

# Audit and Performance Committee Meeting

<b>Date:</b>	Thursday 14th July 2016
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	2015/16 Annual Accounts – <b>FORMAL APPROVAL</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	City Treasurer
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	The efficient and effective management of the Council's financial affairs
<b>Report Author and Contact Details:</b>	<b>Steven Mair – City Treasurer</b> <a href="mailto:smair@westminster.gov.uk">smair@westminster.gov.uk</a>

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The revenue outturn of the Council for the year 2015/16 is now confirmed as an under spend of £5.540m against net budget. The items contributing to this underspend are detailed in section 4.
- 1.2 The capital outturn for the financial year 2015/16 was an underspend of £11.916m against budget. Further information on the capital programme is contained within section 5.
- 1.3 Grant Thornton's audit findings provide an unqualified opinion on the accounts with no material errors identified during the audit.
- 1.4 Since the meeting of the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016 only minor changes have been made to the accounts. The most significant of which is within Note 6 to reference the potential impact of the EU referendum decision.
- 1.5 All previous objections from 2008/09 to 2014/15 have now been resolved and the accounts for those years formally signed off. This is also noted in note 6 to the accounts as a change from the signed annual governance statement.
- 1.6 At the date of the preparation of this report there are no outstanding objections for the year 2015/16.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Council prepared its final accounts for 2015/16 and submitted them to the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton, for audit on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015. This is a full 12 weeks in advance of the statutory requirement of the 30 June.
- 2.2 Due to a change in legislation, formal approval of the accounts is not possible before a fixed period of public inspection has taken place. The change in legislation meant that this must now include the first ten working days in July. Therefore the inspection period has taken place between the 3<sup>rd</sup> June and 14<sup>th</sup> July 2016.
- 2.3 A draft report was brought to Audit and Performance committee on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016 along with the draft audit report. This meeting is to agree the final audited accounts and audit reports.
- 2.4 The Council has very significantly improved the quality and the timeliness of its accounts. This has been achieved through the financial transformation programme that was put in place for 2014/15 and which has continued into 2015/16 and which will continue going forward.
- 2.5 The accounts are shown as the Appendix 1 and contain full detail of the Authority's finances for the year.

## **3. Information**

- 3.1 Due to the draft report on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016, some of the information contained below has previously been reported. However, for completeness it is included alongside the newly reported information below as this meeting represents the formal approval of the accounts.

## **4. Revenue Outturn by Cabinet Member**

- 4.1 Since the meeting of the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016, there have been no changes to the outturn position from the draft accounts submitted at that meeting.
- 4.2 As shown in Table 2 below, at year end the Council has delivered an under spend of £5.540m against the net budget. This is significantly due to:
  - A £2.190m net surplus from the Parking service arising from contract budget underspends (£1.5m), combined with additional income (£0.690m).
  - Additional income from Commercial Waste net of additional disposal costs (£1.878m)
  - A net surplus in Highways (£1.842m) from staffing vacancies and lower spend on reactive maintenance, particularly on footways

The outturn by cabinet portfolio is set out below:

**Table 1 – Period 12 Actual Outturn by Cabinet Member**

<b>Cabinet Portfolio Structure</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual Outturn</b>	<b>Variance to Budget</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Leader of the Council	7,300	7,181	(119)
Deputy Leader and Built Environment	3,914	3,296	(618)
Finance and Corporate Services	29,225	28,811	(414)
Children and Young People	41,043	40,914	(129)
Housing, Regeneration, Business & Economic Development	28,457	28,387	(70)
Public Protection	9,916	9,262	(654)
Sustainability and Parking	(43,730)	(45,966)	(2,236)
City Management and Customer Services	44,687	43,684	(1,003)
Adults & Public Health	64,030	63,831	(199)
Sport and Leisure	11,464	11,366	(98)
<b>SERVICE AREA TOTAL</b>	<b>196,306</b>	<b>190,766</b>	<b>(5,540)</b>

Council Tax	46,043	46,043	-
Business Rates Net of Tariff	80,224	80,224	-
Revenue Support Grant	70,039	70,039	-
<b>Corporate Financing</b>	<b>196,306</b>	<b>196,306</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net (Surplus) / Deficit</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(5,540)</b>	<b>(5,540)</b>

#### **Leader of the Council (Cllr Roe)**

- 4.3 The favourable variance of £0.119m was delivered by year end against this portfolio.
- 4.4 This arose from the Chief of Staff's Office (£0.086m), due to vacancies that were not recruited to (£0.034m), together with underspends on mayoral expenses (£0.024m), staff travel (£0.011m) and £0.017m across other overheads.
- 4.5 A further surplus of £0.033m arose within Policy, Performance and Communications as a result of employee costs being lower than budget (£0.343m) and over achievement on income (£0.325m) of which £0.160m relates to air quality grant income and £0.121m to funding from RBKC and LBHF for the business intelligence project. However, this was offset by adverse variances on expenditure of £0.635m, of which £0.419m was due to contract services with balance across other non-pay expenditure.

## **Deputy Leader of the Council and Built Environment (Cllr Davis)**

- 4.6 The favourable outturn variance of £0.618m arises as a result of a £0.516m surplus in Planning, and under spends of £0.102m in City Promotions, Events and Filming.
- 4.7 Within Planning, there were underspends in Development Planning on staffing (£0.8m), increased income from planning applications (£0.6m), offset by reduced income on rechargeable work, notably building control (£0.73m), and other minor overspends.
- 4.8 The under spend in City Promotions, Events and Filming of £0.102m was due to an under spend of £0.135m resulting from staff vacancies and an over achievement on income of £0.092m. However, this was offset by an over spend of £0.125m, mainly due to contract spend being greater than budget.

## **Finance and Corporate Services (Cllr Mitchell)**

- 4.9 An under spend of £0.414m is reported for this portfolio, arising from variances across a number of directorates.
- A minor under spend arose within the City Treasurer directorate due to improved net interest earnings on loans and investments which delivered a favourable impact on net financing costs, offset by technical adjustments required in the financial statements.
  - An under spend arose within Development and Transformation service (£0.208m), mainly driven by employee related costs being lower than budget. This was the result of vacancies being held during the year to mitigate against pressures in other areas of the directorate.
  - An under spend of £0.103m, driven by under spends within Members Services (£0.158m), mainly relating to the members allowance; the Customer and Complaints team, under spent by £0.061m; offset by £0.116m on Coroner's Services, mainly due to funeral expenses (£0.074m), legal fees (£0.017m) and other overheads (£0.025m).
  - Corporate Services delivered an under spend of £0.164m against the full year budget, the key driver for which was staff vacancies within HR. At P10 it was viewed that the Procurement service could undergo a restructure at a Bi-Borough level which would have delivered savings and equivalent costs of delivery. No decision was confirmed however and no restructure has taken place.
  - WCC business rates income has been significantly lower than CLG assumed baseline funding levels since the start of localised rates. (Lower by £57m in 2013/14 and £66m in 2014/15). It was a further £65m lower in 2015/16. The Council is however protected against a loss in excess of £6m loss by the safety net and thus the Council's budget was balanced in this regard. It is likely that a safety net payment will also be required next

year. The 2017 Revaluation has the potential to create further similar problems in future years

### **Children and Young People (Cllr Chalkley)**

- 4.10 Overall the Children's Services directorate has reported an outturn underspend of £0.129m. This is an improvement on the breakeven projection at P10.
- 4.11 The Commissioning service was underspent by £0.042m as it delivered early MTP savings on Early Years, Legal & Family Partnership budgets, which offset overspends on Assessment and Contact services, plus staffing and transitional costs associated with the delayed implementation of the restructure to the service.
- 4.12 Family Services had an adverse outturn of £1.136m mainly arising from significant demand-led pressures relating to external private and residential placement costs brought about through Government strategy and/or legislative changes. Although placement expenditure has decreased by the MTP target, it still remains a significant cost pressure to the service overall. There were also in-year cuts in Government grant funding for the Youth Offending Service and also the late delivery of MTP savings relating to Play and Children's Centres.
- 4.13 There were also overspends within the Schools Commissioning and Education service of £0.364m mainly due to overspends on the SEN passenger transport contract as the number of high needs, high cost service users have been higher than anticipated. There were also pressures as a result of unfunded posts required to support service stability through the conversion of SEN Statements into the new Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) format. These overspends were partially mitigated by underspends within school standards as a result of increased income.
- 4.14 The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance service had a small overspend a result of additional agency expenditure to cover short term vacancies (£0.052m).
- 4.15 The Finance and Resources service had a favourable outturn of £1.580m as it has delivered underspends from Social Care Legal, Transport and Building Schools for the Future budgets.

### **Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development (Cllr Astaire)**

- 4.16 A favourable variance of £0.070m is reported, comprised of a number of variances.
- 4.17 Within the variances stemming from Growth, Planning and Housing (£0.287m net overspend), the Temporary Accommodation service overspent by £3.5m as a result of increased demand and higher weekly average costs of provision. This was largely mitigated by savings within the Supporting People

service (£1.0m), the use of a one off Temporary Accommodation reserve (£2.0m) and one off additional government grant funding which had not been budgeted for (£0.2m). There was a £1.1m under recovery of income within Major Projects as a result of slippage in the capital programme, £0.100m overspend from lower recharges than budgeted and a £0.090m overspend from a reorganisation within Infrastructure Services. These costs are offset by £0.325m of additional funding from Public Health in Housing Operations; additional recharges to HRA for telephony (£0.254m); a grant received but not budgeted for within Affordable Housing (£0.095); savings within Housing Conditions from valuation fees budget not being spent in full (£0.067m) and other overheads across the portfolio.

- 4.18 A £0.881m surplus in CMC predominantly relates to an income surplus to budget in Tables and Chairs licensing with £0.035m from licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation.

The above position is offset by over spend of £0.524m relating to Cross River Partnership. This is mainly due to an over spend against payments to service providers. The over spend of £0.524m was absorbed within the directorate and offset by under spend in other services.

#### **Public Protection (Cllr Aiken)**

- 4.19 This portfolio is reporting a year end surplus variance against budget of £0.654m.
- 4.20 Favourable variances have arisen across the services, predominantly arising from staff vacancies (£0.674m), additional recharge income (£0.605m), partially offset by the funding of the CCTV service and a contribution towards the creation of a fund for future years' MTP change initiatives (£0.6m), while other minor variations make up the total outturn surplus variance.

#### **Sustainability and Parking (Cllr Acton)**

- 4.21 The surplus of £2.236m is attributable to both underspends (£1.5m) and an increase in revenue streams from suspension and trade permit tariff increases implemented during the second half of the year (a net £0.69m). A small staffing under spend of £0.051m in the Service Development and Transformation team contributes to the overall surplus in this portfolio.

#### **City Management and Customer Services (Cllr Caplan)**

- 4.22 The City Management and Customer Services portfolio has delivered a full year surplus of £1.003m.
- 4.23 The surplus relates to highways maintenance underspends and staffing vacancies of £1.842m and commercial waste income growth net of additional collection and disposal costs of £1.878m, offset by establishing resources of £1.2m on the Council's balance sheet which, subject to approval of business case submissions, may be available for release to fund future years' MTP

change initiatives, by way of example the digitisation agenda and libraries transformation. This combined surplus of £2.520m is offset by pressures in Roads Management income linked to the statutory fees in the service (£0.662m), other running cost pressures in the portfolio (£0.361m) and digital programme costs (£0.335m). In addition, the Agilisys contract was over spent by £0.059m, mainly due to one-off software purchases. However, this was funded from under spends from within the Policy, Performance and Communications directorate.

### **Adults and Public Health (Cllr Robathan)**

- 4.24 The Outturn position for Adults and Public Health as at 31st March 2016 is an under spend of £0.199m. The main reasons for the variance are direct payment claw-backs of care payments received in March and general movements in placement packages. All in year budget pressures were contained within existing resources and the outturn includes the achievement of the £6m savings target for 2015/16.
- 4.25 The anticipated risk in the Homecare forecast of £0.1m at P10 did not materialise as it was mitigated by a slower than expected transfer of packages to new contracts.
- 4.26 There will continue to be on-going pressures on ASC budgets and a forecast growth in demand for care services as a result of increasing numbers of older people, people with disabilities and people with long term health conditions needing care. These demographic pressures are exacerbated by increasing pressure from hospitals to discharge patients in a timely fashion, particularly during the winter months. In addition there is pressure from a reduced capacity to make efficiencies from external care providers without affecting the quality of care they provide along with an increase in homecare costs. Internal reviews of all areas of expenditure are on-going in order to mitigate pressure from care placements. Using ONS & GLA data, demographic pressures have been estimated as being approximately 1.7% of total placement budgets each year for the next 10 years at approximately £1.1m to £1.2m p.a. and this is being closely monitored for financial planning.
- 4.27 On the 4th June 2015 it was announced by the Treasury that Non-NHS Health budgets are to be cut in-year by £200m (6.2%) across England. WCC's current share of the total Public Health funding for 2015/16 is £33.477m. For WCC this equated to a cut of £2.076m which was met from contract underspends and unexpected underspends in Public Health Investment Fund approved projects. In the Spending Review the Chancellor advised that there would be further savings in the Public Health grant - an average real terms saving of 3.9% each year to 2020/21.

### **Sports and Leisure (Cllr Harvey)**

- 4.28 The outturn position for was an under spend of £0.098m mainly due to various budgets that were under spent by £0.257m offset by a deficit relating to

Registrars income pressures and Sayers Croft supplies and services amounting to a total £0.159m.

## 5. Capital outturn by Cabinet Member

5.1 The table below shows the Approved Budget and projects by Cabinet Member Portfolio for 2015/16.

**Table 2 – Capital 2015/16 Outturn by Cabinet Member**

Cabinet Portfolio Structure	Revised Gross Capital £000	Revised External Income £000	Budget (Net) £000	Final Gross Capital £000	Final External Income £000	Outturn Net £000	Gross Expend vs Budget £000	External Income vs Budget £000	Net Spend Variance £000
Deputy Leader and Built Env. - Cllr Davis	20,242	(16,582)	3,661	18,207	(16,585)	1,622	2,036	3	2,038
Finance and Corporate Services- Cllr Mitchell	18,163	(3,576)	14,587	12,756	(6,922)	5,834	5,407	3,346	8,753
Children and Young People - Cllr Chalkley	6,124	(5,565)	559	7,521	(7,223)	297	(1,396)	1,658	262
Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development - Cllr Astaire	35,859	(28,742)	7,117	17,261	(8,332)	8,929	18,598	(20,410)	(1,812)
Public Protection - Cllr Aiken	112	0	112	66	0	66	46	0	46
Sustainability And Parking - Cllr Acton	805	0	805	0	0	0	805	0	805
City Management and Customer services - Cllr Caplan	11,049	(173)	10,876	12,084	(2,316)	9,769	(1,035)	2,143	1,108
Adults and Public Health - Cllr Robathan	92	(165)	(73)	262	(151)	110	(170)	(14)	(183)
Sports and Leisure Services - Cllr D Harvey	2,250	(75)	2,175	1,276	0	1,276	974	(75)	899
<b>SERVICE AREA TOTAL</b>	<b>94,697</b>	<b>(54,878)</b>	<b>39,819</b>	<b>69,432</b>	<b>(41,530)</b>	<b>27,903</b>	<b>25,265</b>	<b>(13,349)</b>	<b>11,916</b>
<b>Financing:</b>			(39,819)			(27,903)			
<b>Net</b>			0			0			

### Deputy Leader of the Council and Built Environment (Cllr Davis)

5.2 The portfolio reported a gross underspend against budget of £2.036m which on a net basis was £2.038m. Within the portfolio there were the following variances due to re-profiling or underspends:

- Oxford Street West: £0.568m
- Westbourne & Paddington: £0.400m
- Queensway street scene: £0.250m
- Leicester Square redesign: £0.130m
- Harrow road range of schemes: £0.320m
- Combination of other minor variations across a range of projects: £0.368m

### Finance and Corporate Services (Cllr Mitchell)

5.3 The portfolio reported a gross underspend against budget of £5.407m which on a net basis was £8.753m. Variances included underspends of (£434k) on the new Tresham House community centre where the final costs out-turned at £4m. There was also slippage of £129k on feasibility costs for the new Marylebone library (budget £590k), and £600k on the Sir Simon Milton Westminster UTC (budget £3.9m). These were offset by increased in year expenditure against expectation of £1.4m on site assembly costs at Huguenot house (approved budget £1.1m) where spend is largely determined by opportunity, and five properties became available and were purchased in year. The landlords responsibility budget of £2.9m underspent by £2m, this budget is essentially resources that can be drawn down if required to undertake essential repairs on corporate property. The forward management plan a



contractually committed works budget of £1.6m managed by AMEY also slipped £742k. The remainder of the variance can be explained by a large number of other projects with smaller individual variances.

- 5.4 At the end of March 2016 the Corporate Service's year end capital spend was £711k which compared to the revised budget of £1,475k. The main reason for this under spend of £764k was the reclassification of one project from capital to revenue which is explained below.
- 5.5 In 2015/16 a capital budget of £790k was created for Office 365 and Strategic Infrastructure Platform (SIP). The nature of the expenditure was deemed to be revenue and was funded by underspends as the council is procuring a service from a provider and not owning an asset. In addition, there was an under spend of £10k relating to software licences however additional expenditure of £34k was incurred relating to Airwatch licences.
- 5.6 The key capital projects related to data centre and network refresh which made up £541k of the total spend of £711k. The data centre and network refresh covered equipment refresh, planned activity for transition away from VMB/Ericsson contracts and general LAN switch updates which are not covered by the City Hall refurbishment programme e.g. Lisson Grove. Also work was under taken on the existing Westminster Netcall platform and a telephony software upgrade under the existing Ericsson contract. A further £112k was been incurred on the purchase and configuration of computers for end users. The remaining balance was made up of smaller ad hoc projects.

### **Children and Young People (Cllr Chalkley)**

- 5.7 The Children's Services capital programme delivered £7,521k of works in 2015/16, of which £7,223k was funded externally and £297k by the Council's own funds. Of the £7,521k, £6,414k was spent on projects delivering additional school/college places, whilst £1,106k of refurbishment works were delivered across schools (£883k) and non-schools sites (£223k).
- 5.8 The variance to revised budget of £4.363m is materially explained by an overachievement against programme of the final school in the Building Schools for the Future programme (Quintin Kynaston) of £1.778m. The remainder of the variance is a result of various other smaller project variances.
- 5.9 Income varied by £1,658k primarily because of the grant income associated with the £1,778k Quintin Kynaston BSF project. The overall net position was therefore £262k.

## **Housing, Regeneration, Business and Economic Development (Cllr Astaire)**

- 5.10 The revised gross expenditure budget was £35.859m, the outturn was £17.261m producing an overall variance of £18.598m but just £1.812m on a net basis because grant movements have varied largely in line with spend. The main reason for this was the Affordable Housing Fund (AHF), which underspent by £23.7m. The re-profiling was caused by delays in Westminster Community Homes (£5m) infill programme and in Dolphin square progressing its Incubator scheme (£18m). This was partly offset by an additional +£2m spend upon acquiring TA properties for temporary accommodation, where 40 properties rather than 37 were purchased and the average cost was £27k more than budget due to market conditions. The balance was made up from a number of other variances.

## **Public Protection (Cllr Aiken)**

- 5.11 This portfolio is reporting a gross and net year end underspend of £46k against a gross budget of £112k. This was a result of an underspend on minor ICT projects to support mobile working.

## **Sustainability and Parking (Cllr Acton)**

- 5.12 This portfolio reported a gross and net variance of £805k which included slippage from 14/15 of £240k on enforcement. This activity was funded from within the Parking revenue surplus position.

## **City Management and Customer Services (Cllr Caplan)**

- 5.13 The portfolio overachieved against a budget of £11.049m gross capital expenditure by £1.035m and in respect of the income budget of £173k by £2.143m due to external funding in bridges, structures and highways works. The gross expenditure variance was materially as a result of a number of Bridges and Structures projects totalling £850k delivering programme activity against budgets which had previously been re-profiled.
- 5.14 There was a gross overspend to budget on externally-funded schemes, offset by a reflection of external funding above budget (£2.143m) which relates predominantly to circa 65 externally-funded schemes – such as Developer-funded Footways works – that have come in or commenced during the year.

## **Adults and Public Health (Cllr Robathan)**

- 5.15 The 2015/16 final outturn position is a gross capital expenditure over achievement against net budget of £170k or £183k on a net basis. This variance to revised budget is because of a late addition of a grant funded Resources Allocation System in Period 11 (£39k) and the Barnard & Florey reconfiguration (£0.182m) which had been slipped into 2016/17 due to issues related to permissions and extension of leases which incurred more

expenditure against programme than planned. A number of other small project variances make up the balance.

### **Sports and Leisure (Cllr Harvey)**

- 5.16 The portfolio underspent against a budget of £2.250m gross capital expenditure by £974k with an income variance of £75k leaving a net position of £899k underspent. This was largely because the Moberly leisure scheme (£0.9m) has been re-profiled to 2016/17 and a range of minor maintenance works in leisure facilities (£0.075m).

## **6 Housing Revenue Account**

- 6.1 This section details the Housing Revenue Account year end position for 2015/16.

### **Revenue Expenditure**

- 6.2 The HRA commenced the year with some significant financial challenges as a result of continuing policy and legislative changes from Central Government. However, the operating position for the year culminated in a surplus of £1.380m, which represented an adverse variance of £6.6m from budget. This is mainly due to lower than expected recovery of leaseholders major works income as a result of slippages in the last and current year Capital programme, lower than expected net rental income due to higher right to buy (RTB) and discretionary stock disposals and higher depreciation charges for the dwelling stock. These adverse variances are partially compensated for by lower than expected repairs and maintenance costs and release of lessee bad debt provision that is no longer required.

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **HRA Capital Outturn - 2015-16**

Description	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Major Works	46,500	29,887	(16,613)
Regeneration/Renewals	28,686	15,612	(13,074)
Other Projects	18,257	9,187	(9,070)
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>93,443</b>	<b>54,685</b>	<b>(38,758)</b>

- 6.3 The HRA Capital outturn was £54.6m against a revised budget of £93.4m, resulting in a variance of £38.8m, see table above. This overall variance is made up of £16.6m on major works to existing stock, £13.1m on Regeneration

and Renewal schemes and £9.1m on non-delegated schemes. It is anticipated that this slippage will be reviewed and re-profiled in future years.

- 6.4 The major works variance is largely the result of a number of factors including the need to re-scope and repackage schemes in order to reduce the impact of multiple leaseholder bills, and to protracted leaseholder consultation processes that have delayed some schemes getting on site.
- 6.5 The regeneration and renewal variance is made up of variances on Ebury Bridge £9.7m, Lisson Arches £2.4m, Tollgate Gardens £1.8m, Parsons North £0.7m and Luton St £0.6m along with some other smaller variances.
- Ebury Bridge – The £9.7m slippage is due to delay in completing the compulsory purchase order (CPO) of 31 of the 66 properties planned buybacks, decanting of tenants and the Soho block acquisition. The construction programme originally envisaged to commence on site in 2015/16 is now likely to be delayed into 2017/18 depending on the rephrasing option selected and procurement route to secure a developer. The unspent buyback budget will be carried forward to meet future buyback costs.
  - Lisson Arches - The £2.4m slippage is due to delay in completing enabling works as the build programme is now expected to commence in 2016/17. The unspent enabling works budget will be carried forward to complete enabling works in advance of the build programme.
  - Tollgate Gardens – The £1.8m slippage is due to delay in completing buyback of units for Tollgate Gardens. A Letter of Intent is underway that provides pre-construction services under the development agreement. Buy-backs are expected to re-commence in mid-2016 so the unspent budget will be carried forward to meet the buyback costs.
  - Parsons North – The £0.7m slippage is due to delay in securing a development partner. The unspent budget will be carried forward to meet project commitments.
  - Luton Street – The £0.6m slippage is due to delay in completing enabling works. The unspent budget will be carried forward to meet project commitments

### **Others**

- 6.6 The £9.1m variance mainly relates to slippage related to Ashbridge £6.9m and the Infill scheme £0.5m as both these projects are slow to start plus slippage for the Self financing scheme £1m all of which are to be carried forward to 2016/17. The planned acquisitions for Dudley House and Moberly/Jubilee are now complete and no further costs are expected in the HRA. The Edgware Road redevelopment is being re-scoped and reports an underspend.

## **7 Balance Sheet**

- 7.1 The Balance Sheet net assets moved from £1.777bn in 2014/15 to £1.898bn in 2015/16. This is mainly due to cash/investment balances increasing year on year and liabilities decreasing following a reduction in short term borrowing and revenue receipts in advance.
- 7.2 There was an increase in the Council's fixed asset base due to capital expenditure incurred in Westminster's City for All capital programme.

A summary position is shown in **Table 3** overleaf:

**Table 3 – Balance Sheet Summary**

31 March 2015		31 March 2016	Movement
£'000		£'000	£'000
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<u>Non-current</u>			
1,937,025	Property, plant and equipment	1,952,377	15,352
42,746	Heritage assets	42,746	-
402,880	Investment property	405,269	2,389
2,394	Intangible assets	1,830	(564)
40,773	Long-term investments	45,916	5,143
24,573	Long-term debtors	12,394	(12,179)
<b>2,450,391</b>	<b>Total long term assets</b>	<b>2,460,532</b>	<b>10,141</b>
<u>Current</u>			
344,685	Short-term investments	514,833	170,148
316	Inventories	235	(81)
122,302	Short-term debtors	137,666	15,364
252,942	Cash and other cash equivalents	117,580	(135,362)
1,950	Assets held for sale	2,250	300
<b>722,195</b>	<b>Current assets</b>	<b>772,564</b>	<b>50,369</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
33,902	Short-term borrowing	2,109	(31,793)
266,481	Short-term creditors	259,931	(6,550)
55,391	Revenue receipts in advance	6,151	(49,240)
<b>355,774</b>	<b>Current Liabilities</b>	<b>268,191</b>	<b>(87,583)</b>
221	Long-term creditors	202	(19)
120,725	Provisions	153,936	33,211
251,520	Long-term borrowing	251,465	(55)
641,746	Other long-term liabilities	605,540	(36,206)
25,157	Capital receipts in advance	55,388	30,231
<b>1,039,369</b>	<b>Long-term liabilities</b>	<b>1,066,531</b>	<b>27,162</b>
<b>1,777,443</b>	<b>Net assets</b>	<b>1,898,374</b>	<b>120,931</b>

## 8. Cashflow Outturn

- 8.1 The Council's level of cash and cash equivalents (that is, investments that mature in no more than three days) moved from £252.9m in 2014/15 to £117.8m in 2015/16.
- 8.2 There was a net outflow of £173m as the Council used its cash reserves to make short-term investments (less than one year). This was offset by capital receipts in £86m for use by the Council for investment in its capital programme.

## **9. Pensions**

- 9.1 The Pension Fund annual accounts for 2015/16 were produced and submitted to the same timescales as the council's main accounts. As at the 31 March 2016, the market value of the Fund was £1.066m compared to £1.099m at the start of the financial year. This reduction of £33m can largely be attributed to the disinvestment of assets to cover cash flow requirements. There is a monthly shortfall of £1.5m-£2m which is required to pay the pension benefits and this led to a withdrawal of assets amounting to £25m over the year.
- 9.2 The Fund consists of approximately 70% allocation to equities. Over the final quarter of the year, equity markets have been particularly volatile with the MSCI World index falling more than 11% between the start of 2016 and mid-February, before rebounding to end the quarter down -1.96%. There were no changes to the fund managers during the year.
- 9.3 The Fund's actuary, Barnett Waddingham, estimate the net liability of the Fund as at 31 March 2016 to be £501m compared to £517m the previous year. Their estimate of the duration of the Fund's liabilities is 17 years.

## **10. Objections**

- 10.1 At the start of 2014/15 the Council had two objections outstanding. During the year both of these objections were decided upon by KPMG LLP enabling the authority's accounts for the years 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12 to be certified. In January 2016 a new objection was accepted by the authority's new external auditor, Grant Thornton UK LLP. This new objection related to the provision of car parking enforcement on housing estates managed by City West Homes and covers the years 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15.
- 10.2 The auditor received representations from the Council on the matter and sought to ascertain comments from the objector on those representations. At this point the objector withdrew the final outstanding objection citing a considerable improvement in the engagement with the inspection process and timely responses to both the objector and the external auditors by the Council. Grant Thornton subsequently provided certification for the 3 outstanding years to 2014/15 meaning there are no outstanding objections for the Council and new objections can only relate to the 2015/16 financial year.
- 10.3 The inspection period for the 2015/16 financial year began on the 3rd of June 2016 and runs to 4.30pm on the 14th of July 2016. No objection may be made unless the auditor has previously received written notice of the proposed objection, specifying the facts on which the objector relies and the grounds on which the objection is being made. A copy of that written notice must also be sent to the Council. At the time of dispatching this report, no indications of objection have been received. Should one be received and accepted between dispatch of this report and the deadline on the 14th of July 2016 then the Committee will be verbally updated and the 2015/16 accounts cannot be certified until the issue is resolved.

## 11. Financial Management Quality Transformation

- 11.1 The Council's accounts represent one outcome from the financial management transformation work that is continuing. This will underpin the work of the Council as well as ensuring compliance with statutory requirements, budget management and excellent financial practice.
- 11.2 In support of this approach a series of further improvements have been brought about:
- Lessons learned from 2014/15 were identified and implemented in this year's timetable which was rolled out for period 5 as a partial hard closedown and then monitored and updated throughout the year. This enabled us to identify new requirements such as the implementation of IFRS13 'Fair Value measurement' early and establish a strategy for its successful implementation.
  - The Core Statements and a number of notes can now be generated automatically from the Trial Balance. This reduction in the production time means more attention can be spent interrogating and reviewing the figures which underpin the statements.
  - An enhanced Quality Assurance process which ensured all working papers were produced in a standardised way to enable consistency and accuracy through a centralised QA team.
  - A number of training courses on technical issues were run throughout the year as well as more informal sessions run by WCC staff. These covered areas including technical accounting issues, to working paper production and Agresso training.
  - The asset register was moved onto a cloud based platform significantly improving performance. This enabled a reduction in days of the processes required in uploading year end information significantly contributing towards the faster close.
- 11.3 Using project management disciplines the Council has developed a highly detailed action plan, defined roles and responsibilities, a communication and stakeholder management plan, risk management and progress reporting.
- 11.4 There have been a series of improvements in the 2015/16 accounts themselves. Some examples of matters improved during 2015/16 which in previous years had not been dealt with to the same standard are noted below:
- "de-cluttering" of the accounts, removing those items which are of a non-material nature or do not help to clarify for users of the document.
  - The order of the notes has been amended to help improve the flow of the document. Notes are now ordered based on which Core statement they relate to in order to aid the reader of the accounts.



- A full review of service concessions and similar contracts has taken place to reclassify reference to PFI schemes.
- Inclusion of a “Narrative Report”, replacing the Explanatory Forward.
- More detailed disclosure of material items of income and expenditure
- Improved formatting of draft accounts, so there is minimal difference between the version first presented to audit and that posted online as the final design version.

11.5 Work to drive forward quality further in 2016/17 will be further prioritised.

## **12. Accounts process**

12.1 The Council prepared its final accounts for 2015/16 and submitted them to the Council’s external auditors, Grant Thornton, for audit on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015. This is a full 12 weeks in advance of the statutory requirement of the 30 June.

12.2 The Council has very significantly improved the quality and the timeliness of its accounts. This has been achieved through the financial transformation programme that was put in place for 2014/15 and which has continued into 2015/16 and which will continue going forward.

12.3 The accounts are shown as the Appendix 1 and contain full detail of the Authority’s finances for the year. At the date of this report these are in the process of being audited with no issues identified to date.

12.4 The Authority has continued accelerating the timeliness of its closedown process and simultaneously targeting improving the quality of its final accounts preparation.

12.5 In recent prior years the date that the Authority has submitted its accounts for audit has been as follows:

- 2012/13            30th June 2013
- 2013/14            19th May 2014
- 2014/15            16th April 2015
- 2015/16            9th April 2016

## **13. External Audit**

13.1 The audit findings report submitted on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016 identified a small number of items which were being finalised by external audit. Since this report those items can be updated

13.2 Critical judgements made by management and the PWC IAS19 disclosures were submitted and reviewed by external audit. These were agreed as appropriate.

13.3 Final sample testing was completed and a review of the revised trial balance to the financial statements confirmed that no changes were required to the figures presented on the 12<sup>th</sup> May to committee.

- 13.4 The management letters of representation for the Council and the Pension fund are included within the papers to this meeting in Appendices 2 and 3.
- 13.5 The Whole of Government Accounts audit work is due to be carried out in September/October in line with prescribed timelines for completion.
- 13.6 The final audit findings reports for the Council and the Pension fund are included as Appendices 4 and 5.

#### **14. Recommendation to Committee**

- 14.1 That the Audit and Performance Committee formally approve the 2015/16 accounts.
- 14.2 The Audit and Performance Committee notes that the pension fund annual report was reported to Pensions Committee on 21 June 2016. The Committee agreed to delegate approval of the final Pension Fund Annual Report 2015-16 document to the Tri-Borough Director of Treasury and Pensions, in consultation with the Chairman.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Steven Mair 020 7641 2904**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Westminster City Council Statement of Account including Pension Fund Accounts 2015/16**

See link below:

[http://transact.westminster.gov.uk/docstores/publications\\_store/accounts/annual\\_accounts\\_2015\\_16.pdf](http://transact.westminster.gov.uk/docstores/publications_store/accounts/annual_accounts_2015_16.pdf)

### **Appendix 2**

#### **Management letter of representation for Westminster City Council**

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Management letter of representation for Westminster City Council Pension Fund**

### **Appendix 4**

#### **Grant Thornton audit findings report 2015/16 for Westminster City Council**

### **Appendix 5**

#### **Grant Thornton audit findings report 2015/16 for Westminster City Council Pension Fund**