

# STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

## Council

23 June 2026

### Town Clerk's Open Report

#### 1. Year End Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2026

- **To approve the Year End Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026, including any reserve movements and virements**

The draft year-end accounts (pre year-end adjustments) were presented at the Governance, Finance & Audit Committee Meeting on 2 June 2026, along with the schedule of year-end reserve transfers (for both designated and restricted reserves) and any virements. The accounts were noted, and, subject to further amendments,

Under minute 8.3, it was subsequently

***RECOMMENDED: That any amendments to the designated [edit: and restricted] reserves and virements be approved.***

These further amendments have been made and are reflected in Appendix 'A', which members are asked to approve.

Following year-end adjustments and the requested changes to the reserve transfers, the 2025/26 budget has resulted in an increase in the general reserve of £113,785, bringing the total to £321,342. This increase has now brought the general reserve level in line with the reserve policy for the first time in a number of years.

Where additional reserve transfers have been requested, these balances have been updated under 2025/26 expenditure figures and so some budget lines appear significantly over budget, or have no budget against them if new codes, however this is purely to do with the change in reserve transfers. Any budget line that is linked to a change in reserve has been highlighted.

Town Hall Hire (Town Hall Commercial Management) has made a small surplus of £4,197. The Cemetery & Open Spaces continue to operate at a loss, with a net deficit of £132,793. Deferred income stands at £104,538 which is made up of future bookings for Town Hall Hire, a proportion of the market contract and some rents.

**Members are asked to approve the Year End Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026, including any reserve movements and virements.**

## **2. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26**

- **To approve Section 1 - the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return**
- **To approve Section 2 - the Accounting Statements 2025/26 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return**

It is necessary for Council to approve sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) in June each year, as the deadline for submission to the External Auditor is on or before 30 June. The responsibility to approve these documents cannot be delegated to a Standing Committee.

The Council's Internal Auditor, Mulberry LAS, has completed the annual internal audit which forms page 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), the Internal Audit Report.

The Internal Audit Report, together with sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR, are attached as Appendices B, C and D. Any changes to these documents will be tabled at the meeting and a verbal update given.

In line with official guidance, the documents should be formally and individually approved by Council in the following order:

- 2.1 Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26
- 2.2 Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2026/26

It is therefore

**RECOMMENDED:** That Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) – the Annual Governance Statement for the year 2025/26, be approved by Council.

and

**RECOMMENDED:** That Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) – the Annual Accounting Statements for the year 2025/26, be approved by Council.

### **3. Recommendations from Finance and Audit Committee 24 March 2026**

- **To approve the recommendations of the Finance & Audit Committee, 24 March 2026**

3.1 At the Finance & Audit Committee meeting of 24 March 2026, the appointment of the internal auditor for 2026-27 and beyond was discussed. The quote is attached as Appendix E.

#### ***Minute 37.4 To Review and Appoint the Internal Auditor for 2026-27***

*The RFO presented to members pricing for re-appointing the existing internal auditor, Mulberry LAS, for up to 3 years. There was concern from some members about change in pricing following any changes to the Town Council following the Local Government Review, whether the fixed rate would remain. The RFO agreed to raise the question with Mulberry LAS, and subject to this agreement: -*

*It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed to approve this.*

**RECOMMENDED** That Mulberry LAS are appointed as the Internal Auditors for the next 3 years (2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29).

Following the question regarding a fixed rate remaining after the Local Government Review, Mulberry LAS has confirmed they will honour the quoted rate.

It is therefore

**RECOMMENDED:** That the appointment of Mulberry LAS as the Internal Auditors for the next 3 years (2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29) be approved by Council.

- 3.2 Members were also asked to undertake the annual review of the Risk Register at the above meeting. The Risk Register is attached as Appendix F.

***Minute 37.5 Annual Review of the Risk Register***

*Members were asked in advance to review the Risk Register and bring any concerns to the meeting. The RFO recommended adding the investment strategy to the financial controls section of the risk register.*

*The Risk Management policy will be reviewed in September, in alignment with the Council's policy review schedule.*

*It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed to approve the Risk Register for recommendation to Council.*

***RECOMMENDED*** ***That the risk register be approved, subject to the addition of the investment strategy as a financial control.***

It is therefore

**RECOMMENDED:** That the risk register be approved by Council, subject to the addition of the investment strategy as a financial control.

Town Clerk