



Subject:	Belfast City Council Statement of Accounts 2024/25
Date:	19 December 2025
Reporting Officer:	Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance
Contact Officer:	Helen Lyons, Corporate Finance Manager

Is this report restricted?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.			
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime			
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?			
After Committee Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>	
After Council Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sometime in the future		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Never		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Call-in			
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to present to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee, the Statement of Accounts of the Council, including the Annual Governance Statement, for the period ending 31 March 2025.
1.2	The Statement of Accounts are an important element of the council's overall corporate governance framework as they provide assurance to Members and ratepayers on the stewardship of the council's finances and its financial position.
1.3	The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025, as attached, have been prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2024/25 based on International Financial Reporting Standards and the Department for Communities Accounts Direction, Circular LG 10/2025 dated 26 February 2025.
1.4	The Chief Executive in his role as Chief Financial Officer can confirm that the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 has been prepared in the form directed by the Department for Communities and in his opinion the Statement of Accounts give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to approve the Council's Statement of Accounts and incorporated Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2025.
3.0	Main report
	<u>Key issues</u>
	Normal Approval Process
3.1	The Committee will be aware that the normal approval process allows for the Statement of Accounts to be presented to the Audit and Risk Panel to allow them to review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the council prior to this report going to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.
3.2	The Audit and Risk Panel was presented with the draft Statement of Accounts at the meeting on 9 September and a verbal update on the status of the draft Report to those charged with Governance (RTTCWG) for 2024/25 was also provided. The Statement of Accounts have been updated for the audit adjustments requested by Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO). The updated Statement of Accounts and draft Report to those charged with Governance (RTTCWG) for 2024/25 have been circulated to the Audit and Risk panel members for consideration. NIAO have identified nine audit recommendations. The verbal update from the Panel Chair following review of the annual Statement of Accounts and the draft RTTCWG is that the Audit and Risk Panel recommends that the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee approve the Council's Statement of Accounts and incorporated Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31 March 2025.

	Audit Opinion																				
3.3	<p>It is the Local government Auditors' opinion that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with relevant legal and statutory requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2024-25, of the financial position of Belfast City Council as at 31 March 2025 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and the statement of accounts have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Department for Communities directions issued thereunder; and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with the Department for Communities directions made under the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015; and the information given in the Narrative Report for the financial year ended 31 March 2025 is consistent with the financial statements. 																				
	Reserves																				
3.4	<p>General Fund</p> <p>The credit balance on the General Fund has increased to £64.6m (of which £50.1m relates to specified reserves). The movement on the reserves balance is summarised in Table 1 below:</p> <p><i>Table 1: Summary of Reserves Position</i></p> <table> <tr> <td>Opening Balance</td><td>£59.3m</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>In year movement in reserves</td><td><u>£5.3 m</u></td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Closing Balance</td><td>£64.6m</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Specified Reserves at year end</td><td><u>£50.1m</u></td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Balance Available</td><td><u>£14.5 m</u></td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	Opening Balance	£59.3m			In year movement in reserves	<u>£5.3 m</u>			Closing Balance	£64.6m			Specified Reserves at year end	<u>£50.1m</u>			Balance Available	<u>£14.5 m</u>		
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3.5	<p>Capital Fund £16,607,146</p> <p>The Capital Fund is made up of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belfast Investment Fund (£5,872,462) -created to support key partnership projects to regenerate Belfast and help lever substantial funds from other sources Local Investment Fund (£304,937) to fund smaller local regeneration projects City Centre Investment Fund (£9,508,497) to support the Belfast City Centre Regeneration Investment Plans 																				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Outcomes Fund (£921,250) to support City Centre projects which might not generate a direct financial return but would enhance the overall City Centre offer and support the attraction of investment.															
3.6	Neighbourhood Regeneration Fund £9,906,334 This fund is to support neighbourhood regeneration and tourism projects in local neighbourhoods.															
3.7	Leisure Mobilisation Fund £534,521 This fund is to support the Leisure Transformation Programme and will cover programme level costs including communications, engagement and procurement costs.															
3.8	Capital Receipts Reserve £4,139,224 These are capital receipts which have originated primarily from the sale of assets and which have not yet been used to finance capital expenditure.															
3.9	Other Fund Balances and Reserves £1,999,580 This relates to the Election Reserve (£225,397) which has been set up to smooth the cost of running council elections, the BWUH Subvention Fund (£1,102,648) to support national and international organisations in bringing their conferences to Belfast and the BWUH Sinking Fund (£671,535) to support planned maintenance and future capital works at the new exhibition centre.															
3.10	Debt The overall level of trade debtors had decreased this year from £5m at 31 March 2024 to £4.7m at 31 March 2025. An analysis of trade debtors, inclusive of VAT, for the last two years is shown below: Table 2: Analysis of Trade Debtors <table><tr><td></td><td>31 March 2025</td><td>31 March 2024</td></tr><tr><td>Less than three months</td><td>£3,683,053</td><td>£2,962,988</td></tr><tr><td>Three to one year</td><td>£785,792</td><td>£1,158,399</td></tr><tr><td>More than one year</td><td>£262,985</td><td>£918,640</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>£4,731,830</td><td>£5,040,027</td></tr></table>		31 March 2025	31 March 2024	Less than three months	£3,683,053	£2,962,988	Three to one year	£785,792	£1,158,399	More than one year	£262,985	£918,640	Total	£4,731,830	£5,040,027
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Total	£4,731,830	£5,040,027														
3.11	Creditors The Department for Communities has set councils a target of paying invoices within 30 days. During the year the council paid 69,124 invoices totalling £180,851,764.															
3.12	The average time taken to pay creditor invoices was 19 days for the year ended 31 March 2025. The Council paid 53,191 invoices within 10 days, 61,691 invoices within 30 days, and 7,433 invoices outside of 30 days. The council endeavours to process invoices as quickly as possible and has an improvement plan to support this process.															

3.13	Annual Governance Statement (AGS) <p>The Statement of Accounts include the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for the year 2024/25, which has been prepared in line with the Accounts Directive provided by the Department for Communities, NIAO guidance and is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government’. Specifically the AGS sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scope of responsibility • the purpose of the governance framework • the governance framework in place • review of effectiveness • update on the significant governance issues declared last year • significant governance issues for current year
3.14	The AGS is approved by the Chair of the Strategic Policy and Resources committee and the Chief Executive. It is subject to review by the LGA (NIAO) as part of their annual audit.
3.15	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u> None
3.16	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u> None
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Detailed Statement of Accounts titled “Belfast City Council Statement of Accounts 2025”