

## **A STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING CONCEPTS AND POLICIES**

### **1 General Principles**

The Statement of Accounts provides a summary of the Council's transactions for the financial year 2025/26 and its financial position as at 31 March 2026. Preparation of the annual Statement of Accounts is required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, which requires them to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2025/26 ("the Code"), supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The objective of the Statement of Accounts is to provide information about the Council's financial performance, financial position and cash flows that is useful to a wide range of stakeholders in assessing the Council's stewardship of its resources.

Fundamental to this assessment is ensuring that information is both relevant and faithfully represented.

A key feature of relevance is materiality. Information is considered material if its omission or misstatement could influence the decisions that users make based on the financial information presented in the Statement of Accounts. Conversely, where information is not material, there is no need to comply with the accounting principles or disclosure requirements set out in the Code.

Information is faithfully represented if it is complete, unbiased and properly determined using appropriate estimation techniques and judgements.

The accounting policies are the principal bases, conventions, rules and practices that specify how the effects of transactions and other events are reflected in the Statement of Accounts. The accounting policies and estimation techniques selected are those that best assist users in their understanding of the financial information presented or disclosed in the Statement of Accounts. The expectation is that this will be achieved by selecting accounting policies that are compliant with the Code.

Consistent policies are applied both within the year and between years. Where policies have changed the reason and effect is disclosed.

The underlying assumptions made in preparing the Statement of Accounts are that financial performance is reported on an accruals basis and that the Council is a going concern.

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

The CIES is reported using total cost principles under IFRS and not the way in which local government is funded. The income and expenditure reported in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will not therefore correspond to the outturn charged to the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reported against the Council's budget.

Note 1 in the Notes to the Core Financial Statements, the "Expenditure and Funding Analysis" provides a high level reconciliation of the expenditure analysis reported in the CIES to the net amount charged to the General Fund and HRA which is to be met by taxpayers and council house tenants together with additional disclosure on material reconciling adjustments.

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## Changes in Accounting Policies and Estimates and Errors

Changes in accounting policies are only made when required by proper accounting practices or the change provides more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions, other events and conditions on the Council's financial position or financial performance. Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period as if the new policy had always been applied unless the Code specifies that the change should be applied prospectively.

Changes in accounting estimates are accounted for prospectively, i.e. in the current and future years affected by the change.

Any material errors discovered in prior period figures are corrected retrospectively by amending opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period.

**3**

## Accruals of Income and Expenditure

Activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place, not simply when cash payments are made or received.

The general principle is that revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received which, in most transactions, will be the amount of cash and cash equivalents receivable. This position is in accordance with IFRS 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers.

Revenue is recognised when the Council satisfies a performance obligation by transferring a promised good or service to a service recipient, this can be over a period of time or at a point in time.

Supplies are recorded as expenditure when 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.

Expenses in relation to services received (including those rendered by the Council's officers) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received, rather than when payments are made.

Interest payable on borrowings (other than that capitalised on qualifying assets) and receivable on investments is accounted for on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.

Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where there is evidence that debts are unlikely to be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

Where the Council acts as an agent for another party, income and expenditure are recognised only to the extent that commission is receivable by the Council for the agency services rendered or the Council incurs expenses directly on its own behalf in rendering the services.

**4**

## Overheads and Support Services

Support services are operated, managed and reported as separate segments they are not apportioned across services but instead reported separately in their own right in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Under the Council's current structure such costs predominantly fall within Assistant Chief Executive's or Finance and Customer Services Directorates.

## 5 Debtors

Debtors are recognised when the Council has delivered or tendered a supply of goods or services. They are recognised and measured at fair value when revenue has been recognised, except for a financial asset where they form part of the asset's carrying value (see accounting policy note 21). Amounts paid in advance of the receipt of goods/services are recognised as a prepayment.

## 6 Creditors

Creditors are recognised when the Council receives a supply of goods or services. They are recognised and measured at fair value of the consideration payable except for a financial liability where they form part of the liability's carrying value (see accounting policy note 21). If consideration is received but the revenue does not meet the revenue recognition criteria, a receipt in advance is recognised.

## 7 Tax Income (Council Tax, and National Non-Domestic Rates)

### Council Tax

Council Tax collection is an agency arrangement. Income shown within the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement is the Council's share of the year's accrued income. The difference between this and the amount transferred to the General Fund under statute (representing the demand on the Collection Fund for the year together with the Council's share of the previous year's surplus or deficit which is distributed or recovered) is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account. Debtors are shown exclusive of the proportions attributable to major preceptors.

### National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

NNDR collection is an agency arrangement. Business rate income within the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement is the Council's share of the accrued business rate income for the year. The difference between this and the amount transferred to the General Fund under statute (representing the Council's share of the estimated business rate income for the year together with the Council's share of the previous year's surplus or deficit which is distributed or recovered) is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account. The central share (after allowable deductions) of business rate income is paid out of the Collection Fund to central government. Growth in business rate income in an Enterprise Zone area, business rate income from renewable energy schemes and from businesses in New Deal areas is wholly attributable to the Council and transferred in full to the General Fund on an accruals basis. Debtors are shown exclusive of the proportions attributable to major preceptors

## 8 Inventories

Inventories are measured at the lower of cost and net realisable value except where acquired through a non-exchange transaction when cost is assumed to be equal to fair value at the acquisition date.

Inventories are measured at the lower of cost and current replacement cost where held for distribution at no charge or for a nominal charge.

The cost attributed to identify inventory is assigned using the first-in, first-out (FIFO) basis.

## 9 Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are investments that mature in

three months or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

In the Cash Flow Statement, cash and cash equivalents are shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and form an integral part of the Council's cash management.

## **10 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets**

### Provisions

A provision is recognised when:

- there is a present obligation (legal/constructive) as a result of a past event,
- it is probable a resource outflow will be required to settle the obligation, and
- a reliable estimate of the amount can be made.

For instance, the Council may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or the payment of compensation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year that the Council becomes aware of the obligation and is measured at the best estimate at the balance sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at each reporting date and adjusted to reflect current best estimates. Where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

If some or all of the expenditure required to settle a provision is expected to be reimbursed (e.g. an insurance claim), this is recognised when it is virtually certain that if the obligation is settled reimbursement will be received. The reimbursement is treated as an asset but the amount recognised does not exceed the amount of the provision.

### Contingent Liability

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the Council a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably.

A contingent liability is not recognised in the financial statements but disclosed as a note to the accounts. If it becomes probable that a resource outflow will be required for an item previously dealt with as a contingent liability, a provision is recognised.

### Contingent Asset

A contingent asset arises where an event has taken place that gives the Council a possible asset whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council.

A contingent asset is not recognised in the financial statements but disclosed as a note to the accounts where it is probable that there will be an inflow of economic benefits or service potential. If it has become virtually certain an inflow will arise and the asset's value can be measured reliably, a debtor and related revenue are recognised.

## **11 Reserves**

The Council sets aside specific amounts as usable reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by appropriating amounts out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. 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/Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then appropriated back into the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement so that there is no net charge against council tax for the expenditure.

Certain unusable reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments and retirement benefits and that do not represent usable resources for the Council – these reserves are explained in the sections relating to the relevant policies.

## **12 Government and Non-Government Grants**

Government grants and third-party contributions, including donated assets are recognised as due when there is reasonable assurance that;

- the Council will comply with the conditions attached to them, and
- the grants and contributions will be received.

Where conditions of grant remain outstanding which could give rise to grant being repaid, grant is carried in the balance sheet as grant received in advance.

Conditions are stipulations that give the grant funder or donor the right to the return of their monies if it is not used for the purpose specified.

Revenue grants or contributions are credited to the relevant service line within net cost of services if specific or to Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income if general or non ring-fenced.

Capital grants are credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income as general grant, but then reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where capital grant has been recognised but has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is credited to the Capital Grants Unapplied Account within reserves. Capital grant that has been used for financing purposes is transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

## **13 Non-current Assets – Property, Plant and Equipment**

Assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the production or supply of goods or services, for rental to others or for administrative purposes and that are expected to be used during more than one financial year are classified as Property, Plant and Equipment.

### Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition and creation of or which add to Property, Plant & Equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that 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 measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

### Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

- the purchase price,
- any costs attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management, and

- the initial estimate of the costs of dismantling, removing or restoring an asset where the Council has an obligation to do so and is required to make provision for these costs.

**Borrowing Costs** - The Council has adopted a policy under IAS 23 'Borrowing Costs' to capitalise borrowing costs directly attributable to the acquisition, construction or production of a qualifying asset. In implementing a policy of capitalisation of borrowing costs the Council has determined what it sees as a qualifying asset and what the borrowing costs are, that are to be capitalised.

- **Qualifying Assets** – Assets that take a substantial period of time to get ready for their intended use or sale, where this would cause a significant balance of borrowing costs to accrue.
- **Borrowing costs** – Where the Council borrows to specifically fund a scheme the amount that is capitalised is the actual cost of borrowing less investment income. Where funds are borrowed generally a capitalisation rate is used based on the weighted average of borrowing costs during the period.

The Council only capitalises borrowing costs when in addition to the above it becomes probable that the capital expenditure will result in future economic benefits or service potential to the Council; and that the borrowing costs can be measured reliably.

Donated assets are measured initially at fair value. The difference between fair value and any consideration paid is credited to the Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement unless the donation has been made conditionally. Until conditions are satisfied, the gain is held in the Donated Assets Account. Where gains are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Assets are then carried in the Balance Sheet using the following measurement bases:

- infrastructure, community assets – depreciated historical cost,
- property, plant and equipment, intangible assets and assets under construction are measured at historical cost,
- dwellings – current value based on existing use value for social housing (EUV-SH),
- all other assets – current value based on existing use (existing use value – EUV) for non-specialised operational assets where there is an active market or where there is no market-based evidence of current value because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost.
- Should an asset be re-classified as a Surplus Asset, it will be measured at fair value. Should an asset be re-classified as an Asset Held for Sale, it will be measured at the lower of carrying value and fair value less cost to sell.

Depreciated historical cost is used as a proxy for current value for relatively short life assets such as vehicles, plant and equipment.

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at current value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their current value at the year-end, but as a minimum they are revalued every five years. In support of this the Council carries out an annual review of its assets for impairment. Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains unless they reverse a previous revaluation or impairment loss in which case they are credited to the relevant service line within net cost of services.

Where decreases in value are identified, the revaluation loss is accounted for by:

- where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains),

- where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

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 of Assets

At the end of each reporting period an assessment takes place 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 by:

- where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains),
- where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where an impairment loss is reversed subsequently, the reversal is credited to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, up to the amount of the original loss, adjusted for depreciation that would have been charged if the loss had not been recognised.

#### Disposals

The carrying amount of an item is derecognised:

- on disposal through, for example, sale, donation, granting of a finance lease or transfer, or
- when no future economic benefits or service potential are expected from its use or disposal as a result, for example, of it being abandoned, scrapped or decommissioned.

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. The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and fair value less costs to sell. Fair value is the price that would be received from the selling the asset in an orderly transaction between market participants under the conditions prevailing at the end of the reporting period. Fair value for social housing being disposed of under Right to Buy (RTB) legislation is the discounted RTB value. Depreciation is not charged on Assets Held for Sale.

Assets held solely to earn rentals or for capital appreciation purposes are classified as investment properties.

Non-operational property, plant and equipment which do not meet the criteria for reclassification as either Assets Held for Sale or investment properties are held within property, plant and equipment as Surplus Assets. Surplus Assets are carried in the balance sheet at their fair value and revalued immediately prior to disposal if the current carrying value is materially different in order that the proper gain or loss on disposal can be determined.

Assets that are to be abandoned or scrapped are not reclassified as Assets Held for Sale.

When an asset is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether Property, Plant and Equipment or Assets Held for Sale) is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited

to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Amounts received for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. A proportion of receipts relating to housing disposals is payable to the Government. The balance of receipts is required to be credited to the Capital Receipts Reserve and can then only be used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the Council's underlying need to borrow (the Capital Financing Requirement). Receipts are appropriated to the Reserve from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of Non-Current Assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

#### Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all Property, Plant and Equipment assets by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives, the depreciable amount being an asset's depreciated historic cost or fair value at the start of the financial year. No depreciation is charged in the year in which an asset is first made ready for use. A charge is made in the year in which an asset is derecognised or classified as held for sale. An exception is made for assets without a determinable finite useful life (i.e., freehold land and certain Community Assets) and assets that are not yet available for use (i.e., assets under construction).

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

- dwellings and other buildings – straight-line allocation over the useful life of the property as estimated by the Council's valuer (Council dwellings over 30 Years, other buildings and non-operational properties up to 100 years)
- vehicles – straight line method over the useful life of the asset, as advised by a suitably qualified officer (Up to 10 years)
- infrastructure – straight-line allocation over determined useful life of the asset
- plant, equipment and computers – straight-line allocation over the useful life of the asset as advised by a suitably qualified officer (plant and equipment up to 15 years and computers/office equipment up to 10 years).

Where an item of Property, Plant and Equipment has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately. Componentisation will take place as assets are acquired, enhanced, replaced or revalued.

Revaluation gains/losses are also depreciated, with an amount equal to the difference between current value depreciation charged on assets and the depreciation that would have been chargeable based on their historical cost being transferred each year from the Revaluation Reserve to the Capital Adjustment Account.

#### **14 Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets**

Services, support services and trading accounts are debited with the following amounts to record the cost of holding Non-Current Assets during the year:

- depreciation attributable to the assets used by the relevant service,
- revaluation and impairment losses on assets used by the service where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which the losses can be written off,
- amortisation of intangible Non-Current Assets attributable to the service.

The Council is not required to raise council tax to cover depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisations. However, it is required to make an annual provision from revenue to contribute towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Council in accordance with statutory guidance. This is known as the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and the policy is detailed below. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisations are therefore replaced by the revenue provision in the General Fund Balance, by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses represent a “real” charge to the HRA to be met by rent payers. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses are determined in accordance with the “Item 8 Credit and Item 8 Debit (General) Determination” which came into effect from 1 April 2017. That determination allows the Council to reverse out impairment and revaluation gains and losses relating to both council dwellings and non-dwellings.

#### Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

Prudent provision (MRP) is made annually for the repayment of debt relating to capital expenditure financed by borrowing or credit arrangements. The amount charged is determined having regard to the relevant statutory requirements and related guidance on MRP issued by MHCLG (now DLUHC).

## **15 Leases and Lease-Type Arrangements**

### Council as Lessee

The Council adopted IFRS 16 (Leases) with effect from 1 April 2024. The main impact of the requirements of IFRS 16 is that, for arrangements previously accounted for as operating leases (i.e. without recognising the leased vehicles, plant, equipment, property and land as an asset, and future rents as a liability), a right-of-use asset and a lease liability are now included on the balance sheet. The Council has elected to apply recognition exemptions to low value assets (below £10,000 when new) and to short term leases and new leases with a duration of less than 12 months. A contract is, or contains a lease, if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time.

The lease liability is measured at the present value of the lease payments, discounted at the rate implicit in the lease, or if that cannot be readily determined, at the lessee's incremental borrowing rate specific to the term and start date of the lease. Lease payments include: fixed payments; variable lease payments dependent on an index or rate, initially measured using the index or rate at commencement; the exercise price under a purchase option if the Council is reasonably certain to exercise; penalties for early termination if the lease term reflects the Council exercising a break option; and payments in an optional renewal period if the Council is reasonably certain to exercise an extension option or not exercise a break option.

The lease liability is subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method. It is remeasured, with a corresponding adjustment to the right of use asset, when there is a change in future lease payments resulting from a rent review, change in an index or rate such as inflation, or change in the Council's assessment of whether it is reasonably certain to exercise a purchase, extension or break option.

The right of use asset is initially measured at cost, comprising: the initial lease liability; any lease payments already made less any lease incentives received; initial direct costs; and any dilapidation or restoration costs. The right of use asset is subsequently depreciated on a straight-line basis over the shorter of the lease term or the useful life of the underlying asset. The right of use asset is tested for impairment if there are any indicators of impairment.

As noted at policy 16 below IFRS16 has also been applied to Service Concession Arrangements and recognition on the resultant remeasurement of the lease liability with effect from 1 April 2024.

## Council as Lessor

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment 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 assets.

### (a) Finance Leases

Where the Council grants a finance lease over an asset, the relevant asset is written out of the Balance Sheet as a disposal. At the commencement of the lease, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. A gain, representing the Council's net investment in the lease, is credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal), matched by a lease asset in the Balance Sheet.

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:

- an amount to write down the net investment in the lease including any premiums received, and
- finance income (credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

The gain credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on disposal is not permitted by statute to increase the General Fund Balance and will be required to be treated as a capital receipt. Where a premium has been received, this is posted out of the General Fund Balance to the Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the amount due in relation to the lease asset is to be settled by the payment of rentals in future financial years, this is posted out of the General Fund Balance to the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When the future rentals are paid, the element for the charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property is used to write down the lease asset. At this point, the deferred capital receipts are transferred to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of Non-Current Assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are appropriated from the Capital Adjustment Account to the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

### (b) Operating Leases

Where the Council grants an operating lease over an asset, the asset is retained in the Balance Sheet. Rental income is credited to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Credits are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments. Initial direct costs incurred in negotiating and arranging the lease are added to the carrying amount of the relevant asset and charged as an expense over the lease term on the same basis as rental income.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and similar contracts fall within scope of IFRIC 12 and are agreements to receive services, where the responsibility for making available the property, plant and equipment needed to provide the services passes to the PFI contractor. As the Council is deemed to control the services that are provided under its PFI schemes and as ownership of the property, plant and equipment will pass to the Council at the end of the contracts for no additional charge, the Council carries the assets used under the contracts on its Balance Sheet

as part of Property, Plant and Equipment. The only exception to this is where PFI assets are transferred to academies under 125 year lease arrangements, at the point of transfer the assets are removed from the Council's balance sheet. With effect from 1 April 2024 IFRS 16 (Leases) also applies to service concession arrangements. Under IFRS16, where indexation (or other changes in a rate) affects future service concession payments, the lease liability requires to be remeasured. Instead of expensing the increased payment, the net present value of future payments that comprise the liability is recalculated based on the revised level of payments.

PFI assets are initially recognised at their fair value when they are first made available for use balanced by the recognition of a liability for amounts due to the scheme operator to pay for the capital investment (this is normally based on the relevant elements of capital cost in the operator's financial model). Initial direct costs to the Council are added to the carrying amount of the asset. Any upfront contributions made by the authority to the PFI operator, either in the form of a cash lump sum or transfer of property that will not be used to provide services under the arrangement, are applied to write-down the PFI liability at the contribution's value agreed in the operator's financial model when the PFI asset is first made available for use.

PFI assets under construction are recognised on the balance sheet where the terms and conditions of the contractual obligation are such that the economic benefit of the asset flows to the Council at that time, similar to an asset that a Council constructs or develops for its own use.

Non-current assets recognised on the Balance Sheet are re-valued and depreciated in the same way as property, plant and equipment owned by the Council.

The amounts payable to the PFI operators each year are analysed into five elements:

- fair value of the services received during the year – debited to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement,
- finance cost – an interest charge on the outstanding Balance Sheet liability, debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement,
- contingent rent – increases in the amount to be paid for the property arising during the contract, debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement,
- payment towards liability – applied to write down the Balance Sheet liability due to the PFI operator (the profile of write-downs is calculated using the same principles as for a finance lease),
- lifecycle replacement costs – Recognised as additions to Property, Plant and Equipment in the Balance Sheet as the scheduled works are carried out and the expenditure is incurred. Where the profile of lifecycle expenditure actually incurred by the PFI operator differs significantly from the projected profile included within the PFI model adjustments are made to account for the difference. A prepayment is recognised where planned expenditure paid for through the unitary payment exceeds the actual amount incurred by the PFI operator. An additional liability is recognised where planned expenditure is less than that actually incurred. The prepayment/additional liability is carried forward in the balance sheet until the expenditure is actually incurred/settled, or, in the case of a prepayment when there is no longer an expectation that it will eventually be incurred by the PFI operator at which point it is charged to revenue. Lifecycle replacement costs which represent the refurbishment or replacement of major components are capitalised as Property, Plant and Equipment in accordance with Accounting Policy 13.

## 17 Investment Properties

Investment properties are those that are used solely to earn rentals and/or for capital appreciation. The definition is not met if the property is used in any way to facilitate the delivery of services or production of goods or is held for sale.

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at Fair Value being the price that would be received from the selling the asset in an orderly transaction between market participants under the market conditions prevailing at the end of the reporting period. Investment Properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually according to market conditions at the year-end. Gains and losses on revaluation are posted to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

Rentals received and expenditure incurred in relation to investment properties are credited/charged to the Financing and Investment Income line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Revaluation and disposal gains and losses are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the General Fund Balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account and (for any sale proceeds greater than £10,000) the Capital Receipts Reserve.

## **18 Intangible Assets**

Expenditure on non-monetary assets that do not have physical substance but are controlled by the Council as a result of past events (e.g. software licences) is capitalised when it is expected that future economic benefits or service potential will flow from the intangible asset to the Council.

Internally generated assets are capitalised where it is demonstrable that the project is technically feasible and is intended to be completed (with adequate resources being available) and the Council will be able to generate future economic benefits or deliver service potential by being able to sell or use the asset. Expenditure is capitalised where it can be measured reliably as attributable to the asset and is restricted to that incurred during the development phase (research expenditure is not capitalised). Expenditure on the development of websites is not capitalised if the website is solely or primarily intended to promote or advertise the Council's goods or services.

Intangible assets are measured initially at cost. Amounts are only revalued where the fair value of the assets held by the Council can be determined by reference to an active market. The depreciable amount of an intangible asset is amortised over its useful life to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. An asset is tested for impairment whenever there is an indication that the asset might be impaired and any losses recognised are posted to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Any gain or loss arising on the disposal or abandonment of an intangible asset is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where expenditure on intangible assets qualifies as capital expenditure for statutory purposes, amortisation, impairment losses and disposal gains and losses are not permitted to have an impact on the General Fund Balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account and (for any sale proceeds greater than £10,000) the Capital Receipts Reserve.

## **19 Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute**

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but does not result in the creation of a non-current asset is charged as expenditure to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year. This includes transformational expenditure on reform projects capitalised under the capital receipts flexibilities implemented with effect from 1 April 2016 under the Local Government Act 2003. Where the Council has determined to meet the cost of this expenditure from existing capital resources or by borrowing, a transfer in the Movement in Reserves Statement from the General

Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account then reverses out the amounts charged so that there is no impact on the level of Council Tax.

## **20 Heritage Assets**

Heritage assets' principal purpose is to contribute to knowledge and culture and are assets which are preserved in trust for future generations for their artistic, cultural, environmental, historical, scientific or technological associations. They are recognised on balance sheet at cost or value. Where they are carried at value, the most appropriate and relevant valuation method is used including, e.g., insurance values. Revaluations are carried out as and when necessary in order to keep carrying values current (there is no requirement for them to be revalued at least every 5 years).

Operational heritage assets (i.e. those that are being held for their heritage characteristics, but are also used for other activities or services) are accounted for as operational assets.

Depreciation is not provided on heritage assets where they have indefinite lives.

Revaluation gains and losses and impairments of heritage assets are accounted for in the same way as for Property, Plant and Equipment.

## **21 Financial Instruments**

### 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 cashflow 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). These are classified as fair value through profit or loss. Equity investments are held for strategic purposes and are designated at FVOCI.

#### Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost

Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the authority 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 Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (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 authority, 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.

When the Council makes loans at less than market rates (soft loans) 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, 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.

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

#### Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit or 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.

The Council has a limited number of shareholdings which would typically be measured at FVPL; however, the Council has designated these equity investments as fair value through other comprehensive income on the basis that:

- They are not quoted in an active market; and
- They are not held for trading

#### Expected Credit Loss Model

The authority recognises expected credit losses on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost, either on a 12-month (i.e. the normal expectation of loss for this category of investment, no event occurring) or lifetime basis (whereby the initial assessment of risk has changed significantly by an event occurring). 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 authority. 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 authority holds loans with two 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.

#### Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities 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 this being the price that would be paid in an orderly transaction between market participants on the date on which the liability is recognised. Ordinarily, this will be the transaction price, such as the principal amount of a loan received. Thereafter they are carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments over the life of the instrument to the amount at which it was originally recognised. For most of the borrowings that the Council has, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal repayable (plus accrued interest) and interest charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

The amount of interest charged to the HRA is determined on a fair and equitable share basis by reference to the HRA's Capital Financing Requirement.

Gains and losses on the repurchase or early settlement of borrowing are credited and debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year of repurchase/settlement. However, where repurchase has taken place as part of a restructuring of the loan portfolio that involves the modification or exchange of existing instruments, the premium or discount is respectively deducted from or added to the amortised cost of the new or modified loan and the write-down to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is spread over the life of the loan by an adjustment to the effective interest rate.

Where premiums and discounts have been charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, regulations allow the impact on the General Fund Balance to be spread over future years. The reconciliation of amounts charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement 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.

Where the Council has entered into financial guarantees that are not required to be accounted for as financial instruments they are reflected in the Statement of Accounts to the extent that provisions might be required, or a contingent liability note is needed, under the policies set out in the section on Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets.

## **22 Employee Benefits**

### Benefits Payable During Employment

Short-term employee benefits (those that fall due wholly within 12 months of the year-end), such as wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits for current employees, are recognised as an expense in the year in which employees render service to the Council. An accrual is made against services in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services for the cost of holiday entitlements and other forms of leave earned by employees but not taken before the year-end and which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the remuneration rates applicable in the following financial year. Any accrual made is required under statute to be reversed out of the General Fund Balance by a credit to the Accumulating Compensated Absences Adjustment Account via the Movement in Reserves Statement.

### Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Council to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy and are charged on an accruals basis at the earlier of when the Council can no longer withdraw an offer of those benefits or when the Council recognises the cost of restructuring.

Redundancy payments are charged to the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

### Post-Employment Benefits

Employees of the Council are members of three separate pension schemes:

- The National Health Service Pension Scheme, administered by the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA).
- The Teachers' Pension Scheme, administered by Teachers' Pensions on behalf of the Department for Education.
- The Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS), administered by South Yorkshire Pensions Authority.

All three schemes provide defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees worked for the Council.

The arrangements for both the National Health Service and Teachers' schemes mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot be identified specifically to the Council. These schemes are therefore accounted for as if they were a defined contributions scheme – no liability for future payments of benefits is recognised in the Balance Sheet and the Public Health and Children's and Education Service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statements are charged with the employer's contributions payable to the National Health Service and Teachers' Pensions Scheme in the year.

The Local Government Scheme is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme:

- The liabilities of the South Yorkshire Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method – i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates etc., and projections of earnings for current employees.
- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate based on the indicative rate of return on high quality corporate bonds. In determining these liabilities, an assumption has been made on the advice of our actuaries that 50% of employees retiring will take an increase in their lump sum payment on retirement in exchange for a reduction in their future annual pension.
- The assets of the South Yorkshire Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value.
- The change in the net pensions asset/liability is analysed into the following components:
  - current service cost – the increase in liabilities as result of years of service earned this year – allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked.
  - past service cost – the increase in liabilities arising from current year decisions as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years – debited to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked.
  - net interest – interest receivable on the fair value of plan assets held at the start of the period adjusted for changes in plan assets during the year as a result of contributions and benefit payments less the interest payable on pension liabilities both determined using the discount rate based on high quality corporate bonds used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period – debited/credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
  - re-measurements - return on plan assets (net of admin expenses and excluding amounts included in net interest) and actuarial gains/losses that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions are debited/credited to the Pensions reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
  - contributions paid to the South Yorkshire pension fund – cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities are not accounted for as an expense.
- In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, this means that there are appropriations 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 balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the impact on 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.

Accounting Standard IAS19 (Employee Benefits) states an entity shall recognise the net defined benefit liability/asset in the statement of financial position. In line with IAS19 and IFRIC14 (the standard that limits the recognition of the asset), when the actuary determines a defined benefit asset; the asset is recognised at the lower of the surplus in the defined benefit plan and the asset ceiling calculated by the actuary.

#### Discretionary Benefits

The Council also 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.

### **23 Value Added Tax (VAT)**

VAT payable is included only to the extent that it is irrecoverable from HM Revenue & Customs, whilst VAT receivable is excluded from income. The net amount due from/to HMRC at the end of the financial year is included within debtors or creditors.

### **24 Events after the Reporting Period**

Events after the reporting period are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the audited Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue. Two types of events can be identified:

- those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is adjusted to reflect such events,
- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events, but where a category of events would have a material effect disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and their estimated financial effect.

Events taking place after the date the Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services authorises the audited Accounts for issue are not reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

### **25 Exceptional Items**

When items of income and expense are material, their nature and amount is disclosed separately, either on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement or in the notes to the accounts, depending on how significant the items are to an understanding of the Council's financial performance.

### **26 Interests in Companies and Other Entities**

Where the Council exercises control, shares control or exerts a significant influence over another entity, and the Council's interests are material in aggregate, it will prepare Group Accounts. The Council's interest in another entity can be contractual or non-contractual and may be evidenced by, but is not limited to, the holding of equity or debt instruments in the entity as well as other forms of involvement such as the provision of funding, liquidity support, credit enhancement and guarantees.

The Council has control over another entity, where it is able to direct the activities of that entity such that it has exposure to or rights over variable returns and can use its power over the entity to affect the returns it receives.

Shared control with another party or parties in a joint venture arises where decisions about activities that significantly affect returns require the unanimous consent of the parties sharing control including the Council.

The Council can exert a significant influence over an associate where the Council has the power to participate in the financial and operating policy decisions of an entity which fall short of control or joint control.

The Council's single entity financial statements include the income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows of the local Council maintained schools within the control of the Council.

Where local Council maintained schools convert to academies during the year, the assets, liabilities and reserves of the school are deconsolidated from the Council's single entity accounts at their carrying amount at the date of conversion unless the school has a deficit for which the Council retains responsibility. The Non-Current Assets of the school are derecognised when the Council relinquishes control over school premises which it had held as a local Council maintained school through ownership, legally enforceable rights or some other means.

Interests in companies and other entities are recorded in the Council's balance sheet as financial assets at cost, less any provision for losses.

## **27 Acquisitions and discontinued operations**

Transfers of functions to or from other public sector bodies are accounted for with effect from the date of transfer. Assets and liabilities are transferred at their carrying value at the date of transfer unless otherwise agreed and the balance sheet restated to reflect the value of assets brought onto or removed from the balance sheet. The financial effect of functions transferred, to or from the Council are disclosed separately in the current year as "transferred in" or "transferred out" operations. The financial effect of functions transferred to another public sector body are disclosed separately in the comparative year to enable the performance of continuing operations to be compared on a like for like basis.

A function in this context is an identifiable service or business operation with an integrated set of activities, staff and recognised assets and/or liabilities that are capable of being conducted and managed to achieve the objectives of that service or business operation.

Discontinued operations are activities that cease completely. Income and expenditure relating to discontinued operations are presented separately on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.