

Statement of Accounts:

Resolutions of Council Assembly, 20 July 2005

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2004/05 (see item 7.2, pages 98 - 166)

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the statement of accounts 2004/05, be agreed.
 2. That the Mayor, as presiding member at the council assembly meeting, sign and date the accounts as being approved by the council assembly.
 3. That in agreeing to approve the statement of accounts, council assembly also seeks to draw lessons for improved financial management in future years.

Council assembly therefore asks overview and scrutiny committee to arrange for the investigation of the background to the following issues and how they may be best addressed, making recommendations to the executive and/or council assembly as necessary:

- (A) Housing Management Although the number of council homes fell by 1,748 in the year, expenditure on supervision and management rose by £18m (22%) to £101m.
- (B) Rent Arrears £3.361m of rent arrears was written off but outstanding rent arrears fell by only £1.151m; the underlying trend in rent arrears therefore still appears to be upwards.
- (C) Parking Fines Provision for debt write-off in the parking trading account has risen from £2.520m to £4.171 m and net revenue rose by only £200,000 so the percentage of parking fines uncollected appears to be increasing.
- (D) Debtors The Consolidated Balance Sheet shows “debtors” owing £110.5m in 2003/04 and £136m in 2004/05. The reasons for this increase and the nature and origin of these debts should be probed in order to ensure no further rise occurs and write-off is minimised.
- (E) Publicity Costs The publicity budget rose by £1 million (25%) in a single year which amounts to a weekly council tax increase of nearly £1.50.
- (F) Freedom of Information & Data Protection The director of finance has reported weaknesses in staff awareness of and adherence to the Freedom of Information Act and of the Data Protection Act.

Note: Resolution 3 stands referred to the overview and scrutiny committee for consideration.