

4.1 Accounting Policies

This section explains the accounting policies applied in producing the Statement of Accounts.

4.1.1 General Principles

4.1.1.1 Statutory Guidance and Accounting Standards used

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2023/24 financial year and its position at the year end of 31 March 2024. The Council is required to prepare an Annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 which require the accounts to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24 (The Code) issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and statutory guidance issued under Section 21(2) of the Local Government Act 2003. The Statement of Accounts is prepared on a going concern basis.

4.1.1.2 Accounting Convention

The accounting convention adopted in the Statement of Accounts is principally historical cost, modified by the revaluation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments.

4.1.1.3 Accounting Developments and Changes

The following accounting standard amendments have been introduced by the Code for 2023/24:

- *Definition of Accounting Estimates (Amendments to IAS 8) issued in February 2021;*
- *Disclosure of Accounting Policies (Amendments to IAS 1 and IFRS Practice Statement 2) issued in February 2021;*
- *Deferred Tax related to Assets and Liabilities arising from a Single Transaction (Amendments to IAS 12) issued in May 2021;*
- *Updating a Reference to the Conceptual Framework (Amendments to IFRS 3) issued in May 2020.*

The application date and initial adoption date of the above standards is 1 April 2023.

The amendments to the above standards are either not applicable or do not have a material effect on the Statement of Accounts and accounting policies.

4.1.1.4 Prior Period Adjustments, Changes in Accounting Policies and Estimates and Errors

A prior period adjustment will be made to the accounts as a result of a change in accounting policies and the effect is material. Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively (unless stated otherwise) by adjusting opening balances

Appendix 1 – SoA Section 4.1 Accounting Policies

and comparative amounts for the prior period as if the new policy had always been applied.

Changes in accounting estimates will be accounted for prospectively i.e. in the current and future years affected by the change and do not give rise to prior period adjustment.

Material errors in prior periods are corrected retrospectively by amending opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period. A full disclosure as to the nature, circumstance and value of the adjustment will be disclosed in the notes to the accounts.

4.1.1.5 Events after the Balance Sheet Date

Events after the Balance Sheet date are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the Balance Sheet date of 31 March and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue. The two types of events and the accounting treatment are given below:

- For any material events after the balance sheet date which provide additional evidence regarding conditions existing at the balance sheet date, an adjustment has been made to the Statement of Accounts.
- Material events after the balance sheet date which concerned conditions not existing at 31 March have been disclosed as a separate note to the accounts.

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

4.1.1.6 Accruals of Expenditure and Income

The revenue and capital accounts of the Council are maintained on an accruals basis i.e. activity is accounted for in the year it takes place, not simply when cash payments are made or received. Further details are given below:

- Revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods, is recognised when the goods or services are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the performance obligations in the contract.
- Supplies are recorded as expenditure in the period during which they are consumed. Where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption, they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet. For some quarterly payments including gas and electricity, expenditure is recorded at the date of meter reading rather than being apportioned between financial years. This practice is consistently applied each year and therefore does not have a material effect on the year's accounts.
- Expenses for goods or services are recorded as expenditure when the goods or services are received by the Council rather than when payments are made.
- Where income and expenditure has been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, an appropriate class of asset or liability for the

Appendix 1 – SoA Section 4.1 Accounting Policies

relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Cash received or paid and not yet recognised as income or expenditure is shown as a creditor (receipt in advance or contract liability) or debtor (payment in advance) in the Balance Sheet and the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) adjusted accordingly. Where it is doubtful that debts will be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made against the loss allowance or to revenue in Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure (where there is no specific loss allowance). Loss allowances are set up for expected future credit losses and are offset against the debtor balance on the Balance Sheet. The level of loss allowance is periodically reviewed with any movements being debited or credited to the CIES.

- Works are charged as expenditure once complete, prior to completion (work in progress) they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet.
- For significant accruals such as pay awards, estimates are made based on the best information available at the time. Cost of pay awards not yet settled but likely to apply to part of the financial year to which the accounts relate are based on forecast cost.
- Interest payable on borrowings and interest receivable on investments is accounted for as income and expenditure based on the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- Income and expenditure are credited and debited to the relevant service in the CIES. Capital expenditure creates a fixed asset which is shown on the Balance Sheet.
- Accruals have been made on the basis of the known value of the transaction wherever possible. Where estimates have been required to be made, they are based on appropriate and consistently applied methods. In the case of highways and building works, the related assets or liabilities will be valued at the year-end by colleagues working in the relevant service. Where there has been a change to an estimation method from that applied in previous years and the effect is material, a description of the change and if practicable, the effect on the results for the current period is separately disclosed.
- Accruals are made for all material sums.

4.1.1.7 Schools

The Code confirms that the balance of control for local authority maintained schools (i.e. those categories of school identified in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended) lies with the local authority. The Code also stipulates that those schools' assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows are recognised in the local authority financial statements (and not the group accounts). Therefore, schools' transactions, cash flows and balances are recognised in each of the financial statements of the Council as if they were the transactions, cash flows and balances of the Council.

4.1.1.8 Choices permitted under IFRS

For some policies, IFRS provides different options that can be used and the Council has for a number of years, chosen to apply the following:

De Minimis Capital Expenditure

All assets acquired can be included in the Balance Sheet, regardless of their cost. However, where the current value is less than the following amounts the Council may choose to exclude the asset from the Balance Sheet:

	£m
Vehicles and Plant	0.003
Computer Equipment	0.005
Land & Buildings	0.010
Heritage Assets	0.005

Componentisation

Where an asset consists of significant components that have different useful lives and/or depreciation methods, these components are separately identified and depreciated accordingly. The Council has chosen to only apply componentisation where the value of the asset is in excess of £3m.

Depreciation (including amortisation of intangible assets)

Certain property, plant and equipment components and intangible assets are written down over time and charged to revenue. IFRS allows the Council to choose the asset life over which this write down occurs as well as the depreciation method. The following assets are depreciated on a straight line basis over their individually assessed useful life:

- Buildings, dwellings, vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment.
- Infrastructure and Community.
- Intangible assets.

4.1.2 Policies primarily affecting the CIES

4.1.2.1 Government Grants and Contributions

Government grants and other contributions are recognised as being due to the Council when the attached conditions have been satisfied and there is reasonable assurance that the grant or contribution will be received.

Grants and contributions are credited to income when there is reasonable assurance that the attached conditions will be met. Any grants received where conditions have not been met are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When all conditions are satisfied, the grant is credited to the relevant portfolio line and non-ring fenced grants and capital grants are credited to Taxation and Non-specific grant income in the CIES.

4.1.2.2 Business Improvement Districts (BID)

A BID scheme applies across the city. The scheme is funded by a BID levy paid by non-domestic ratepayers. The Council is the BID billing authority and acts

as agent under the scheme. The BID transactions are therefore not recognised in the CIES.

4.1.2.3 Operating Leases

Receivable (Council as lessor)

Where the Council has granted an operating lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the asset is retained in the Balance Sheet. Rental income is credited to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the CIES. Credits are made on a straight line basis over the life of the lease and any direct costs incurred in negotiating and arranging the lease are added to the carrying amount and charged as an expense over the lease term on the same basis as rental income.

Payable (Council as lessee)

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to *the CIES as an expense of the service benefiting from use of the leased asset* in the CIES. Charges are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, regardless of the pattern of payments.

4.1.2.4 Employee Benefits

Benefits Payable During Employment

Wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Council.

An accrual is made for the cost of the holiday entitlements or for any form of leave allowed under terms and conditions of service, which employees have earned during the year and are able to carry forward into the next financial year.

Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Council to terminate an employee's employment before the normal retirement date or an employee's decision to accept voluntary redundancy. They are charged on an accruals basis to the Corporate Items line or the relevant portfolio line in the CIES (depending on reason for termination) when the Council is demonstrably committed to the termination of the employment of an employee or group of employees or are making an offer to encourage voluntary redundancy.

NHS Pension Scheme

Pension costs relating to the NHS Pension Scheme have been treated as defined contribution schemes and the costs are charged to the relevant portfolio line in the CIES.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

Pension costs relating to Teachers' Pension Scheme have been accounted for as defined contribution schemes and the costs are charged to the relevant portfolio line in the CIES. The arrangements for the teachers' pension scheme mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot ordinarily be identified specifically to the authority. The scheme is therefore accounted for as if it were a defined

contribution scheme and no liability for future payments of benefits is recognised in the Balance Sheet.

Defined Benefit Schemes (Local Government Pension Scheme)

Within the CIES, services have been charged with their current service cost. This represents the extent to which the pension liability has increased as a result of employee service during the year.

Past service costs (the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years), and settlements have been charged to Corporate Items in the CIES.

Net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset), i.e. net interest expense for the authority (the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability (asset) that arises from the passage of time) is charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the CIES – this is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability (asset) at the beginning of the period – taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability (asset) during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.

The CIES shows the re-measurements comprising:

- The return on plan assets – excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset) – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
- actuarial gains and losses – changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
- Contributions paid to the pension fund – cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

Discretionary Benefits

The Council has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff (including teachers) are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies as are applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

4.1.2.5 Charges to Service Revenue Accounts for Non-Current Assets

Service revenue accounts, support services and trading accounts are debited with the following amounts to record the real cost of holding non-current assets during the year:

- Depreciation attributable to the assets used by the relevant service.
- Revaluation and impairment losses attributable to the clear consumption of economic benefits on tangible fixed assets used by the service, and

Appendix 1 – SoA Section 4.1 Accounting Policies

other losses where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which the losses can be written off.

- Amortisation of intangible fixed assets attributable to the service.

4.1.2.6 Financing and Investment

The financing and investment line of the CIES is charged or credited for the following amounts relating to investments:

- Income, expenditure and changes in the fair value of investment properties – comprising of upward and downward movements in the value of properties, together with any gains and losses arising on disposal and rentals receivable and expenses incurred in relation to properties.
- Gains and losses of financial instruments including:
 - Interest revenue calculated using the effective interest method.
 - Gains and losses arising from de-recognition of financial assets measured at amortised cost.
 - Impairment losses (including reversals of impairment losses or impairment gains).
- Net interest on Defined Benefit Pension Schemes.

4.1.2.7 Other Operating Expenditure

Other operating expenditure includes charges for:

- The proportion of receipts relating to HRA disposals payable to the Government.
- Gains or losses on sale and de-recognition of non-current assets (excluding investment properties).
- Levies.

4.1.2.8 Overheads and Support Services

Overheads and support services are reported within portfolio lines of the CIES, based on the organisational structure under which the Council operates.

4.1.2.9 Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR)

As a billing authority the Council acts as agent, collecting Council Tax and NNDR on behalf of the major preceptors and central government and, as principal, collecting rates for themselves. The Council maintains a separate Collection Fund that shows the transactions for the collection from taxpayers and distribution to preceptors, the Council and the Government of Council Tax and NNDR. The Council's share of the Council Tax and NNDR is credited to the CIES. The transactions presented in the Collection Fund statement are limited to the cash flows permitted by statute for the financial year, whereas the Council will recognise income on a full accrual basis.

There is no requirement for a Collection Fund Balance Sheet since the assets and liabilities arising from collecting Council Tax and NNDR belong to the

bodies (i.e. preceptors, the Council and the Government) on behalf of which the Council collects these taxes.

The Council's balance sheet includes its share of the end of year balances in respect of Council Tax and NNDR relating to the arrears, impairment allowances for doubtful debts, overpayments and prepayments and appeals.

Where debtor balances for the above are identified as impaired because of a likelihood that payments due under statutory arrangements will not be made, the asset is written down and a charge made to the Collection Fund. The impairment loss is measured as the difference between the carrying amount and the revised future cash flows.

4.1.2.10 Jointly Controlled Operations

Jointly controlled operations are activities undertaken by the Council in conjunction with other venturers that use the assets and resources of the venturers but is not a separate entity. The Authority recognises on its Balance Sheet the assets that it controls and the liabilities that it incurs and debits and credits the CIES with the expenditure it incurs and the share of income it earns from the activity of the operation.

4.1.2.11 Acquired Operations

Operations acquired by the Council are accounted for in accordance with the Code and are disclosed in the accounts. If these are material they will be disclosed separately in the CIES under the heading of 'acquired operations'.

4.1.2.12 Exceptional Items

Normally any material exceptional items are separately identified on the face of the CIES in order to give a fair presentation of the accounts. Where these items are less significant they are included within the cost of the relevant service.

4.1.2.13 Value Added Tax

Income and expenditure excludes any amounts related to VAT, except for input VAT that is irrecoverable under legislation which is charged to the service that incurs the cost.

4.1.3 Policies primarily affecting the Balance Sheet

4.1.3.1 Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE), Heritage Assets and Intangible Assets

PPE - Recognition

General

All expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of PPE is capitalised on an accruals basis, if it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Council and the cost of the item can be reliably measured. Expenditure that maintains but does not extend the previously assessed standards of performance of an asset (e.g. repairs and maintenance) is charged to revenue as an expense when it is incurred.

Surplus Assets

Assets that are surplus to service needs but that do not meet the classification of Investment Property or Assets Held for Sale are classified as PPE ‘Surplus’, and held at fair value pending a decision on the future use of the asset.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and Similar Contracts

In accordance with the code, the Council accounts for its PFI contracts in accordance with IFRC 12 Service Concession Agreements. The Council is deemed to control the services that are provided under its PFI schemes and ownership will pass to the Council at the end of the contracts for no additional charge (with the exception of LIFT Joint Service Centres for which there is an option to purchase). The Council carries the assets used under the contracts, on its Balance Sheet as PPE and they are accounted for in the same way as the other assets. The initial recognition of assets is at fair value with a corresponding liability for the amounts due to the scheme operator.

The amounts payable to the PFI operators are comprised of 5 elements. The Current Value of Services received during the year, Finance Cost, Contingent Rent are all posted to the CIES. *The repayment of the outstanding liability and recognition of assets from lifecycle replacement are posted to the balance sheet.*

Finance Leases - General

Leases are classified as finance leases where substantially all of the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the PPE transfer from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases.

Where a lease covers both land and buildings, the land and buildings elements are considered separately for classification. ~~*Arrangements that do not have the legal status of a lease but convey a right to use an asset in return for payment are accounted for under this policy where fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent on the use of specific asset.*~~

Finance Leases – where the Council is Lessee

Property, Plant and Equipment (PP&E) held under finance leases is recognised on the Balance Sheet at the commencement of the lease at its fair value measured at the lease’s inception (or the present value of minimum lease payments, if lower). The asset is matched by a liability for the obligation to pay the lessor. Any initial direct costs of the Council are added to the carrying amount of the asset.

Lease payments are apportioned between:

- A charge for the acquisition of the interest in the PPE – applied to write down the lease liability and
- A finance charge which is debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES.

Property, Plant and Equipment recognised under finance leases is accounted for using the policies applied generally to such assets, subject to depreciation being charged over the lease term if this is shorter than the asset’s estimated

Appendix 1 – SoA Section 4.1 Accounting Policies

useful life (where ownership of the asset does not transfer to the Authority at the end of the lease period).

Finance Leases – the Council as Lessor

Where the Council grants a finance lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the carrying amount of the asset is written off *to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the CIES as part of the gain or loss on disposal* and a long term debtor raised in the Balance Sheet.

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between the principal repayment which reduces the debtor balance *(together with any premiums received)* and interest which is credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES.

The gain credited to the CIES on disposal is not permitted by statute to increase the General Fund Balance and is required to be treated as a capital receipt.

Heritage Assets

Acquisitions are either purchased by the City Council or donated by a third party. Purchases are initially recorded at cost while donations are held at nil value until the assets related collection is externally valued within the heritage asset valuation cycle.

Items are omitted from the Balance Sheet where the Council is unable to obtain the valuations at a cost which is commensurate with the benefits it would provide to users of the financial statements.

Depreciation or amortisation is not required on assets with indefinite useful lives.

Intangible Assets

Intangible assets where the Council has control of the asset through either custody or legal protection, for example software licences, are capitalised at cost.

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, i.e. purchase price plus any costs incurred in bringing the asset into working condition for its intended use. The Council does not capitalise borrowing costs. Assets are then carried in the Balance Sheet using the following measurement bases:

- Community and Infrastructure assets for example parks and land used for cemeteries and crematoria are generally valued at depreciated historical cost.
- Council dwellings are valued at Existing Use Value for Social Housing as defined in the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors valuation manual. The valuation exercise was carried out in accordance with guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2016 based on a desktop revaluation of beacon properties by the Council's internal valuers.

Appendix 1 – SoA Section 4.1 Accounting Policies

- Other land and buildings are valued at current value, the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use. Where insufficient market based evidence of current value is available because an asset is specialised in nature, Depreciated Replacement Cost has been applied.
- Finance leases are recognised at present value of the minimum lease payments.
- ~~Heritage assets are reported in the Balance Sheet at valuation and have been valued periodically by an external valuer. These external valuations have been carried out by a variety of qualified experts in the relevant field. These external valuations are adjusted annually by the Council to provide an internal valuation which is used until the external quinquennial revaluation. Acquisitions are held at their purchase price, adjusted annually each year (except in year of purchase), until the next valuation.~~
- Heritage assets are reported in the Balance Sheet at an externally adjusted valuation. These external valuations have been carried out by a variety of qualified experts in the relevant field. These external valuations are adjusted annually by the Council to provide an internal valuation which is used until the collection is periodically externally revalued. Acquisitions are held at their purchase price, adjusted annually each year (except in year of purchase), until the next valuation.
- All other assets are valued at current value.

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at current value are revalued as a minimum every 5 years. If there is evidence that there have been material changes in the value a further valuation will be undertaken.

Increases in valuations are credited to services within the CIES where they arise from the reversal of a revaluation or an impairment loss previously charged on the same asset. Any gains in excess of previous revaluation losses are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve.

Any revaluation losses are firstly written down against any previous revaluation gains held in the Revaluation Reserve. Where there are no previous revaluation gains, the losses are charged to the relevant line of the CIES.

The Revaluation Reserve contains revaluation gains recognised since 1 April 2007 only, the date of its formal implementation. Gains arising before that date have been consolidated into the Capital Adjustment Account.

Impairment

Asset values are assessed at each year end as to whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. Where indications exist and any possible differences are estimated to be material, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated and, where this is less than the carrying amount of the asset, an impairment loss is recognised for the shortfall. Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for as follows:

- Where there is a balance of revaluation gains on the Revaluation Reserve for the relevant asset, the impairment loss is charged against

Appendix 1 – SoA Section 4.1 Accounting Policies

that balance until it is used up. If there is no balance of revaluation gains the impairment loss is charged to the relevant portfolio line of the CIES.

- For intangible assets there will be no Revaluation Reserve balance, so impairment losses are charged to the relevant portfolio line of the CIES only.

Depreciation and Amortisation

Depreciation is provided for on all PPE assets. The annual charge to the CIES is calculated by dividing the value less any residual value of the asset by the estimated asset life. There is no depreciation on the assets in the year of acquisition, although a full year of depreciation is charged in the year of disposal. In accordance with recommended accounting practice, depreciation is not provided for in respect of freehold land, Heritage Assets, certain Community Assets and assets under construction.

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

- Buildings and Dwellings – straight-line allocation over the useful life of the property as estimated by the valuer.
- Vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment – straight line allocation over the useful life.
- Infrastructure and Community – straight-line allocation over *the useful life*
 - Finance leases - over the lease term. If the lease term is shorter than the asset's estimated useful life and ownership of the asset does not transfer to the authority at the end of the lease period.
- Intangible assets – amortised on a straight line basis over the economic life.

Where an item of PPE asset has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately.

The Revaluation Reserve is reduced for the depreciation relating to revaluation gains with a corresponding credit to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Componentisation

Where an asset consists of significant components that have different useful lives and/or depreciation methods to the remainder of asset, these components are separately identified and depreciated. A component value must be at least 20% of the whole asset. Where there is more than one significant part of the same asset which has the same useful life and depreciation method, the parts have been grouped to determine the depreciation charge. Componentisation only applies to enhancement and acquisition expenditure and revaluations carried out from 1st April 2010 with a de-minimis level of £3m.

Fair Value Measurement

Some non-financial and financial assets of the Council are measured at fair value at the reporting date. Fair value assumes the transaction takes place either:

Appendix 1 – SoA Section 4.1 Accounting Policies

- In the principal market for the asset or liability, or
- The most advantageous market for the asset or liability.

The fair value of an asset or liability is measured using the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability, assuming that market participants act in their economic best interest.

When measuring the fair value of a non-financial asset, the Council takes into account a market participant's ability to generate economic benefits by using the asset in its highest and best use or by selling it to another market participant that would use the asset in its highest and best use.

Valuation techniques are used which maximise the use of observable inputs and minimise the use of unobservable inputs. After reviewing the inputs used the valuation is categorised within the following fair value hierarchy:

Level 1 – quote prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets / liabilities that can be accessed at the measurement date.

Level 2 – inputs other than quoted prices within level 1, that are observable either directly or indirectly.

Level 3 – unobservable inputs

Disposal

Assets are written out of the balance sheet on disposal through sale, granting of a finance lease, donation and transfer. This includes assets transferred because of schools academisation.

4.1.3.2 Investment Property

Investment properties are those used solely to earn rentals and/or for capital appreciation. It does not apply to properties which are being used to deliver services for the Council.

Investment properties are measured initially at cost. They are not depreciated but are revalued annually at fair value as outlined in note 4.1.3.1.

4.1.3.3 Interests in Companies and Other Entities

Inclusion in the Council's group accounts is, in accordance with the Code, dependent upon the extent of the Council's interest and control over an entity. In the Council's single-entity accounts, the interests in companies and other entities are shown as financial assets at cost, less any provision for losses.

4.1.3.4 PPE Assets Held for Sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an asset held for sale. Assets held for sale are carried at the lower of carrying value and fair value less costs to sell.

If assets no longer meet the criteria to be classified as assets held for sale, they are reclassified back to non-current assets. They are valued at the lower of their carrying amount before they were classified as held for sale, adjusted for depreciation, amortisation or revaluations that would have been recognised had

Appendix 1 – SoA Section 4.1 Accounting Policies

they not been classified as held for sale, and their recoverable amount at the date of the decision not to sell.

4.1.3.5 Inventories

Inventories are largely valued at latest purchase price and any difference between this and actual cost is not considered to be material. Other less significant stocks are valued at average or actual cost.

4.1.3.6 Financial Assets

Financial assets are classified based on a classification and measurement approach that reflects the business model for holding the financial assets and their cash flow characteristics. There are three main classes of financial assets measured at:

- amortised cost,
- fair value through profit or loss (FVPL), and
- fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI)

The Council's business model is to hold investments to collect contractual cash flows. Financial assets are therefore classified as amortised cost, except for those whose contractual payments are not solely payment of principal and interest (i.e. where the cash flows do not take the form of a basic debt instrument).

Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost

Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value. They are subsequently measured at their amortised cost. Annual credits to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For most of the financial assets held by the Council, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable (plus accrued interest) and interest credited to the CIES is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

However, the Council has made a number of loans to voluntary organisations at less than market rates (soft loans). When soft loans are made, a loss is recorded in the CIES (debited to the appropriate service) for the present value of the interest that will be foregone over the life of the instrument, resulting in a lower amortised cost than the outstanding principal.

Interest is credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES at a marginally higher effective rate of interest than the rate receivable from the voluntary organisations, with the difference serving to increase the amortised cost of the loan in the Balance Sheet. Statutory provisions require that the impact of soft loans on the General Fund Balance is the interest receivable for the financial year – the reconciliation of amounts debited and credited to the CIES to the net gain required against the General Fund Balance is managed by a transfer to or from the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Appendix 1 – SoA Section 4.1 Accounting Policies

Any gains and losses that arise on de-recognition of an asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES.

Expected Credit Loss Model

The Council recognises expected credit losses on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost (or where relevant FVOCI), either on a 12-month or lifetime basis. The expected credit loss model also applies to lease receivables and contract assets. Only lifetime losses are recognised for trade receivables (debtors) held by the Council.

The Council has extended the simplified approach to lease receivables and trade receivables and contract assets where there is a significant financing component.

Impairment losses are calculated to reflect the expectation that the future cash flows might not take place because the borrower could default on their obligations. Credit risk plays a crucial part in assessing losses. Where risk has increased significantly since an instrument was initially recognised, losses are assessed on a lifetime basis. Where risk has not increased significantly or remains low, losses are assessed on the basis of 12-month expected losses.

The Council has a portfolio of a significant number of loans to local businesses. It does not have reasonable and supportable information that is available without undue cost or effort to support the measurement of lifetime expected losses on an individual instrument basis. It has therefore assessed losses for the portfolio on a collective basis.

The Council has grouped the loans into three groups for assessing loss allowances:

Group 1 – these loans were made to companies under control of the Council and within the group accounts. A scoring matrix system has been used to assess the risk of default for each loan. Loss allowances for these loans can be assessed on an individual basis.

Group 2 – these loans were made to non-controlled companies (outside of the Council group accounts). A scoring matrix system has been used to assess the risk of default for each loan. Loss allowances for these loans can be assessed on an individual basis.

Group 3 – for the residual group of loans, the Council relies on past due information and calculates losses based on lifetime credit losses for all loans more than 30 days past due.

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit of Loss

Financial assets that are measured at FVPL are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured and carried at fair value. Fair value gains and losses are recognised as they arrive in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services.

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through other comprehensive income

Financial assets that are measured at FVOCI are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Authority becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured and carried at fair value. Fair value gains and losses are recognised as they arise in other comprehensive income.

Fair value measurements of financial assets

The fair value measurements of the financial assets are based on the following techniques:

- Instruments with quoted market prices – the market price.
- Other instruments with fixed and determinable payments – discounted cash flow analysis.

The inputs to the measurement techniques are categorised in accordance with the following three levels:

- Level 1 inputs – quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets that the Council can access at the measurement date.
- Level 2 inputs – inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset, either directly or indirectly.
- Level 3 inputs – unobservable inputs for the asset.

Any gains and losses that arise on de-recognition of the asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES.

The Council may, where it sees fit, and within the guidelines of the Code decide to designate investments in equity instruments to FVOCI or transact reclassifications, modifications or de-recognition or transfer of financial assets when applicable transactions occur.

4.1.3.7 Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities except those held for trading are recognised on the Balance Sheet initially at fair value and carried at their amortised cost. Interest payable is charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the CIES. The amount shown in the Balance Sheet is the carrying amount of the loan as at 31st March.

Financial liabilities held for trading are recognised at fair value through profit and loss.

Financial guarantees are recognised as a provision held at fair value based on the expected probability of the guarantee being called as at the balance sheet date.

Where premiums and discounts have been charged to the CIES as part of restructuring the debt portfolio, regulations allow the impact on the General Fund Balance to be spread over future years. The Council has a policy of spreading the gain or loss over the term that was remaining on the loan against which the premium was payable or discount receivable when it was repaid. The

reconciliation of amounts charged to the CIES to the net charge required against the General Fund Balance is managed by a transfer to or from the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

4.1.3.8 Provisions

Provisions have only been recognised in the accounts where there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefits as a result of a past event and where such an amount can be reliably estimated. Provisions are charged to the CIES and, depending on their materiality, are either disclosed as a separate item on the Balance Sheet or added to the carrying balance of an appropriate current liability. When expenditure is eventually incurred, it is charged to the provision set up in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year. Where it is apparent that the provision is not required or is lower than originally anticipated, the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

Where some or all of the payment required to settle a provision is expected to be recovered from another party, for example from an insurance claim, this is only recognised as income for the relevant service if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received if the Council settles the obligation.

4.1.3.9 Contingent Liabilities

Where a potential provision cannot be accurately estimated or an event is not considered sufficiently certain, it has not been included in the accounts but is instead disclosed in the notes as a contingent liability. A contingent liability also occurs where a liability may arise but is dependent upon the outcome of future events before it can be confirmed.

4.1.3.10 Defined Benefit Schemes (Local Government Pension Scheme)

For defined benefit schemes, pension fund assets are accounted for at fair value.

Pension liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis, using an assessment of the future payments that will be made for retirement benefits earned to date by employees. This assessment includes assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates and projections of projected earnings for current employees.

Liabilities are discounted at the Balance Sheet date using a discount rate that takes into account the duration of the employer's liabilities and the requirements of IAS19. The discount rate chosen is the Single Equivalent Discount Rate which uses the annualised Merrill Lynch AA rated corporate bond yield curve and assumes the curve is flat beyond the 30 year point. The estimate of the Council's past service liability duration is 17 years.

4.1.3.11 Reserves

The Council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by transferring amounts out of the general fund balance. Transfers to and from reserves are shown in the MIRS and not within services. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve

is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in that year to score against the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the CIES. The reserve is then transferred back into the general fund balance so that there is no net charge against Council Tax for the expenditure. Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments, retirement, and employee benefits and are not usable resources for the Council.

4.1.4 Policies affecting the Cash Flow Statement

4.1.4.1 Cash and Cash Equivalents

The Council's Cash Flow Statement reflects the movements in cash and cash equivalents during the year and is shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand. Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with the Council's own bank. Cash equivalents are deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. This includes Council deposits in other UK bank call accounts and Money Market Funds.

4.1.5 Policies used to account on a Funding Basis

In a number of areas statutory provisions require the Council to account for transactions relating to the General Fund (and subsequently the amount to be raised from Council Tax) differently from the treatment required by IFRS. In each case the adjustment required is offset by a transfer to a specific reserve. The adjustments are shown within the MIRS as adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under statutory provisions.

4.1.5.1 Depreciation, amortisation, revaluation gains and losses and impairment

Instead of these charges the Council is required to make an annual provision from revenue to contribute towards the reduction in its borrowing requirement (in line with the Council's published Minimum Revenue Provision policy). The difference between the two transactions is adjusted within the Capital Adjustment Account.

For the HRA, depreciation is replaced by a contribution to the Major Repairs Reserve.

4.1.5.2 Gains and Losses on Sale of Assets

Where sale proceeds are in excess of £10k, the gain or loss on sale or disposal (including finance leases) is removed from the CIES and adjusted with the Usable Capital Receipts Reserve (sale proceeds) and the Capital Adjustment Account (carrying value in the Balance Sheet).

A proportion of receipts relating to HRA disposals is payable to the Government and a corresponding sum is therefore transferred back from the Capital Receipts Reserve to the General Fund.

4.1.5.3 Capital grants

Capital Grants are reversed out of the General Fund to the Capital Grants Unapplied Account. When the grant is applied to fund capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account.

4.1.5.4 Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS)

Certain items of expenditure and related grant funding charged to the CIES under IFRS may be treated as capital for funding purposes. A transfer is made between the General Fund and the Capital Adjustment Account reserve for these items.

4.1.5.5 Employee Benefits

Accruals made for holiday entitlements or leave are reversed out of the General Fund to the Accumulated Absences Account.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the General Fund Balance to be charged with the amount payable by the authority to the pension fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the MIRS, this means that there are transfers to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the General Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

4.1.5.6 Termination Benefits - Pension Enhancements

Pension costs calculated according to IAS 19 are replaced by the actual pension payment for the year. The difference between the two transactions is transferred between the General Fund and the Pensions Reserve.

4.1.5.7 Financial Liabilities

Where premiums and discounts have been charged to the CIES as part of restructuring the debt portfolio, regulations allow the impact on the General Fund to be spread over future years. The gain or loss is spread over the term that was remaining on the loan against which the premium was payable or discount receivable when it was repaid. The difference between the two approaches is transferred between the General Fund and the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account.

4.1.5.8 Financial Assets

Statutory provisions allow the General Fund to be charged with the actual interest receivable for the financial year. The adjustment to the CIES for soft loans is therefore removed and adjusted within the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account.

4.1.5.9 Use of Reserves

The Council may make a charge against the General Fund to set aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. The Council may then also choose to use these reserves to reduce the impact on the General Fund when the expenditure is incurred.

4.1.6 Accounting Policies not relevant or not material

The accounting policies are reviewed each year to assess whether it is appropriate for individual policies to be included. There are a number of accounting policies that have not been included above, because the statements are not materially affected by their implementation or they are not relevant. These policies include:

- Use of capital receipts to fund disposal costs
- Intangible Assets – Recognition of website development and other internally generated assets
- The treatment of bonds
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Subsequent revaluation of assets held for sale
- Provision for back pay arising from unequal pay claims
- Treatment of foreign currency translations
- Discontinued operations
- Contingent Assets