Audit & Governance Committee
16 November 2026
Annual Accounts and Audit 2025/26
For Decision

Cabinet Member:
Cllr S Clifford, Resourses & Finance

Local Councillor(s):
All

Senior Leadership Team:
S Cremer - Director, Resources

Report author and job title: Sean Cremer, Director - Resources, S151 Officer
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Report status: Public Choose an item.

Executive summary

1. This report and attachments come to the Audit and Governance Committee for Approval of the 2025/26 annual accounts of Dorset Council, and to note reports of the external auditor for 2025/26.

1.1 The associated papers contain a summary of the findings from the audit as well as the management response to and findings and/or recommendations as appropriate.

2. **Recommendation(s)**

2.1 Approve the Audited Statement of Accounts for Dorset Council and Dorset County Pension Fund for the period ending 31 March 2026 and delegate authority to the s151 Chief Financial Officer (in consultation with the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee or the Chair of the Pension Fund Committee as appropriate) to approve the accounts subject to any further changes as required by external auditors Grant Thornton UK LLP.

2.2 Note the content of the Audit Findings Report (ISA260) for Dorset Council 2025/26.

2.3 Note the content of the Audit Findings Report (ISA260) for Dorset County Pension Fund 2025/26

2.4 Note the content of the Auditor's opinions for Dorset Council 2025/26 and the Dorset County Pension Fund 2025/26, covering both the financial statements and their consistency with the Pension Fund Annual Report.

2.5 Approve the content of the Dorset Council and Dorset County Pension Fund letters of management representation and delegate authority to the s151 Chief Financial Officer (in consultation with the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee or the Chair of the Pension Fund Committee as appropriate) to approve any further changes as required by external auditors Grant Thornton UK LLP.

2.6 Note the content of the Auditor's Annual Report for Dorset Council.

3. Reason for the recommendation(s)

3.1 In accordance with the national backstop deadline of 31 January 2027 for the completion of the 2025/26 audit, the Committee is asked to approve the recommendations which provide a disclaimer of opinion on the financial statements for 2025/26.

4. The report

4.1 The attached reports, provided by the Council's external auditor, Grant Thornton UK LLP, sets out the findings arising from the audit of the Dorset Council financial statements for 2025/26 financial year.

4.2 The report describes the work that the external auditor has undertaken to address the risks identified in the Audit Plan, which was presented to the Audit Committee on 29 June 2026.

4.3 The statement of accounts (subject to any audit amendments from Grant Thornton UK LLP) were submitted to Grant Thornton UK LLP for their final review on 5 November 2026.

5. Alternative options considered

5.1 N/A

6. Legal considerations

6.1 N/A

7. Financial implications

7.1 All covered within this report.

8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

8.1 None.

9. Well-being and health implications

9.1 None.

10. Other implications

10.1 None.

11. Risk implications

11.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: High

Residual Risk: High

12. Equalities

12.1 None.

13. Appendices

13.1 Appendix 1 - Audited Statement of Accounts for 2025/26 - Dorset Council and Dorset County Pension Fund

13.2 Appendix 2 - Audit Findings Report (ISA260) 2025/26 - Dorset Council

13.3 Appendix 3 - Audit Findings Report (ISA260) 2025/26 - Dorset County Pension Fund

13.4 Appendix 4 - Draft Letter of Representation for Dorset Council

13.5 Appendix 5 - Draft Letter of Representation for Dorset County Pension Fund

13.6 Appendix 6 - Draft Opinion for Dorset Council Accounts - to follow

13.7 Appendix 7 - Draft Opinion for Dorset County Pension Fund (financial statements) – to follow

13.8 Appendix 8 - Draft Opinion for Dorset County Pension Fund (consistency with Pension Fund Annual Report) – to follow

13.9 Appendix 9 – Auditor's Annual Report year ending 31 March 2026 – to follow

14. Background papers

14.1 Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026 - Dorset Council and Dorset Pension Fund.pdf

15. Report sign-off

15.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Assurance & Governance (Monitoring Officer), the Director for Resources (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Cabinet Member(s).