents have been prepared on the guidance given by the external auditor for the accounts.

The Council's Internal Auditor has also submitted his annual summary report which is attached.

## Appendices

1. Council's Internal Auditor's Report
2. Annual Internal Audit Report for 2023/24
3. Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24
4. Accounting Statements for 2023/24

### **3. Appointment of Internal Auditor 2024/25**

#### **Recommendation**

**The Governance Committee resolve to confirm the appointment of Mike Slaughter as Internal Auditor for the financial year 2024/25.**

#### **Ward**

Not ward specific.

#### **Risk Management**

To have in place effective internal audit coverage for the Council.

#### **Objective**

To ensure compliance with the Governance arrangements in place as outlined within the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

#### **Report**

The Council is required to have in place an effective internal audit resource, to evaluate the impact of its risk management, control, and governance processes, in consideration with the guidance for such Councils as ours.

The Internal Audit Review for 2022/23 and 2023/24 were carried out by Mike Slaughter, who has extensive experience within Local Government. Mike has been of benefit to the Council in his approach etc.

If the Council are agreeable Mike would be willing to do the 2024/25 audit.

## Appendix A

Committee	Probable 2023/24 £	Out-Turn 2023/24 £
Governance	354,426	346,484
Environment	494,625	499,807
Community Development	377,220	321,359
Overall Net Expenditure	1,226,271	1,167,650

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
	<b>Probable</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Net service Expend	1,226,271	1,167,650
Precept Income	1,402,764	1,402,764
Use of Reserves	(176,493)	(235,114)
Total Resources	1,226,271	1,167,650

### Position of Reserves

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
	<b>Probable</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>
1 April B/F	879,869	879,869	1,056,362	1,114,983*
From/(To) Reserves	176,493	(235,114)	162,045	162,045
31 March C/F	1,056,362	1,114,983	894,317	952,938*

\*Of which £103k has been earmarked for the Skate Park installation 2024/25.

The additional balances of £59k going into 2024/25 do not materially affect the Council's 7-year plan, and this will be subject to a further report at the next Governance Committee.

In considering the estimated reserves of £950k at 31/03/2025, Members should note that the following:

- Good practice level of reserves £400k
- Self-insurance of £350k

Council will be left with estimated operational reserves of £200k.

**Malcolm Wilkinson**  
**Deputy Town Clerk**

**22 April 2024**