

Notice of Meeting

Audit Committee

Date: Monday 27 March 2023

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: The Annexe, Crosfield Hall, Broadwater Road, Romsey, Hampshire,
SO51 8GL

For further information or enquiries please contact:

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Legal and Democratic Service

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The recommendations contained in the Agenda are made by the Officers and these recommendations may or may not be accepted by the Committee.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SCHEME

If members of the public wish to address the meeting they should notify the Legal and Democratic Service at the Council's Beech Hurst office by noon on the working day before the meeting.

Membership of Audit Committee

MEMBER

WARD

Councillor C Borg-Neal (Chairman)

Andover Harroway

Councillor T Swain (Vice-Chairman)

Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams

Councillor C Donnelly

Andover Downlands

Councillor N Gwynne

Romsey Cupernham

Councillor M Maltby

Chilworth, Nursling & Rownhams

Councillor J Parker

Romsey Tadburn

Audit Committee

Monday 27 March 2023

AGENDA

The order of these items may change as a result of members of the public wishing to speak

- 1 Apologies**
- 2 Public Participation**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**
- 4 Urgent Items**
- 5 Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2022**
- 6 Internal Audit Progress Report to 28 February 2023 and Draft Annual Audit Plan 2023/24 5 - 28**

To outline the work undertaken and progress against the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23 by Internal Audit to 28 February 2023.
- 7 Corporate Risk Register - Update 29 - 32**

To provide an update on the risk management approach and the key risks contained in the Council's Corporate Risk Register.
- 8 Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy (including Whistle-blowing) 33 - 42**

To provide an update on the Council's Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy (including Whistleblowing).
- 9 Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 43 - 59**

To consider the approval of the 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement.
- 10 Statement of Accounts 2021/22 60 - 200**

To approve the Council's audited Statement of Accounts 2021/22.

ITEM 6 Internal Audit Progress Report to 28 February 2023 and Draft Annual Audit Plan 2023/24

Report of the Internal Audit Manager (Portfolio: Finance and Resources)

Recommended:

- 1. That the Internal Audit progress report be endorsed.**
- 2. That the Draft Annual Audit Plan for 2023/24 be approved.**

SUMMARY:

- The report sets out the Internal Audit coverage, findings and performance for 2022/23 to 28 February 2023 and summary risk profile for those areas reviewed. The executive summary detail, assurance opinion and risk profiling definitions are detailed in Annex 1.
- It also presents the Draft Annual Audit Plan for 2023/24 in Annex 2 which has been aligned to current risks and reflects the Council's key priorities and objectives.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Annual Audit Plan for 2022/23 was approved by the Audit Panel on 14 March 2022. The Draft Audit Plan for 2023/24 is shown in Annex 2 to this report.
- 1.2 The scope of audits included in the plans enable a continuing assurance opinion to be provided on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control framework and reflects the Council's key priorities and objectives.
- 1.3 A risk assessment has ensured that the Corporate and Service risk registers, in consultation with all Heads of Service and senior management, inform the plans and that the audit resource required is matched against available resources.

2 Independence and Objectivity

The Internal Audit Team's independence and objectivity has been maintained in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

3 Performance against the Audit Plan

- 3.1 Since 1 April 2022, the Internal Audit function has made good progress against the Annual Audit Plan 2022/23, as summarised in the Internal Audit Progress Report in Annex 1.
- 3.2 Of the 9 audits reported as complete in Annex 1, 6 were classified as substantial assurance, 1 as limited assurance and 2 had a split assurance opinion of substantial/limited. The executive summary detail, assurance opinion and risk profiling definitions are detailed in Annex 1.

All actions arising from audit reviews to date have been accepted by management and programmed for implementation.

4 Compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS)

- 4.1 The Audit Committee received a report at the June 2022 meeting on the Internal Audit function's conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards UK. (PSIAS). A self-assessment against these standards was carried out in March 2022 and another review is currently underway. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards are a mandatory requirement, the objectives of which are to:
- (i) Define the nature of internal auditing within the UK public sector,
 - (ii) Set basic principles for carrying out internal audit in the UK public sector,
 - (iii) Establish a framework for providing internal audit services, which add value to the organisation, leading to improved organisational processes and operations, and
 - (iv) Establish the basis for the evaluation of internal audit performance and to drive improvement planning.
- 4.2 No areas of "partial" assurance were previously highlighted. There were however some areas identified where further developments could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the team going forwards. These are being progressed during 2022-23 and included:
- Bringing the Audit Charter and Strategy to the Audit Committee to inform Members of the core principles for the professional practices of internal auditing and to obtain endorsement of any future updates. These were brought to and approved by the Audit Committee on 26th September 2022.
 - Seeking opportunities for feedback on the performance of the Internal Audit Manager from the Audit Committee and Chief Executive.
 - Continuing, where appropriate, to develop the use of CAATS (Computer Assisted Audit Techniques), and other methodologies in testing.
 - Developing and reporting on the Internal Audit Team role in project assurance whilst ensuring independence is maintained as clearly expressed in the Audit Charter.
 - Developing and embedding fraud awareness processes.

5 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

- 5.1 The work of the Internal Audit function supports the Council's four strategic aims for maintaining and improving quality of life in Test Valley, by ensuring that the Council makes the most of its available resources and transforms the way it works, to provide even better value for money and effective service delivery.

6 Consultations/Communications

- 6.1 The external auditors have been consulted on the internal audits planned coverage for 2023/24.
- 6.2 The Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24 has involved full consultation with senior management, service heads, external audit, and has been approved by the Audit Committee at its previous meeting.

7 Risk Management

- 7.1 The annual audit plan 2023/24 is based on the Council's risk registers and Internal Audit contributes towards the overall corporate governance framework of assurance.

8 Resource Implications

- 8.1 There has been no shortfall of actual days spent against planned days in the Annual Audit Plan at this stage.
- 8.2 Following restructure of the team in 2021/22 the budget savings have been retained to provide some contingency for external support where needed to enable audit coverage on the core audits or more specialised areas.

9 Equality Issues

- 9.1 No equalities matters have been identified in the preparation of this report.

10 Conclusion

- 10.1 This report outlines the work undertaken and progress against the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23 by Internal Audit to 28 February 2023.
- 10.2 As at 28 February 2023 progress on the planned 2022/23 Audit Plan is on target. It is not anticipated that additional external resource will be needed to support the delivery of the plan.
- 10.3 An Internal Audit plan for 2023/24 is presented based on the outcomes of consultation with stakeholders and an assessment of risk inherent to Council processes.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
None			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	2		
Author:	Jan Balfour	Ext:	8234
File Ref:	N/A		
Report to:	Audit Committee	Date:	27 March 2023



Internal Audit Progress Report as at 28 February 2023

Jan Balfour – Internal Audit Manager

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Internal Audit is a statutory function for all local authorities.

The requirement for an Internal Audit function in local government is detailed within the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 as to:

“Undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards and guidance.”

The standards for “proper practices” are laid down in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) (the standards – updated 2016).

Internal Auditing is an independent, objective and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

This report includes the status against the 2022/23 internal audit plan.

2.0 AUDIT PLAN PROGRESS AS AT 28 FEBRUARY 2023

There are 27 full audits and 2 follow up reviews totalling 29 reviews. These include the “core” financial audits which are compulsory and take place on an annual basis, cross cutting/corporate audits, and service specific reviews. Also included are 3 audits deferred from 2021-22.

To date 23 (79%) have been completed to final report stage, 2 (7%) are at draft report stage and 3 (10%) are in progress as at 28th February 2023. 1 audit (4%) is proposed for deferral to the 2023-24 Audit Plan.



3.0 ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Internal Audit has provided advice and assurance in the following areas:

11 pieces of advice and assurance.

National Fraud Initiative (NFI) to facilitate national data matching carried out by the Cabinet Office.

Audit Committee reporting and attendance.

Audit Planning and consultation.

Risk Management and Annual Governance Statement.

Work is underway to develop and promote Fraud Awareness and carry out a risk assessment of the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption processes and procedures.

Project Assurance role on 12 projects.

4.0 CONTINGENCIES

2 special investigations have been undertaken to date.

3 pieces of work have been carried out under the provision for requests from the S151 Officer. These have included the £150 energy payments scheme, use of Purchasing Cards and the procurement of VMWare Server replacement. Reports were produced for 2 and summaries of these were reported to the December Audit Committee.

5.0 AUDIT PLAN CHANGES

The following changes have been made to the Audit Plan since issue of the last progress report.

Audits removed from the Audit Plan:

It is proposed to defer the audit of Mobile Devices from the 22-23 Audit Plan to Quarter 1 of the 23-24 plan. This is due to progress on the roll- out of mobile devices having been delayed.

Audits added to the Audit Plan.

3 audits were deferred from the 2021-22 Audit Plan as previously reported to the Audit Committee. These included Asset Management (Capital Accounting), Garden Waste and Emergency Planning. All have been completed, the Executive summary for Asset Management is provided below.

2 audits (Grants and Portway Business Park) were held in reserve to be included in the 2022-23 Audit Plan should there be capacity to do so. These have now been deferred and included in the 2023-24 Audit Plan.

6.0 ASSURANCE LEVEL/OPINION

Internal Audit Reviews culminate in an opinion on the assurance that can be placed on the effectiveness of the framework of risk management, control and governance designed to support the achievement of management objectives for the area under review.

Assurance Level/Opinion:	Description:
Full	There is a sound system of control designed to achieve the system objectives.
Substantial	While basically there is a sound system there are weaknesses which put some of the control objectives at risk.
Limited	Weaknesses in the system of controls are such as to put the system objectives at risk.
No	Control is generally weak leaving the system open to significant error or abuse.

ANNEX 1

The **opinion** is formed with reference to the Councils Corporate risk matrix. Each control weakness identified during an audit review is scored according to this matrix. Where * shown this opinion is qualified when selected.

Likelihood

A Very High	Substantial or Limited*	Limited	No Assurance	No Assurance
B High	Substantial	Limited*	Limited Or No Assurance*	No Assurance
C Significant	Substantial	Substantial or Limited*	Limited	Limited Or No Assurance*
D Low	Substantial or Full*	Substantial	Substantial or Limited*	Limited
E Very Low	Full	Substantial or Full*	Substantial*	Limited
F Almost impossible	Full	Full	Substantial	Substantial or Limited*
	IV Negligible	III Significant	II Critical	I Catastrophic
	<u>Impact</u>			

7.0 CONTROL WEAKNESS – RISK RANKING

Priority Level:	Description:
High	Major issues for the attention of Senior Management. Action needs to be taken within a reasonable timescale to address significant control weaknesses and to ensure that the controls can be relied upon for the effective performance of the Service or function.
Medium	Issues for middle management action. These include control weaknesses that may expose the system function or process to a key risk but the likelihood of it occurring is significant rather than high.
Low	Minor matters. Low risk exceptions or improvements which help to improve service effectiveness and efficiency.

8.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

1.

Control Weaknesses Identified:		
High	Medium	Low
0	1	0

HOUSING BENEFIT & COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT 2022/23

Overall Assurance Opinion:
Substantial Assurance - overall
Limited Assurance - in respect of the outstanding control weaknesses identified in the previous audit around the monitoring of overpayments and debt recovery action and the monitoring and refunding of credit balances.
Agreed actions are scheduled to be implemented by 30/06/23

Scope:	Control Weakness:	Control improvement upon implementation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dealing with Customers Registration and Assessment of claims Payments Overpayments and Recovery Refunds Write-offs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accuracy checking is currently only targeting B&B claims as these were identified as being a higher risk area. Although some new claims are also being checked other areas are not being checked for accuracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential errors occurring in other work areas are identified and rectified promptly. Greater assurance that benefit recipients receive the benefit to which they are entitled.

2.

Control Weaknesses Identified:		
High	Medium	Low
0	2	0

COUNCIL TAX & NON DOMESTIC RATES 2022/23

Overall Assurance Opinion:
Substantial Assurance
Agreed action is scheduled to be implemented by 28/02/23

Scope:	Control Weakness:	Control improvement upon implementation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Continuity Planning • Valuation • Discounts, exemptions and reliefs • Suppression of bills • Annual and ad hoc billing arrangements • Income collection • Refunds • Recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent reconciliations by the Systems Team are not being performed between all write-offs on the system and write-off authorisation forms. • Income and debt year end 2021/22 reconciliations for Council Tax & NDR were found to be correct and signed off however no counter signature had been provided to confirm their accuracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any unauthorised write-offs on the system are picked up through segregation of duties. • Any inaccuracies are identified through a counter check.

3.

Control Weaknesses Identified:		
High	Medium	Low
0	2	1

**DEBTORS
2022/23**

Overall Assurance Opinion:
Substantial Assurance
Agreed action is scheduled to be implemented by 31/03/23

Scope:	Control Weakness:	Control improvement upon implementation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedures. Fees and charges. The provision for bad and doubtful debts. The raising and prompt despatch of Debtor accounts. Procedures for the receipt of payments and allocation of income to the correct accounts. Procedures for debt collection and write-off of debts. Debtor system access control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The income suspense account has had a small negative balance for over a year and does not reconcile. Aged debt is not regularly chased in a timely manner. Reconciliations are not currently being performed regularly between refunds in the sundry debtors system module to the actual refunds made from the creditors system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All cash received is promptly and correctly allocated. Minimised risk of loss of revenue through late or no recovery action. Any inaccuracies are promptly identified.

4.

Control Weaknesses Identified:		
High	Medium	Low
0	4	0

**CLIMATE EMERGENCY
2022/23**

Overall Assurance Opinion:
Limited Assurance
Agreed action is scheduled to be implemented by 30/04/24

Scope:	Control Weakness:	Control improvement upon implementation:
<p>The Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has assigned responsible officer/Service. • Has target dates for implementation. • Is on track to being implemented within these target timescales. • There are mechanisms in place to ensure the regular review of progress against the CEAP by Management Team and OSCOM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates on the progress of the CEAP to Management Team are ad hoc, rather than regularly programmed. There is no evidence of a corporate management strategy to enable measurement of the progress of the CEAP and whether or not it will meet the Council's climate targets. • Reports provided to OSCOM do not present the progress of actions against planned timescales. • Allocated action timescales are not specific and monitored. There are also no checks in place to review whether the CEAP as a whole is on track. • 10 out of 57 actions have not been allocated an officer contact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Team will be able to more effectively monitor the progress of the CEAP against the Council's climate targets. • OSCOM will be able to more effectively to scrutinise the progression of actions against the Council's Climate Emergency targets. • Slippage against time bounded actions can be considered.

5.

Control Weaknesses Identified:		
High	Medium	Low
0	6	0

**CYBER SECURITY (RESPONSE PLANNING)
2022/23**

Overall Assurance Opinion:
Substantial Assurance - overall.
Limited Assurance - in respect of the Shared Services Agreement (MoU), corporate monitoring and out of hours response.
Agreed action is scheduled to be implemented by 31/05/23

Scope:	Control Weakness:	Control improvement upon implementation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyber Security Incident Response Plan • Response timescales for Cyber Security alerts. • Testing of the Cyber Security Incident Response Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Shared Services Agreement (MoU) does not provide for Cyber Security Incident Response and the principles of cooperation to be adopted regarding a common and reciprocal approach across the shared service. • The “Security Incident Response Plan” is not approved corporately by the Council’s Management Team or reviewed alongside the Council’s Business Continuity arrangements in terms of the potential impacts on and recovery prioritisation of critical Services. The Council’s approach and response to a ransomware attack has not been considered at a corporate level by Management Team. • The “Security Incident Response Plan” is generic. Detailed “playbooks” for specific higher risk events have however been identified, are under development and awaiting approval by the IT Leadership Team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assurance of a common and reciprocal response and should and event occur the prompt severance of data centre links to contain the impacts. • Greater assurance at a corporate level that there are proactive measures in place to bolster processes, enable early detection and coordinate effective response. • Specific higher risk events are effectively managed should these occur. • Roles and responsibilities are clearly understood and plans are accessible and operate effectively in practice. • Cyber events occurring outside

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “Security Incident Response Plan”: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has not been communicated to those listed as having a key role. - Is not centrally held in an accessible area which is known to all with a key role. It is currently held in an IT Sharepoint area which may be inaccessible in the event of an incident. • The “Security Incident Response Plan” is not subject to periodic assessment testing. It is not subject to approval by senior management at a corporate level and there is no established programme for its testing or the extent of any testing. • Monitoring and detection of cyber events is not currently undertaken outside of business hours at TVBC with the exception of The Lights. Out of hours coverage is not consistent across the shared service. 	<p>of business hours can be promptly managed and impacts minimised.</p>
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6.

Control Weaknesses Identified:		
High	Medium	Low
0	0	1

**INCOME COLLECTION
2022/23**

Overall Assurance Opinion:
Substantial Assurance
Agreed action is scheduled to be implemented by 30/06/23

Scope:	Control Weakness:	Control improvement upon implementation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for the collection of income including cash collected at the Council's offices and through payment outlets. • The safe transit and secure handling/storage of cash and processing of cheques. • The receipting and recording of income. • The prompt banking of income. • The posting of income to the correct general ledger accounts. • Income and bank reconciliation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no evidence that income variances (over/under banking) are investigated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income discrepancies are promptly picked up and investigated.

7.

Control Weaknesses Identified:		
High	Medium	Low
0	2	1

**ASSET MANAGEMENT (CAPITAL ACCOUNTING)
2022/23**

Overall Assurance Opinion:
Substantial Assurance
Agreed action is scheduled to be implemented by 30/09/23

Scope:	Control Weakness:	Control improvement upon implementation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CIPFA requirements for Capital Accounting are met. The Council has an up to date Capital Strategy and Capital Programme. An up to date Asset Balance Sheet and Fixed Asset Register is maintained. Access is restricted to authorised personnel and an effective contingency plan is in place. Assets have been correctly valued in accordance with CIPFA guidance. Depreciation is correctly calculated and reflected in the financial statements. Fixed assets are periodically reconciled to the main accounting system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Accountancy Fixed Asset Register is not regularly reconciled to an independent record of land and property i.e. the Property and Asset Management Asset Register and no evidence is maintained of reconciliations. There is no common naming convention for assets within the 2 registers. There is currently no staff contingency cover for capital accounting and no written procedure notes. Access to the Fixed Asset Register is not restricted to the Accountants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater assurance that all assets are included and accurately recorded in the Fixed Asset Register and the Council's Balance Sheet. The capital accounting process can be effectively covered and assets correctly recorded in the event of staff absence. Unauthorised amendments to the Fixed Asset Register are minimised.

8.

Control Weaknesses Identified:		
High	Medium	Low
0	1	1

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT
2022/23**

Overall Assurance Opinion:
Substantial Assurance
Agreed action is scheduled to be implemented by 31/05/23

Scope:	Control Weakness:	Control improvement upon implementation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loans are administered in accordance with Council Policy & Procedures. Documentary evidence and records/accounts are maintained to support the transfer of funds and are securely held. Investments are placed with reputable firms and are regularly monitored and reported. Procedures for the use of investment brokers are sound. Investments are calculated and valued appropriately. Payments are for the correct amounts and properly transferred. Interest is correctly calculated. Adequate segregation of duties is in place, loans are appropriately authorised and periodically reconciled with an independent source. Procedures for the management of the Authority's cash flow are adequate and working effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TMP1 "Risk Management" refers to the Crime Policy as having cover of £15m when the policy actually has liability limited to £10m. The Counterparty limit is £15m so consideration required as to whether the current insurance level is sufficient. TMP1 also refers to an IT disaster recovery plan detailed on SharePoint and accessible by Audit only. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance is sufficient to cover a loss up to the counterparty limit. The TMP references to and reflects the Finance & Revenues Service business continuity arrangements.

9.

Control Weaknesses Identified:		
High	Medium	Low
0	2	0

**IT SHARED SERVICE
2022/23**

Overall Assurance Opinion:
Substantial Assurance
Agreed action is scheduled to be implemented by 31/08/23

Scope:	Areas for Development:	Control improvement upon implementation:
<p>Review of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The interim staffing structure in place following the absence of a Head of IT to manage the Service and departure of the Deputy Chief Executive. The future direction of the Service in terms of its capacity, focus and structure and supporting governance arrangements. The robustness and fitness for purpose of the current Shared Services Agreement/Memorandum of Understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to review the outcomes and key recommendations in the Methods report with a documented and time bound action/improvement plan with clear ownership assigned. Reflecting the risks identified within the Methods report within the IT Service and Corporate Risk Register as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The risks identified in the Methods report are addressed and potential impacts on service delivery minimised.

9.0 CONTROL WEAKNESSES

Of the 9 2022/23 audits completed, where an opinion has been given 24 exceptions have been raised:

Risk:	No. of exceptions (actions):
High	0
Medium	20
Low	4

DRAFT AUDIT PLAN 2023-24

<u>Planned Days</u> <u>2022-23</u>	<u>Audit Assignment</u>	<u>Planned Days</u> <u>2023-24</u>	<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Comment</u>
	CORE AUDIT (COMPULSORY)			
10	Accounting System	10	Q4	
8	Treasury Management	8	Q3	
16	Benefits	16	Q1 & Q3	System review Q1 then remainder in Q3.
10	Income Collection	10	Q3	
20	Council Tax & NNDR	20	Q1 & Q3	System review Q1 then remainder in Q3
10	Creditors	10	Q3	
10	Debtors	10	Q3	
15	Payroll	15	Q4	Also review compliance with contract
12	Follow ups	14	Q2 & Q4	2 audits
111	Subtotal	113		
	CORPORATE/CROSS SERVICE AUDITS			
15	Procurement & Contracts 1. Procurement > £100k (Capital Programme) (10 days) 2. Valley Housing (10 days) 3. Chantry Centre (10 days) 4. Kier contract (5 days)	35	Q1-Q4	1. To pick up some building maintenance procurement and capital programme procurement as part of sample testing.
7	Corporate Governance	8	Q1-Q4	Production of Annual Governance Statement and development of best practice.
0	Risk Management	10		
6	Covid Support Grants (post assurance)	0		
0	Grants	10	Q4	To cover Shared and Rural Prosperity Grant Funds and larger revenue grants
5	Climate Emergency	0		
3	Floats & End of Year	5	Q1	End of year reconciliation processes
10	Recruitment and Retention of Staff (inc Temporary staffing)	0		
10	Insurance	0		
5	Key partnerships	0		Rolling programme. Propose to follow up on the 2022/23 review of the IT Shared Service (to cover within Follow Ups allocation)
20	ICT audits: 2 x 10 days audits jointly agreed 1. Virtualisation (VMWare) (10 days) 2. Mobile Devices (10 days)	20	Q2/3 Q1	Working in liaison with WCC ICT Auditors (Southern Internal Audit Partnership (SIAP))
81	Subtotal	88		

<u>Planned Days</u> <u>2022-23</u>	<u>Audit Assignment</u>	<u>Planned Days</u> <u>2023-24</u>	<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Comment</u>
	ONGOING ACTIVITIES			
10	Advice & Assurance	15	Q1-Q4	Include procurement advice
5	Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy and Whistleblowing (training, communications & policy updates)	10	Q1-Q4	Development of fraud awareness promotion (intranet and internet)
40	Audit Planning & Reporting	40	Q1-Q4	
7	NFI	7	Q1-Q4	
1	External Audit Liaison	1	Q1-Q4	
45	<p>Role in Major Projects</p> <p>1. Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery</p> <p>2. Andover & Romsey Town Centre Redevelopment</p> <p>3. Office 365</p> <p>4. Finance Management System</p> <p>5. Agile working</p> <p>6. Environment Act</p> <p>7. Land Charges</p>	40	Q1-Q4	<p>Projects and time allocation will be assessed throughout the year in consultation with S&I and will include but are not limited to those listed.</p> <p>1. to review transition from project approach to working group</p>
108	Subtotal	113		
	SERVICE AUDITS			
0	Building Maintenance	0		Reserve Audit to be undertaken in Q4 if capacity to do so.
0	Food Safety	0		Reserve Audit to be undertaken in Q4 if capacity to do so.
0	Fuel Usage	8		
0	CIL/S106	10		
0	Events & Public Halls bookings	8		inc Health and Safety assurance checks and booking process
10	Vehicle Workshop & Transportation	0		
10	Housing Register and Lettings	0		
7	Member Allowances (probity)	0		
Reserve audit	Portway Business Park	10		Income
7	Car Parking	0		
10	The Lights	0		
44	Subtotal	36		
	CONTINGENCIES			
15	S151 Requests	15	Q1-Q4	Potential areas to cover include VAT and Cost of Living Support Grants
15	Special Investigations	15	Q1-Q4	
15	Work carried forward of work in progress from previous year.	20	Q1	
45	Subtotal	50		
389	Total Audit Days planned	400		

ITEM 7 Corporate Risk Register – Update

Report of the Internal Audit Manager (Portfolio: Finance and Resources)

Recommended:

That the update on the Council’s approach to the management of the Corporate Risk Register be noted.

SUMMARY:

- This report provides the Audit Committee with an update on the risk management approach and the key risks contained in the Council’s Corporate Risk Register (attached as an Annex).

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of risk management is to assess the potential barriers to achieving the Council’s objectives. Maintaining an up-to-date risk register assists with management of risks and monitoring of the actions to mitigate them.

2 Corporate Risk Register

- 2.1 The Corporate Risk Register has been integrated into, maintained, and reviewed as part of the Council’s Performance Management Framework. It is reviewed by senior management on at least a quarterly basis and involves:
- (i) Identification of the key risks facing the Council at the present time to ensure these are all captured. The potential consequences of these risks are also considered and what needs to be done to manage them.
 - (ii) Review of the current risks in the register to consider their continuing significance and relevance.
- 2.2 The Corporate Risk Register is under review to assess the categories and types of risks facing a local authority at the current time and to reconsider the key strategic risks alongside and in the context of the Corporate Plan process. Accordingly, this is not a full report of the register, however members are provided with an update on the content and direction of travel of the Register’s ‘Red’ Risks. The Annex highlights the red risks together with the mitigations and the direction of travel for the current risk score compared to the previous risk score as determined by the Council’s Management Team.
- 2.3 The table below summarises the overall scoring of the current risks and the direction of travel since they were last reported to the Audit Committee in September 2022.

	Total	Red	Amber	Green
Total Number	16	3	11	2
Risk Score Reduced	3	1	2	0
Risk Score Unchanged	12	2	8	2
Risk Score Increased	1	0	1	0

2.4 The risks that have seen scores change are:

- (i) C12 “Inability to recruit and retain staff” (reduced risk score) – this is as a result of work undertaken with managers to review harder to recruit posts
- (ii) C26 “Processes, funding and capacity are insufficient to deliver regeneration projects” (reduced risk score) - this is due to the establishment of 2 additional posts and a funding strategy is being developed.
- (iii) C2 “Major loss or release of personal data in contravention of the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR” (reduced risk score) – this is because the mitigating measures are working effectively at the current time.
- (iv) C28 “Inability to effectively absorb the economic shocks arising from Ukraine, cost of living and other geo-political issues” (increased risk score) - this being due to the increase in cost of living and its potential impacts.

2.5 The nature of corporate risks is such that a decrease in risk scores will generally be longer term. There will be some risks where the future actions are designed to prevent the risks (likelihood and/or impact) from getting any worse and therefore the score remains the same despite having carried out further actions.

3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

3.1 The purpose of risk management is to manage the barriers to achieving the Council’s objectives and priorities.

4 Consultations/Communications

4.1 The Corporate Risk Register is subject to regular review and update by senior management on at least a quarterly basis.

5 Risk Management

- 5.1 The maintenance of the Council's risk registers contributes towards the overall corporate governance framework of assurance.

6 Resource Implications

- 6.1 The Internal Audit Manager facilitates the risk management process. This role is segregated from her Internal Audit role and to maintain independence any audit review of risk management is undertaken by the Senior Auditor and reported to the Head of Finance & Revenues/S151 Officer.

7 Equality Issues

- 7.1 The report is for information purposes.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 Risks are identified and managed throughout the year as part of the Council's Performance Management Framework.
- 8.2 The Internal Audit Manager facilitates the risk management process, updates the Corporate Risk register and is able to respond to any queries relating to the risk management process. Each risk has a designated officer as "Risk Owner" and they are responsible for ensuring that all agreed mitigation actions are completed.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
None			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	1		
Author:	Jan Balfour	Ext:	8234
File Ref:	N/A		
Report to:	Audit Committee	Date:	27 March 2023

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER - RED RISKS

Risk No	Type of Risk	Risk Owner	Risk (Description)	Factors	Consequences	Existing Risk Controls	Current Risk Score	Direction of Travel (See note *)	Updates	Target Risk Score
C6	Managerial/ Professional	Deputy Chief Executive	Failure of service and corporate business continuity plans in the event of a serious incident	Lack of awareness and how to respond.	The Council may not be able to get its vital services up and running to meet the immediate needs of the community. The Council may be in breach of the Civil Contingencies Act. Bad publicity / loss of reputation/ loss of public confidence/financial consequences, potential hardship.	Service Business Continuity plans in place.	DI	 	A new process though which emergency planning and business continuity planning is managed has been agreed. Review of all BCPs to be undertaken as part of project.	EI
C13	Technological	Deputy Chief Executive	Council data compromised as a result of Digital (cyber) attack (linked to C6)	More organised threats emerging involving more participants. Potential attack on the way the Council gets to its information e.g. via the internet. Scam support companies contacting users direct (via email or phone).	The Council may not be able to access its information e.g. via internet which would impact its ability to function. Council data may be compromised. Reputational damage. Potential Data Protection breach resulting in Information Commissioner's Office penalty. Financial loss.	Permanent block has been placed on accessing webmail accounts. Dual supplier filtering controls and firewall in place. Only one gateway into Council network (through Winchester City Council and TVBC).	BII		Work to reduce the likelihood of this risk materialising is being undertaken alongside the BCP work identified above. Reviews underway to assess data back-up arrangements and local / cloud hosting of all major systems.	DII
C26	Financial	Heads of Finance & Revenues and Planning Policy & Economic Dev't	Processes, funding and capacity are insufficient to deliver regeneration projects	Gap between the estimated cost and value of regeneration projects is unaffordable. Insufficient expertise to deliver projects throughout the programme.	Delays in delivery of major regeneration projects for the Andover and South of Romsey Town Centres	Regeneration board provides scrutiny and monitoring of progress . Council has approved the establishment of three new posts that will create capacity to deliver projects with the regeneration programme.	BII		Two of the new posts have been advertised. Work continues to develop a financial strategy covering the regeneration programme. Funding approved for Western Avenue riverside improvements.	CII

*NB: C26 - Downward pointing arrow indicates that the risk has decreased in its likelihood since the report to the Audit Committee in September 2022

2.3 There have been no allegations or concerns about fraudulent or corrupt activity raised under this policy during 2022/23.

3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

3.1 The Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy (including Whistleblowing) supports the Council's four strategic aims for maintaining and improving quality of life in Test Valley, by ensuring that the risk of impropriety is minimised and that there are systems in place to respond to any allegations should they occur.

4 Consultations/Communications

4.1 The Head of Finance & Revenues (S151 Officer) and Head of Legal & Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) have been consulted on this policy.

5 Risk Management

5.1 This Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy gives consideration to the risk of fraud and corruption and the responsibilities for how this risk should be monitored and managed.

6 Resource Implications

6.1 There are no resource implications associated with this report.

7 Equality Issues

7.1 The report is for information purposes.

8 Conclusion

8.1 This report provides an update on the Council's Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy (including Whistleblowing).

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
None			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	1		
Author:	Jan Balfour	Ext:	8234
File Ref:	N/A		
Report to:	Audit Committee	Date:	27 March 2023



**TEST VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY including Whistle-blowing
(Reviewed March 2023)**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the Council's commitment to the prevention, deterrence, detection and investigation of all forms of fraud and corruption.
- 1.2 Fraud and corruption are sensitive and damaging issues which can lead to financial loss, bad publicity and loss of public confidence in the way public money is being used. It is therefore important that the Authority has robust systems and procedures in place to ensure that the risk of impropriety is minimised, as far possible, and that where instances do occur, there is a prompt and effective response to them
- 1.3 The policy covers the following main areas:
- Definitions of fraud and corruption
 - Roles and responsibilities of Members and Officers
 - Anti-fraud and corruption framework
 - Responding to allegations and concerns raised internally and externally (Whistle-blowing)
 - Actions to be taken when fraud or corruption is discovered

2. Definitions of Fraud and Corruption

- 2.1 Fraud is defined as "The intentional distortion of financial statements or other records by persons internal or external to the organisation which is carried out to conceal the misappropriation of assets or otherwise for gain". Fraud is a deliberate act by an individual or group of individuals and is therefore always intentional and dishonest. This includes failure to report any instances of money laundering (please refer to the Council's Money Laundering Policy).
- 2.2 Internal fraud refers to fraudulent acts undertaken by Council Members and employees. Examples of such fraud would include: falsification of expenses claims, theft of cash and alteration of records to conceal the deficiency, falsification of invoices for payment, failure to account for monies collected, dealing inappropriately with benefits claims of friends or relatives.
- 2.3 It is also worth noting that there may, in some instances, be potential for those in positions of trust within the Authority to perpetrate frauds against third parties. The Authority has responsibility for the integrity of staff employed in such positions of trust.

- 2.4 Procurement of services or goods can be an area particularly open to the potential of fraud and/or corruption. The Council has in place robust Financial Procedure Rules and Contract Standing Orders and it is important that the correct procedures are followed when engaging in new contracts/business.
- 2.5 External fraud is defined as fraud committed against the Authority by persons outside of the organisation. Examples include false statements in benefits applications and applications for grants.
- 2.6 Corruption is defined as, "The offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward which may influence the action of any person". This would normally mean a payment, favour or gift given to a Member or Officer as a reward, or an incentive, to that person for any actions (or inactions) contrary to the proper conduct of their duties. Please also refer to the Council's Anti-Bribery Policy.
- 2.7 Examples of areas where corruption can occur include tendering and awarding of contracts, appointment and reward of outside consultants, awarding of permissions, planning consents and licences.
- 2.8 Types of inducement include cash, 'free' holidays, 'free' professional services/advice, provision of goods or materials, 'free' entertainment such as tickets for sporting events.
- 2.9 The Fraud Act 2006 states that the offence of Fraud can be committed in 3 ways:
- *Fraud by False Representation*
A person is in breach of this section if he/she: **Dishonestly** makes a false representation and **Intends**, by making the representation, to make a gain for himself or another, or to cause loss to another or to expose another to a risk of loss Note: the gain or loss need not have taken place.
 - *Fraud by failing to disclose information*
A person is in breach of this section if he or she: **Dishonestly** fails to disclose to another person information which he/she is under legal duty to disclose and **Intends**, by failing to disclose the information, to make a gain for himself or another, or cause loss to another or to expose another to a risk of loss.
 - *Fraud by abuse of position*
A person is in breach of this section if he/she: **Occupies a position** in which he/she is expected to safeguard, or not to act against, the financial interests of another person, **Dishonestly** abuses that position and **Intends**, by means of the abuse of that position to make a gain for himself or another or to cause loss to another or to expose another to a risk of loss. Note: A person may be regarded as having abused their position even though their conduct consisted of an omission rather than an act. Example of an omission could be an employee who fails to take up the chance of a crucial contract in order that an associate or rival company can take it up instead at the expense of the employer.

3. **Roles and Responsibilities**

3.1 **Council Members**

Members have a duty to ensure that Council assets are safeguarded from fraud and abuse and to ensure that the Council's powers, duties and responsibilities are exercised in an open, fair and proper manner to the highest standards of probity. These issues need to be borne in mind when considering reports, making decisions and scrutinising the Council's activities. Members should endorse and support all policies and measures taken to prevent, deter, detect and resolve instances, or suspected instances, of fraud and corruption throughout the Authority. Members have a personal responsibility to abide by the Council's constitution, in particular Codes of Conduct.

3.2 **Statutory Officers**

The Chief Financial Officer (Head of Finance & Revenues) has been delegated, through the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, the powers to control and regulate the Council's finances. These include the promotion of systems and practices to minimise the risk of fraud and corruption.

An important part of the control framework is the maintenance of an adequate and effective internal audit of the Council's accounting records and of its system of internal control, as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011. The Head of Finance & Revenues (as section 151 officer or "Chief Financial Officer") should be provided with sufficient resources to allow him to be able to fulfil his responsibility to ensure the proper administration of financial affairs. The Monitoring Officer's (Head of Legal & Democratic Services) duties include ensuring that the Constitution is up to date, that decisions are made fairly and lawfully, establishing and providing support to the work of the Standards regime and maintaining registers of Members' Interests and Gifts and Hospitality. The Council has a statutory duty to provide the Monitoring Officer with sufficient resources to perform this enhanced role.

3.3 **Managers**

Managers are responsible for ensuring there are adequate measures to prevent and detect fraud and corruption within the areas under their control. Achievement of this is assisted by:

- compliance with Council policies, rules and regulations;
- ensuring staff understand their responsibilities through adequate supervision, written procedures and job descriptions;
- responding positively to points raised and advice given by internal and external audit.

Management need to be vigilant in guarding against fraud and corruption, be aware of any circumstances which may indicate that there may be a problem and report any such suspicions to the Head of Finance & Revenues or the Internal Audit Manager for an independent investigation or advice. In carrying

out their responsibilities, all managers (and staff) should be conscious of the fact that they are spending public money collected through taxes. This provides an extra responsibility not only to spend it economically and effectively but also fairly.

3.4 Employees

Staff have a duty to make management aware of any concerns they have about the conduct of Council affairs or the use of Council assets and resources. Any matters raised by them should be taken seriously and properly investigated. In the event that a matter raised does not turn out to be one of concern then no action should be taken against the member of staff unless the member of staff was shown to be acting maliciously and this would be dealt with through the Council's disciplinary procedure.

The Council has a Confidential Reporting Code for Employees, following the introduction of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 which protects "whistleblowers" from unjust recrimination where they have an honest and reasonable suspicion of malpractice and they act on it. The Council, in the interests of probity and good local government, wishes to encourage staff to raise concerns so that they can be properly investigated.

3.5 Internal and External Auditors

Internal Audit

Internal Audit have an important role in assisting management in the prevention and detection of fraud by:

- Independently reviewing systems, procedures and controls to ensure that there are adequate safeguards to prevent, deter and detect fraud and corruption; particular attention is paid to the review of contracts and computer systems where there is potentially a significant risk
- Through specific audits and testing of systems, identifying areas of concern
- Responding to requests for advice from managers on controls to put in systems
- Independently investigating suspected frauds and irregularities and reporting conclusions to management and, where necessary, the Police
- Producing, and advising on the production, of rules, regulations and policies which deter fraud and corruption.

The Council's Financial Procedure Rules give Internal Audit its powers of access to all relevant records, to require explanations from Members and Officers of areas of concern and to be informed of all suspected fraud and irregularities across the Council.

The Council takes part in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data matching exercises. This process involves providing various datasets held by the Council to the Cabinet Office via an online portal which interrogates the data and identifies potential areas of fraud. A simple example could be where the

electoral register shows two adults registered to vote at an address but Council Tax records show a single person discount being applied. The output of the NFI exercises offers indications of where fraud may be occurring; however each potential match requires individual investigation.

External Audit

External Auditors certify that the Authority's accounts represent a true and fair view of the Council's financial position. In reaching this conclusion, they must satisfy themselves that control systems are sound and that measures are being taken to minimise the chances of fraud and corruption. They have limited time and resources to carry out this work and consequently there is a co-operation with the Council's Internal Auditors who are able to examine the Council's activities in more detail. In serious cases of fraud and corruption, External Audit have wide powers to investigate and act should the need arise.

Benefits Team

The payment of benefits is an area where most external fraud is perpetrated against local authorities nationally. The Council has a legal duty to administer a benefits service to all those who qualify. At the same time, there is a responsibility to ensure that benefit payments are only made to those who have a genuine entitlement. Therefore, the Council's role is to try and stop fraud from taking place, catch those who are making false claims and reduce the number of fraudulent claims made each year.

The Council works closely with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) who operate a Single Fraud Investigation Service responsible for:

- Prevention and detection of fraud and error
- Prosecution of those people found to have defrauded the system

The Single Fraud Investigation service now investigates all fraud for Housing Benefit, Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, Employment & Support Allowance, Tax Credits and Universal Credit.

4. **Anti-Fraud and Corruption Framework**

4.1 Constitution

The Council's Constitution includes a number of measures which can assist in the prevention or detection of fraud and corruption, it is perhaps worth highlighting the following examples:

- **Scrutiny** - checks and balances are built into the Council's structure e.g. Overview and Scrutiny committees review Cabinet decisions.
- **Openness** - members of the public can attend meetings and participate in them within pre-defined limits, they have access to Council agendas and minutes (apart from areas exempted by law), they can inspect the Council's accounts and raise objections with External Audit.
- **Delegations** - the extent of powers delegated to Committees, individual Members and Council Officers is laid down.

- **Conduct** - The General Purposes Committee oversee and advise on issues of Officer conduct. Codes of Conduct are in force for Members and Officers generally and for specific areas such as dealing with Planning issues.
- **Disclosure** - registers of interests are maintained for Members and Officers; similarly gifts and hospitality registers are kept. Members and Officers are required to declare any interests in matters they are dealing with and, where appropriate, not be involved in decisions or processing matters in which they have an interest. Officers employed within Benefits administration and internal audit are required to provide a signed declaration of interest in respect of the payment of benefits.
- **Regulation** - rules such as , Contract Standing Orders and Financial Procedure Rules promote the carrying out of Council business in an open, fair and honest manner.
- **Vigilance** - the Confidential Reporting Code encourages employees to raise issues of concern and requires these to be dealt with in a proper manner.

4.2 Monitoring, Investigation and Review

Those with responsibility for the monitoring, investigation and review of Council business, decisions and systems include:

- **Statutory Officers** - the Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer are responsible for ensuring that the conduct of the Council's business is well regulated, that policies and regulations are kept up to date and monitored and that where there are breaches, these are promptly investigated and action taken.
- **Internal Audit** - their role is to review financial systems across the Authority and advise on controls which can minimise the chances of fraud and corruption occurring. Where irregularities do occur, these will be investigated in an objective and timely manner and progress reported to management and, where appropriate, Council Members in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules and section 5 of this Policy.
- **External Audit** – their role is to promote anti-fraud and corruption practices within local government generally and at a local level they review the preventative measures put in place at each Council.
- **Benefits Team** - the Council works closely with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) who operate a Single Fraud Investigation Service.

5. **Response to Allegations and Concerns**

- 5.1 Allegations and concerns about fraudulent or corrupt activity may come from different sources e.g.
- Members of the public, sometimes anonymously
 - Other local authorities
 - Council Members
 - Council managers or staff
 - Resulting from internal or external reviews
 - From the work of the Benefits Team
 - Data matching exercises undertaken as part of the National Fraud Initiative.

- 5.2 Wherever these concerns come from, they must be treated seriously and confidentiality will be respected as far as possible. A thorough investigation will be made of all concerns but the level of resources applied to this will be dependent on the nature of the concern e.g. sums or resources involved, sensitivity of the area, source of concern, evidence provided or available, risk inherent in that area. Investigations may be carried out by Internal Audit or a Head of Service independent of the alleged offence.
- 5.3 For cases of internal fraud, investigations should be closely managed and documented. Appropriate Council Members and managers, as referred to in Financial Procedure Rules, will be kept informed of progress. If the matter may involve disciplinary action against a member of staff, the HR Manager will be informed. If Police action is required, the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer will be consulted or informed.
- 5.4 For cases of external fraud, evidence needs to be gathered which is sufficient to justify actions to be taken e.g. withdrawal of benefit payment, referral to Police. Where external fraud involves significant sums of money, is likely to be sensitive or may cause embarrassment to the Authority, the lead investigatory officer will inform as soon as possible the Monitoring Officer and the S151 Officer and then the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will inform the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder.
- 5.5 At all times confidentiality must be maintained and information disclosed only to those who need to know it, in order not to prejudice any disciplinary or criminal action.
- 5.6 There is a confidential process to support Whistle-blowing on any concerns relating to alleged fraudulent or corrupt practices that a person believes may be taking place within the Council. Details of the process can be found on the Council's website and intranet under 'Speak Up' which provides clear guidance on how to contact Internal Audit and other routes of reporting suspicions or concerns.
- 6. Actions to be Taken when Fraud and Corruption is Uncovered**
- 6.1 Where there is sufficient evidence of fraud or corruption, or there is strong suspicion but internal investigations are unable to obtain further evidence required, the Police should be involved, where it is in the Council's/Public's interests.
- 6.2 Determination of the "Council's/Public's interests" will include factors such as the sums or resources involved, the strength of the evidence obtained or available, the potential cost to the Council of pursuing the matter, the sensitivity of the area concerned. Referral to the Police will be the normal course of action unless there are good reasons not to do so.
- 6.3 The decision to refer cases to the Police (excluding Housing Benefit cases) will be made as follows:

Person Involved	Decision to refer to Police
External parties (not Housing Benefit cases) and Officers up to and including Business Unit Manager level	Two from Head of Finance & Revenues, Head of Legal & Democratic Services, Head of Service concerned.
Head of Service and Deputy Chief Executive	Chief Executive and either Head of Finance & Revenues or Head of Legal & Democratic Services.
Chief Executive	Leader of the Council, Heads of Finance & Revenues and Legal & Democratic Services
Council Member	Chief Executive and either Head of Finance & Revenues or Head of Legal & Democratic Services

The appropriate Portfolio Holder should be kept informed of decisions made, whether these result in referrals to the Police or not.

- 6.4 Where involvement of the Police is not appropriate, action must still be taken. This may involve disciplinary action including dismissal against members of staff, recovery of any sums of money or resources misappropriated. All actions in this regard will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Policy.
- 6.5 Wherever practicable, the Authority should attempt to recover sums of money it may have lost through fraudulent or corrupt activity.
- 6.7 At the conclusion of any fraud or corruption investigation, systems and procedures should be reviewed and any lessons learned from the case, whether or not there was sufficient evidence to prove any wrongdoing.

ITEM 9 Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

Report of the Head of Finance and Revenues

Recommendation:

That the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 be approved and that the Leader and Chief Executive be authorised to sign it on behalf of the Council.

Recommendation to Council

SUMMARY:

- The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Annual Governance Statement, which will accompany the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts.
- Best practice requires that the approval of this Statement is considered separately from the Statement of Accounts, although both are published together each year.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Test Valley Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and used economically, efficiently and effectively.
- 1.2 The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

2 Background

- 2.1 As part of its responsibilities outlined above, the Council is required to produce an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and publish the Statement alongside its Annual Statement of Accounts. The format of the statement is based on guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA) in conjunction with the Society of Local Chief Executives (SOLACE) titled "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework".
- 2.2 The Statement is attached as an Annex to this report and covers the following areas:
- (a) Scope of responsibility
 - (b) The purpose of the Governance Framework

- (c) The impact of Covid-19 on the governance framework
- (d) The Governance Framework in place at the Council
- (e) A review of its effectiveness
- (f) A separate Annex of best practice actions that have been identified and will be implemented during 2023/24.

- 2.3 The Review of Effectiveness (item 2.2 (e)) has been carried out by the Internal Audit Manager, who has reviewed all of the internal audit work carried out during the year. To inform this work, a self-assessment of the internal audit function's conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) has been carried out.
- 2.4 On the basis of Internal Audit work completed in 2022/23, the Internal Audit Manager has provided a "substantial assurance" opinion in respect of the Council's risk management, control and governance arrangements.
- 2.5 The report is being presented to the Audit Committee ahead of the end of the financial year to which it relates. However, to receive the Council approval that will enable the AGS to be published alongside the Statement of Accounts, it needs to be considered at this meeting. An update to Councillors will be provided if any material events occur between the date of the meeting and 31 March.

3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

- 3.1 In addition to its legal responsibilities, approval of an AGS is considered to be best practice and will ensure that proper arrangements are in place to deliver the aims of the Council's Corporate Plan.

4 Consultations/Communications

- 4.1 The Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and all Heads of Service have been asked to review the AGS and consider whether there are any areas which they felt are appropriate for disclosure. All comments received have been incorporated in the Statement.

5 Options and Options Appraisal

- 5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to approve an AGS. In view of this, if the annexed AGS is not recommended for approval, the Audit Committee should provide a clear indication as to what changes are needed in order for a revised version to be presented as soon as possible.

6 Risk Management

- 6.1 The research and preparation of the 2022/23 AGS has not identified any significant red or amber risks that need addressing.
- 6.2 Three areas have been identified where improvements can be made to existing controls to further strengthen the Council's governance arrangements. These are summarised as an appendix to the AGS.

7 Resource Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct resource implications in approving the AGS. The publication costs can be met within existing budgets.

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The Council is required by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 to approve, and subsequently publish, the AGS with the Statement of Accounts.

9 Equality Issues

- 9.1 This report has not identified any equalities matters.

10 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

- 10.1 The AGS is part of the framework for delivering good governance in local authorities. The Statement is a high profile document signed by the Leader and Chief Executive and is published with the Statement of Accounts each year to demonstrate a commitment to the continuous review and development of the Council's governance arrangements.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (legislation.gov.uk)			
<u>Confidentiality:</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	1	File Ref:	N/A
(Portfolio: Finance and Resources) Councillor M Flood			
Officer:	Carl Whatley	Ext:	8540
Report to:	Audit Committee	Date:	27 March 2023

Test Valley Borough Council

Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

1 Scope of responsibility

- 1.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3 The Council has approved and adopted a local code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. A copy of the Local Code of Corporate Governance is on the Council's website at: <http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/local-codecorporate-governance>, or can be obtained from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services. This statement explains how the Council has complied, and continues to comply, with the principles underlying this code and also meets the requirements of regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement.

2 The purpose of the governance framework

- 2.1 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, value for money services.
- 2.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk at a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.
- 2.3 The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks occurring and the impact should they happen, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

- 2.4 The governance framework that has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2023 is explained in the following section along with changes that have been implemented in the year. It will continue to be developed during the coming year.

3 The impact of Covid19 on the governance framework

- 3.1 During the course of 2022/23 the Council's governance arrangements have become less impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. This reflects the national picture of moving towards a strategy of living with covid and moving away from a direct response and recovery phase.
- 3.2 The Council delivered the key elements of its Covid-19 Recovery Plan due to being focused on the response and immediate recovery phase aligned to the national picture around Covid19. Priorities such as the safety of our population, sustainable recovery and reviewing future working practices have become embedded within the organisation and are being delivered within services as part of their ongoing projects or business-as-usual practices. Therefore the Corporate Action Plan project focusing on recovery was closed down and brought off the Corporate Action Plan at its last update in April 2022.
- 3.3 The Council has sought to draw the lessons learned from the pandemic to inform its future work on responding to unforeseen incidents through strengthening its approach to community resilience, building capacity within communities and ensuring the council has agility in the way that it works to call upon the skills and resources needed from across services when such incidents occur. Examples in 2022/23 which required this approach include responding to the cost-of-living crisis and supporting refugees as a result of the war in Ukraine.

4 The governance framework

- 4.1 The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the Council's governance arrangements are as follows:
- The Council has fulfilled the following key roles (now formally adopted as part of the Local Code of Governance):
 - To promote the well-being of the area and provide leadership to the community;
 - To ensure the provision of high quality services provided in-house, by private sector companies, (where the ability to influence exists), jointly with other Councils or agencies, or by the voluntary sector;
 - To be accountable and provide stewardship for the use of public funds and resources;
 - To build a strong sense of community.

- 4.2 In fulfilling these roles the Council is committed to following the six core principles of good corporate governance identified in the CIPFA/SOLACE Guidance.

Partnership Working

- 4.3 A single strategic partnership for the Borough is in place called the Test Valley Partnership. It brings together the key partner agencies from across the public and voluntary and community sector. It meets twice a year and provides a place in which the key strategic issues facing the borough can be discussed, joint work developed and statutory duties met.
- 4.4 The Test Valley Partnership and its umbrella groups (community safety management group, community resilience forum and the civilian military forum) all continued to meet during 2022-23. The partnership has reviewed its programme of work in-light of where evidence is demonstrating a focus is required.
- 4.5 During this year the partnership has continued to demonstrate its added value by bringing partners together to work on key issues affecting communities in Test Valley by aligning work and resources and taking a focused and targeted approach to where it can make its greatest impact. A good example of this in practice has been the response to the Cost of Living crisis.
- 4.6 The partnership held a special meeting in August with approximately 40 delegates in attendance from across the public and voluntary sector. As a result, the partners were able to pool knowledge on existing support and explored who would be in most need of that support map where the gaps were and to think about how the partnership can work together to help in response to these challenges.
- 4.7 The headline outcomes were:
- Established a cost-of-living **information hub** on the Council website with input from a host of agencies.
 - Established a £50,000 **cost-of-living grant** for organisations supporting households through that crisis that was later increased to £100,000.
 - Establishment of a weekly **stakeholder** meeting to touch base and enable organisations to share any early warning signs, any insight in to what the story behind the headlines is for people living in Test Valley, and to check whether we need to mobilise the wider partnership to identify further support.
- 4.8 As the Council's place-based approach has grown, partnership websites such as Andover Vision and Romsey Future have been developed, where appropriate, due to the collaborative nature of the projects e.g. Romsey South of Town Centre. Consultation and project information has been posted to these websites with clear links back to relevant Council Services.

Community Working and the Corporate Plan

- 4.9 The Council has a clear vision of its purpose and desired outcomes for the short, medium and long term. These are encapsulated in its Corporate Plan and in its delivery vehicle, the Corporate Action plan through a range of corporate and service strategies and through four areas of focus as part of the Council's commitment to the Test Valley Partnership.
- 4.10 There has been considerable consultation and stakeholder involvement in the development and progression of these plans and strategies and they are made available to the public through a variety of means including the Council's website and Test Valley News.
- 4.11 The Council has published a Corporate Plan for 2019 / 2023 "Growing Our Potential" which was approved by the Council on 10th April 2019. It has four main aims and an action plan detailing how these aims will be delivered. In developing the plan, previous priorities were reviewed, extensive consultation was undertaken with local people and elected Councillors whilst also considering external influences on the borough, such as government policy.
- 4.12 Work commenced in Summer 2022 to prepare the evidence for the development of the new Corporate Plan which will come into effect from April 2023. This is an extensive process which seeks to bring together evidence that reflects the strategic influences facing the authority and is built upon a robust package of public engagement over two phases. The development of the plan includes the active engagement of the council's overview and scrutiny committee throughout the process and will be considered by Full Council in April 2023.
- 4.13 The Council has a longstanding strategic commitment to work with its communities collaboratively. At the centre of this is the democratic role elected councillors play in bringing communities together to ensure inclusivity when undertaking local action planning and priority setting. The Council's Member and Community Development Group, chaired by the Leader of the Council, supports community councillors to engage more effectively with local residents and communities.
- 4.14 Building upon the practice and learning gained as part of the council's participation in the Innovation in Democracy Programme, further opportunities to embed and develop our approach to innovative engagement practice through the use of deliberative engagement has taken place in 2022/23.
- 4.15 As part of the development of the new Corporate Plan, the Council has worked with the Involve Foundation (a leading national organisation on public engagement) to design and deliver a series of deliberative events across the borough to enable a representative group of the borough's population to come together to explore the future focus of the council's corporate plan priorities. Drawing upon lived experience, data and insights and facilitating deliberation amongst participants has culminated in a series of robust outcome statements for the council to consider which will help shape our future strategic focus.

- 4.16 Embedding this practice has included specialist training from Involve to TVBC staff to be able the council to facilitate this form of engagement practice on an onward basis and builds upon earlier development work as a result of the workshop in 2021 held with senior managers which was hosted by the Southern Policy Centre. In addition the Council has also undertaken deliberative activities with young people as part of the Andover Youth Assembly partnering with a local voluntary organisation to deliver this work.
- 4.17 The Council formally reviews its progress and performance against its corporate priorities through an Annual Corporate Action Plan Report <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/corporate-plan-for-2019-to-2023> which is presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSCOM) and the Cabinet.
- 4.18 The Council's Consultation Portal provides a single link to all our current 'live' consultations, giving residents the opportunity to get involved, as well as access to details of the feedback from previous consultations.
- 4.19 There are a number of tools in place to enable the Council to hear the widest range of views from local communities, in a consistent way, as part of an evidence led approach to decision making. These include:
- Statement of community involvement.
 - Community Planning Toolkit.
 - Specialist advice and support through Community Engagement Officers and policy Team.
 - Equality objectives which set out how the Council will ensure an inclusive approach to consultation.

Committee Role in Governance

- 4.20 The Corporate Plan is supported by a performance management framework (including performance indicators) to measure progress and performance against the Corporate Action Plan is reported annually to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.21 At its meeting on 6 April 2022 Council resolved to form an Audit Committee in April 2022 with effect from 18th May 2022 replacing the arrangements previously undertaken by the OSCOM Audit Panel. This committee met four times during the year. The terms of reference for the Audit Committee can be found here: <https://democracy.testvalley.gov.uk/documents/g3494/Public%20reports%20pack%20Monday%2020-Jun-022%2017.30%20Audit%20Committee.pdf?T=10>
- 4.22 Full Council is ultimately responsible for approving amendments to the Council's Constitution. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the Constitution which is undertaken at least annually to ensure that it is up to date with current legislation and best practice.

- 4.23 The Cabinet has responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the Council's business unless that business is delegated specifically to another committee (e.g. Planning, Licensing) and ensuring that governance arrangements and compliance is adequate for the conduct of that business.
- 4.24 As part of the Council's open and transparent approach, Overview and Scrutiny Committee has responsibility for scrutinising the decisions of the Cabinet and reviewing the Council's policies and functions and making recommendations to the Cabinet as appropriate.
- 4.25 The Council's Audit Committee takes responsibility for audit and risk management issues, reviewing the Council's work in these areas and monitoring the progress and performance of both Internal and External Audit.
- 4.26 The Council's General Purposes Committee together with the General Purposes Employment Appeals and Ethics Sub-Committee have the role of promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst Members and assisting them to observe the Authority's Code of Conduct. The work of the Sub-Committee is supported by the appointment of three Independent Persons and Parish representatives as required by the Localism Act 2011. The General Purposes Committee may receive reports as to the operation of the Code of Conduct. In addition, the General Purposes Employment Appeals and Ethics Sub-Committee will be required to determine complaints which are referred to it by the Monitoring Officer following investigation and direct or recommend any further action required consistent with the Localism Act 2011 and associated regulations.
- 4.27 Members of OSCOM undertake task and finish panel reviews. Once an area for review has been identified, the lead member/chairman of the panel presents the draft scoping document for the review to the full committee for consideration.
- 4.28 A full report is then subsequently presented to OSCOM once the review has been completed or reached an appropriate stage. This process has ensured more effective and focused reviews and a clear line of responsibility to the main committee. In addition, there is a standing Budget Panel which meet regularly throughout the year and covers the budget setting process of the Council. This panel reports to OSCOM on a regular basis and brings any issues of concern to the attention of the Committee.
- 4.29 The roles of the Cabinet, OSCOM, and other committees of the Council as well as specific roles assigned to the Leader, Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holders and senior officers of the Council are defined and documented within the Council's Constitution.
- 4.30 The Constitution clearly identifies the powers, duties and responsibilities delegated to the Leader, Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holders and Officers, and includes rules for how Council and committee meetings should operate and the relationship between Members and Officers.

- 4.31 The conduct of Members and Officers is regulated by separate codes of conduct within the Council's Constitution. The Council's General Purposes Committee together with the General Purposes Employment Appeals and Ethics Sub-Committee promote high standards of conduct by Members and the latter considers allegations of breach of the Code of Conduct by Members where referred to them.
- 4.32 Having regard to the benefits of remote meetings, the Council responded to the Government's consultation/call for evidence on the subject. The Council has been able to continue to avail itself of the ability to conduct non-committee business remotely or in a hybrid fashion where appropriate. Officers are investigating the potential for live streaming Council meetings.

Supporting the Committee Role

- 4.33 The Council has a Strategy and Innovation Service to strengthen the Council's ability to develop and manage its corporate planning processes. The Service leads on key projects and programmes including the Council's approach to modernisation in its ways of working.
- 4.34 The quality and value for money of services provided to users is measured through the Authority's performance management system. This includes the measurement and review of performance against national and local performance indicators and actions taken to address areas for improvement. Performance is monitored regularly throughout the year.
- 4.35 The conduct of day-to-day Council business is regulated through policies and procedures such as Contract Standing Orders and Financial Procedure Rules. The delegations to Members and Officers are kept continually under review and revised as appropriate. These documents were updated during the 2022/23 financial year.
- 4.36 A comprehensive set of Human Resources policies ensures compliance with employment legislation and promotes good personnel practices. These include disciplinary and capability processes to deal with conduct or performance which is unacceptable. These policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and revised.
- 4.37 A People Strategy was produced in 2020/21 which shapes the cultural direction and people management practices for the future to enable the Council to achieve its ambitions over the next 3-5 years. Whilst being able to respond to the changing needs of local government and the borough's residents this forms part of the Council's Corporate Framework with close links to the Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy. Work has also been undertaken during the year to identify and review hard-to-recruit-to posts.

Finance & Risk Management

- 4.38 The Council has in place a Medium Term Financial Strategy, updated annually, which supports the aims of the Corporate Plan. The Medium Term Financial Strategy has been materially affected by macro-economic factors of high inflation and rapidly increasing interest rates. The greatest risk to the MTFS is the uncertainty surrounding the potential for a business rates re-set which could see a material reduction in a key income stream, the timing and extent of which is beyond the Council's control.
- 4.39 Risk management is outlined in its Risk Management Strategy. Corporate and Service specific risks are reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Council's Service Performance Boards and progress in managing the corporate risk register is reported to the Audit Committee on 6 monthly basis.
- 4.39.1 Risk management is embedded within the Council's processes e.g. reports to decision-making committees use a template which includes a section on risk assessment which must be completed before the report can be considered.

Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion

- 4.40 Elected Members and all officers are aware of their obligations under equality legislation, as well as the standards of behaviour and language which are expected from representatives and employees of the Council. Ongoing training is provided for both Members and officers.
- 4.41 Equality impact assessments are built into the Council's decision making process. The Council has reviewed its corporate equalities objectives, alongside its duties under the new gender pay gap publication requirements. The Council continues to deliver training on the Equality Act 2010 to new members of staff and to Members.
- 4.42 There is an area of Portfolio responsibility focused on "Diversity and Inclusion". The responsibility for being the Council's lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion has been allocated to the Head of Legal & Democratic. The Council has published information that demonstrates compliance with the Equality Duty as defined by the Equality Act 2010 on its website. (<https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/equality---diversity/equalities>)
- 4.43 The Council has established Disability Focus Groups that contributed towards the development of the new Corporate Plan. The groups are helping the Council and its partners on an ongoing basis.
- 4.44 The Council is a statutory partner with regards safeguarding its residents of all ages under both The Children Act 2004 and The Care Act 2015. The Council has in place a Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and this and the associated procedures are monitored regularly to ensure compliance with these duties. The Council also liaises with both the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board to ensure this.

- 4.45 On an annual basis the Council is required by the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership to complete the required Section 11 audit which is a self-assessment of its position with regards its safeguarding duties. The last full audit which took place in 2021 was reviewed in 2022 and identified that the Council is compliant with Section 11 of the Children Act.
- 4.46 On a bi-annual basis the Council is also required by the Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board to undertake an audit of its position with regards its safeguarding duties, the last audit was undertaken in 2020 however due to pressures on organisations as a result of the pandemic the 2022 assessment was delayed and will take place in 2023.

Environmental and managing a changing climate

- 4.47 The Council approved a Climate Emergency Action Plan in 2020 to identify the steps it will be taking to work towards achieving carbon neutrality. Evidence has been gathered to provide information on greenhouse emissions, decarbonisation and how the Council can deliver its services in a more environmentally friendly way.
- 4.48 The requirement to achieve nutrient neutrality from new residential development continues to affect the Council's strategic priority to deliver housing. To help unlock housing delivery the Council has approved a mitigation framework which includes the purchase of nitrate credits for onward purchase by developers within the Borough.
- 4.49 Measures to secure the use of land to provide off-site mitigation solutions necessary to protect the internationally designated nature conservation sites in and around the Solent have included the purchase of nitrate credits from a third party which can be purchased from the Council directly through an approved mitigation framework. The Council is investigating the amount of nitrate credits arising from recent land purchases and how any credits could be used. Work has also continued with the Environment Agency, Southern Water and other partners to review permit limits at Wastewater Treatment Works serving the Borough.

Officer structure

- 4.50 The Chief Executive is the Council's Head of Paid Service and has overall corporate management and operational responsibility for the way in which the Council delivers its services. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services is designated as the Council's Monitoring Officer and has responsibilities under section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 for ensuring that the Council complies with relevant laws and regulations and internal policies such as Contract Standing Orders. The Head of Finance and Revenues is designated as the Council's Section 151 Officer with responsibility for ensuring the "proper administration of financial affairs".
- 4.51 The Head of Finance and Revenues also has responsibility under section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 for reporting to the Council and the external auditor if the Council has made, or is about to make, expenditure which is unlawful.

- 4.52 These three statutory officers meet regularly throughout the year (plus as required on an ad hoc basis) to discuss significant corporate issues.
- 4.53 The CIPFA statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government requires the Chief Finance Officer to report directly to the Chief Executive and be a member of the 'Leadership Team', of equal status to other members. The Council does not strictly comply with this requirement in that the Head of Finance and Revenues reports to the Deputy Chief Executive. However, in practice, the Head of Finance and Revenues is able to report directly to the Chief Executive and Members as and when required, is a member of the Management Team, and is involved and consulted in all matters which have financial implications for the Council.

Complaints & Whistleblowing

- 4.54 The Council's Constitution contains a Confidential Reporting Code for Employees which safeguards "whistle-blowers" who raise legitimate concerns about the Council's actions and specifies how their concerns should be addressed. The Code is monitored by the Audit Committee.
- 4.55 Financial Procedure Rules require all staff to raise concerns about the use or misuse of Council resources with the Head of Finance and Revenues or Internal Audit who will carry out an independent investigation of the circumstances. Internal Audit also actively encourages staff to raise matters of concern through "Speak Up" campaigns. A form is available on the Council's intranet for staff to raise concerns (anonymously if desired) about the use of Council resources and this facility has been extended to the website so that members of the public can raise concerns in this area.
- 4.56 The Council also has a formal complaints procedure for members of the public to raise issues, e.g. where they are dissatisfied with the service they have received, and an annual report is prepared for the Audit Committee summarising these complaints and how they were resolved.
- 4.57 The Council has a detailed Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy which sets out the roles, responsibilities of officers and Members and actions to be taken when fraud or corruption is discovered. In addition, an Anti-Bribery Policy has been approved to address the requirements of the Bribery Act 2010.

Training and awareness

- 4.58 The Democratic Services Manager is responsible for identifying and providing for Councillors' training needs. The Council has a cross-party Member and Community Development Group which is supported by officers from a range of services.
- 4.59 This Group has continued to work to promote an enhanced role for Councillors that focuses on them acting as a catalyst for change to encourage communities to reach their full potential. This work has brought together the needs and expectations of our communities in order to make balanced decisions, and has ensured a culture of democratic accountability is embraced throughout the Council.

- 4.60 The Group assists the Council in developing a programme of Councillor training and development that is shaped by the Councillors themselves, ensuring that training and development activities offered is tailored to individual Councillor needs as well as the needs of Councillors generally, the council and communities. This work has been shared with the Councillor Commission and has become a key part of the ongoing work that supports this national project.
- 4.61 All new Councillors are provided with induction training to assist them with understanding and successfully carrying out their different roles, with an ongoing programme of training and development provided on specific issues where appropriate e.g. planning, and to build key skills and knowledge.
- 4.62 All officers also receive induction training and appropriate professional and skills training and development identified, for instance, through annual performance discussions.
- 4.63 Publications such as Test Valley News are sent to all households and the Council's website is an important source of information about the Council and its services. The Council's website has been designed to make it more accessible to residents and businesses of Test Valley and to make it easier to undertake transactions online. An External Communications Strategy has been produced to support the emerging Corporate Plan.

5 Review of effectiveness

- 5.1 The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the senior managers within the Authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the annual report of the Internal Audit Manager, and also by comments made by the external auditor and other review agencies and inspectorates.
- 5.2 The Council's Internal Audit team, located within the Finance & Revenues Service, carries out a continuous review of the Council's systems to provide independent assurance that the control environment is effective in achieving the Council's objectives. The team objectively examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of the control environment as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of the Authority's resources.
- 5.3 The performance of the Internal Audit team is monitored by the Council's Audit Committee and Section 151 Officer. The Internal Audit Manager presents the Internal Audit Charter, Strategy and Annual Audit Plan to the Audit Committee and produces an Annual Report giving an opinion of the adequacy of the Council's systems of internal control.
- 5.4 A self-assessment of the internal audit function's conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) was carried out in March 2023. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards are a mandatory requirement, the objectives of which are to:

- define the nature of internal auditing within the UK public sector,
 - set basic principles for carrying out internal audit in the UK public sector,
 - establish a framework for providing internal audit services, which add value to the organisation, leading to improved organisational processes and operations, and
 - establish the basis for evaluation of Internal Audit performance to drive improvement planning.
- 5.5 The self-assessment concluded that the function “generally” conforms to the standards.
- 5.6 There is evidence that the work the Internal Audit function has delivered is effective; especially around risk and performance. It contributes to and has influence in the Authority on these areas. It is a highly respected service that is engaged with the organisation and which provides ongoing support in key areas, as well as effective assurance on controls.
- 5.7 The Internal Audit Manager has provided substantial assurance in respect of the Council’s risk management, control and governance arrangements. “Substantial Assurance” means that systems in place are generally sound, but some best practice developmental areas have been identified to strengthen the Council’s governance arrangements. These form the basis of the action plan appended to this Statement.
- 5.8 The Council is regularly audited by the External Auditor (Ernst and Young LLP) who independently examines the Council’s accounts and financial systems and who presents an [Annual Audit Report](#) to Members, the latest available covering the financial year 2020/21. This was a positive report with an unqualified opinion on the Council’s accounts, system of internal control and arrangements to achieve value for money.

6 Declaration

- 6.1 We have been advised on the implications of this review of the effectiveness of the governance framework and of any significant governance issues. A plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place as shown in the attached annex.
- 6.2 We propose over the coming year to take steps to address these matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed: **Signed:**
 Leader of the Council Chief Executive

Governance Actions for 2022-23

No significant governance issues have been identified. The following are best practice developmental areas to strengthen the Council's governance arrangements.

Issue	Action to be Taken	Timescale	Lead Officer
<p>Contract Standing Orders: Strengthen the knowledge and understanding of procedure rules that underpin procurement of goods and services by the Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide in-house refresher training for all authorised signatories on Contract Standing Orders and to update them on changes made to the Contract Standing Orders in 2022. • To enhance the initial training and awareness of Contract Standing Orders as part of the induction process for officers who will have procurement responsibilities as part of their role. 	30/09/23	Head of Finance & Revenues
<p>Performance Management Framework: To update the council's performance management framework in light of the new Corporate Plan being developed.</p>	<p>To ensure an integrated approach to performance management, the preparation and monitoring of the Corporate Action Plan, Service Planning, Performance indicators/ impact measures and risk.</p> <p>To review and update the Council's approach to the management and monitoring of risk.</p>	31/03/24	Head of Strategy & Innovation and Head of Finance & Revenues

<p>BCP and Cyber security/response and implementation of the new approach: To implement an updated approach to preparation and management of corporate and service business continuity plans.</p>	<p>To ensure the continued delivery of services following a major incident based around the principles of Resilience, Recovery and Contingency through review and update of the Council's approach to disaster recovery.</p>	<p>31/03/24</p>	<p>Head of Strategy & Innovation</p>
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ITEM 10

Statement of Accounts 2021/22

Report of the Head of Finance and Revenues

Recommended:

1. **Ernst & Young's Annual Audit Results Report (Annex 1 to the report):**
 - a. **That the matters raised in the report be considered,**
 - b. **That the proposed audit opinion and value for money conclusion be noted.**
2. **That the Head of Finance & Revenues and the Chairman of the Audit Committee be authorised to sign letter of representation (Annex 2 to the report) on conclusion of final audit work.**
3. **That the Head of Finance & Revenues and the Chairman of the Audit Committee be authorised to approve the audited Annual Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2021/22 (Annex 3 to the report) on completion of final audit work.**

SUMMARY:

- The Council is required to prepare an Annual Statement of Accounts and have those accounts audited. This report presents the Annual Statement of Accounts together with an interim Annual Audit Results Report of the Council's external auditors, Ernst & Young.
- The Statement of Accounts is expected to be issued with an unqualified opinion; this means the auditors have found no unadjusted material errors or misstatements in the accounts.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council is required to produce and approve an Annual Statement of Accounts for each financial year.
- 1.2 The audit of the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2022 has been undertaken by Ernst & Young (EY) and is nearing completion. The Annual Statement of Accounts, together with an interim auditor's Annual Audit Results Report are presented for the Audit Committee's consideration.

2 Ernst & Young's Annual Audit Results Report

- 2.1 At the time of writing this report, EY were awaiting the final feedback from their specialist valuation team regarding the valuation of four property assets. EY cannot conclude their audit until this report is received.

- 2.2 Therefore, the Annual Results Report, shown in Annex 1, contains reference to outstanding valuations work and is not a final report for the committee to receive.
- 2.3 However, the audit is complete in all other respects and the Annual Results Report does provide commentary on the various conclusions expected to be drawn by EY from their audit work.
- 2.4 An unqualified opinion is expected to be given on the Annual Statement of Accounts. This means that the auditors have found no material areas of concern as part of their audit where suitable adjustments to the accounts have not been made.

3 2021/22 Statement of Accounts

- 3.1 As has been identified above, the audit of the accounts is not yet completed and it is therefore not possible to seek the Audit Committee's approval of the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts at this meeting.
- 3.2 However, the majority of the audit is complete and it is not anticipated that significant changes will need to be made at the conclusion of the outstanding audit work. To prevent further delays in approving the 2021/22 accounts, it is therefore recommended that the Chairman of the Audit Committee and the Head of Finance & Revenues be given delegated authority to sign the final accounts once all audit work has been concluded.
- 3.3 An update will be brought to the next Audit Committee meeting if any changes are required to amend the Statement of Accounts before they are approved.
- 3.4 Aside from minor presentational changes, there have been three areas where changes have been made to the accounts from the version that was approved for audit. These have previously been discussed during progress updates on the audit. In summary, they are:
- A change to the provision for business rates appeals. This was needed to correct an error in the original calculation and to take account of information that became available after the balance sheet date.
 - A correction of a split between financial instruments and investment property additions.
 - Reclassification of one property from land and buildings to community assets
- 3.5 Councillors should consider the Council's Annual Governance Statement, shown at the end of the Statement of Accounts (Annex 3), as part of their consideration of the Statement of Accounts. This remains unchanged from the statement approved by Council on 8th June 2022.
- 3.6 It is necessary to send a Letter of Representation to EY at the conclusion of the audit confirming that all appropriate regulations and guidelines have been followed. The draft letter is shown in Annex 2 to the report.

3.7 For similar reasons to those set out in paragraph 3.2, it is recommended that the Chairman of the Audit Committee and Head of Finance & Revenues be authorised to sign the Letter of Representation once all audit matters have been concluded to their satisfaction.

4 Risk Management

4.1 An evaluation of the risks associated with the matters in this report indicate that further risk assessment is not needed because the issues covered do not represent significant risks.

5 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

5.1 The audit of the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts is nearing its conclusion. As it is considered unlikely that there will be any significant changes required at the conclusion of all audit work, it is considered most expedient for authorisation to be given to the Chairman and Head of Finance & Revenues to approve the accounts and Letter of Representation at the appropriate time.

5.2 It is expected that EY will issue an unqualified opinion in respect of the Annual Statement of Accounts.

5.3 The reason for the recommendation is to comply with a statutory duty to approve the Council's audited Statement of Accounts each year.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
None			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	3	File Ref:	N/A
(Portfolio: Finance and Resources) Councillor M Flood			
Officer:	Carl Whatley	Ext:	8540
Report to:	Audit Committee	Date:	27 March 2023

Test Valley Borough Council

Audit results report

Year ended 31 March 2022

March 2023

15 March 2023



Members of the Audit Committee

Test Valley Borough Council
Beech Hurst,
Weyhill Road,
Andover,
SP10 3AJ

Dear Members

2021/22 Audit results report

We are pleased to attach our audit results report, summarising the status of our audit for the forthcoming meeting of the Audit Committee. [We will update the Audit Committee at its meeting scheduled for 27th March 2023 on further progress to that date and explain the remaining steps to the issue of our final opinion.

The audit is designed to express an opinion on the 2022 financial statements and address current statutory and regulatory requirements. This report contains our findings related to the areas of audit emphasis, our views on the Council's accounting policies and judgements and material internal control findings. Each year sees further enhancements to the level of audit challenge and the quality of evidence required to achieve the robust professional scepticism that society expects. We thank the management team for supporting this process.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Audit Committee, other members of the Council and senior management. It is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the contents of this report with you at the Audit Committee meeting on 27th March 2023.

Yours faithfully

Kevin Suter

Partner

For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

Encl

Contents

ANNEX 1



Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) issued the "Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies". It is available from the PSAA website (<https://www.psa.co.uk/audit-quality/statement-of-responsibilities/>). The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas. The "Terms of Appointment and further guidance (updated April 2018)" issued by the PSAA sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and in legislation, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature. This report is made solely to the Audit Panel members and management of Test Valley Borough Council in accordance with the statement of responsibilities. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Audit Panel, and management of Test Valley Borough Council those matters we are required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Audit Panel members and management of Test Valley Borough Council for this report or for the opinions we have formed. It should not be provided to any third-party without our prior written consent.



ANNEX 1

01

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

ANNEX 1

Scope update

In our audit planning report, we provided you with an overview of our audit scope and approach for the audit of the financial statements. Due to the timing of the Audit Planning Report, there have been no changes to the planned approach of the audit.

Status of the audit

Our audit work in respect of the Council's opinion is underway. The following items relating to the completion of our audit procedures were outstanding at the date of this report.

- Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE) and Investment Property Valuations
- Final Review of Work
- Receipt of the Letter of Representation;
- Receipt of the final signed and approved Statement of Accounts.

Details of each outstanding item, actions required to resolve and responsibility is included in Appendix A.

Given that the audit process is still ongoing, we will continue to challenge the remaining evidence provided and the final disclosures in the Narrative Report and Accounts which could influence our final audit opinion. We will provide a verbal update to this position at the March Committee.

Auditor responsibilities under the new Code of Audit Practice 2020

Under the Code of Audit Practice 2020 we are required to consider whether the Council has put in place 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources. The 2020 Code requires the auditor to design their work to provide them with sufficient assurance to enable them to report to the Council a commentary against specified reporting criteria (see below) on the arrangements the Council has in place to secure value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of its resources for the relevant period.

The specified reporting criteria are:

- *Financial sustainability*
How the Council plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;
- *Governance*
How the Council ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks; and
- *Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness:*
How the Council uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.

Status of the audit – Value for Money

In the Audit Plan and September Committee we reported that we had yet to complete our value for money (VFM) risk assessment, but presented to the committee that we had not identified any risk of significant weakness against the three reporting criteria we are required to consider under the NAO's 2020 Code at that time.

We have completed our risk assessment, and revisited our assessment through to the completion of the audit of the financial statements and remain satisfied that we have not identified a risk of significant weakness. As a result we have completed our planned VFM procedures and have no matters to report by exception in the auditor's report (see Section 03).

We note that we have raised one recommendation for improvement with management based on our work over Value For money (see Section 4)

Audit differences

See Section 3 for details

We note one unadjusted misstatement in relation to an overstatement of the Pension Assets of £74k.

Other differences identified throughout the audit have been adjusted for in the Accounts by management.

Other reporting issues

We have reviewed the information presented in the Annual Governance Statement for consistency with our knowledge of the Council. We have no matters to report as a result of this work.

We are still to perform the procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts submission. These will be completed on completion of the audit. We note that the Council remains below the de-minimis for full procedures, which has been set at £2bn. Therefore, we anticipate having no issues to report.

We have no other matters to report.

Areas of audit focus

In our Audit Plan we identified a number of key areas of focus for our audit of the financial report of Test Valley Borough Council. This report sets out our observations and status in relation to these areas, including our views on areas which might be conservative and areas where there is potential risk and exposure. Our consideration of these matters and others identified during the period is summarised below, with the details provided within the "Areas of Audit Focus" section of this report.

Issue	Summary finding
Fraud Risk: Misstatements due to fraud or error	Work in this area is now complete. We note that there are no issues to be raised.
Fraud Risk: Risk of fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition – inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure	Work in this area is substantially complete. PPE Additions: Testing completed. One audit difference of £111k identified. REFCUS: No issues identified
Significant Risk: Accounting for Nitrate Credits	We note that this is a new area of accounting and disclosure. Therefore we have engaged an EY reporting specialist to look at this area and report on our expected approach. This has been discussed with management. We note that there is a difference in management's approach to the accounting treatment to what our specialist has noted but in the current year this is not material. Therefore, no issues noted.
Other area of audit focus: Valuation of Land and Buildings in Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) and Investment Properties (IP)	This work is currently underway. We are still waiting on the final report from EY Real Estates in relation to 3 Investment Properties and one PPE asset. We will provide a verbal update to this at the Audit Committee.
Other Area of Audit Focus: Pension Liability Valuation	We have completed our work in this area, and identified a minor disclosure misstatement which management have agreed to update. We note that we have received the response letter from the pension fund auditor which identified an overstatement in the pension asset of £74k.



Executive Summary

Control observations

We have adopted a fully substantive approach, so have not tested the operation of controls.

As part of our work, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed. Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, we are required to communicate to you significant deficiencies in internal control identified during our audit.

There are no matters we wish to report.

Independence

Please refer to Section 8 for our update on Independence.



ANNEX 1



02 Areas of Audit Focus



Significant risk

Risk of fraud in revenue recognition - inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure

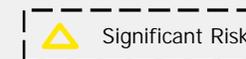
What is the risk?

Under ISA 240 there is a presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to improper revenue recognition. In the public sector, this requirement is modified by Practice Note 10 issued by the Financial Reporting Council, which states that auditors should also consider the risk that material misstatements may occur by the manipulation of expenditure recognition.

From our risk assessment, we have assessed that the risk manifests itself through the potential to inappropriately capitalise revenue expenditure to improve the financial position of the general fund.

Capitalized revenue expenditure can be funded through borrowing with only minimal MRP charges recorded in the general fund, deferring the expenditure for 30+ years when the borrowing is repaid. Alternately, other sources such as capital receipts or grants could be inappropriately used to finance the expenditure.

Inappropriate classification of revenue expenditure as REFCUS (revenue expenditure funded by capital under statute) could also have the same impact, incorrectly removing the spend from the general fund through applying statutory overrides.



What did we do?

Our approach focused on the following:

- ▶ We selected a sample of Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) and Investment Property additions to test and confirm the item was appropriate to capitalise as per IAS 16 through agreement to evidence such as invoices and capital expenditure authorisations.
- ▶ We selected a sample of REFCUS items to test to confirm the appropriateness of the classification of these items
- ▶ When performing journals testing, we analysed entries that would be classed as high risk transactions, such as items originally recorded as revenue expenditure and subsequently capitalised or reclassified as REFCUS.

What are our conclusions?

We tested a sample of PPE and Investment Property additions and noted one audit difference in relation to Property Additions for £111k.

We have identified no issues in relation to REFCUS.

We have not identified any instances of inappropriate judgements being applied.

We did not identify any other transactions through our test of journals or our other audit procedures which appeared unusual or outside the Council's normal course of business.



Significant risk

Misstatements due to fraud or error

What is the risk?

The financial statements as a whole are not free of material misstatements whether caused by fraud or error.

As identified in ISA (UK) 240, management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of its ability to manipulate accounting records directly or indirectly and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively.

We identify and respond to this fraud risk on every audit engagement.



What did we do?

Our approach focused on:

- Testing the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements
- Assessing accounting estimates for evidence of management bias, and
- Evaluating the business rationale for significant unusual transactions.

Further to this, we have:

- Inquired of management about risks of fraud and the controls put in place to address those risks, as well as gaining an understanding the oversight given by those charged with governance of management's processes over fraud.
- We have considered the effectiveness of management's controls designed to address the risk of fraud.

What are our conclusions?

We have not identified any material weaknesses in controls or evidence of material management override.

We have not identified any instances of inappropriate judgements being applied.

We did not identify any other transactions during our audit which appeared unusual or outside the Council's normal course of business.

We note that our journals testing is now complete and no issues have been identified.



Significant risk

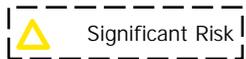
Accounting for Nitrate Credits

What is the risk?

In September 2020 the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) announced the intention to set up a 'Nitrate trading' platform. The idea is that housing developers would be able to buy 'nitrate credits' to offset the footprint of new homes in areas particularly vulnerable to nitrate pollution. Credits could involve funding the creation of habitat like wetlands, meadows and woodland. Developers will need an 'Appropriate Assessment' of the development proposal if there is a likelihood to increase nitrogen loading into protected sites. A nitrogen budget must be calculated and if the site is not nitrate neutral then nitrate mitigation will be required. If this does not result in neutrality, then planning will be refused. The Government announced a pilot scheme in September 2020 to enable development on the Solent in Hampshire where development was prevented because of nitrate pollution to the Solent strait.

The Council has purchased Nitrate Credits within 2021/22. The nitrate credits will therefore need to be accounted for on the Council's balance sheet. The credits need to be valued using an appropriate basis. Given the scheme is new there is not yet an accepted accounting approach for valuation and disclosure of the credits and then how income should be recognised by the Council as the credits are sold.

We will therefore need to understand and agree the approach to accounting and disclosure of this in the 2021/22 financial statements, involving EY financial reporting specialists as necessary to support our work in this area.



What did we do?

We:

- Ensured that the Nitrate Credits have been valued correctly and on an appropriate basis in the financial statements.
- Ensured the Council has appropriate Powers in place to be able to trade these credits
- Reviewed and challenged the Council's accounting and disclosure, considering both the value of nitrate credits held by the Council carried as an asset on its balance sheet, and how revenue is recognised in the financial statements as the credits are sold.

Conclusion

We engaged an EY reporting specialist to look at this area and report on our expected approach. This has been discussed with management. We note that we agree with the Nitrate Credits being held on the Balance Sheet as Inventory and are comfortable with the Balance Sheet valuation. However, there is a difference in management's approach to the accounting treatment compared with our view for the I&E impact. Management has recorded the sale of these credits through revenue but in our view these should be treated as capital. In the current year this is clearly trivial at £16.6k, however, we note that this may become material in the future.

Other areas of audit focus

What is the area of focus?

Valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) including Investment Property

Property, Plant and Equipment land and buildings (L&B) measured at Fair Value (FV) or Existing Use Value (EUV) and Investment Properties (IP) represent significant balances in the Council's accounts and are subject to valuation changes, impairment reviews and depreciation charges.

Material judgemental inputs and estimation techniques are required to calculate the year-end L&B and IP balances held in the balance sheet.

As the Council's asset base is significant, and the outputs from the valuers are subject to estimation, there is a higher risk that L&B and IP may be under/overstated or the associated accounting entries incorrectly posted. We are required to undertake procedures on the use of experts and assumptions underlying fair value estimates.

The risk is heightened for assets that may have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, such as traditional retail assets, commercial property or other sectors impacted by the lockdown restrictions and their impact on the economy.

What did we do?

We have:

- Considered the work performed by the Council's valuers, including the adequacy of the scope of the work performed, their professional capabilities and the results of their work;
- Sample tested key asset information used by the valuers in performing their valuation (e.g. floor plans to support valuations based on price per square metre);
- Considered the annual cycle of valuations to ensure that assets have been valued within a 5 year rolling programme as required by the Code for PPE and annually for IP. We have also considered if there are any specific changes to assets that have occurred and that these have been communicated to the valuer;
- Reviewed assets not subject to valuation in 2021/22 to confirm that the remaining asset base is not materially misstated;
- Considered changes to useful economic lives as a result of the most recent valuation; and
- Tested accounting entries have been correctly processed in the financial statements.

What are our conclusions?

We note we have substantially completed this work.

The majority of our sample has been tested by the internal audit team, however 4 items (3 Investment property and 1 PPE asset) have been sent to our EY Real Estates team for them to review.

At the time of writing this report:

Internal Audit Team

- Investment Properties - no issues identified
- PPE - no issues identified but work subject to final review

EY Real Estates

We are awaiting the final report from EY Real estates in relation to the 4 assets they are reviewing.

A verbal update will be given to the Audit Committee.

Other areas of audit focus

What is the area of focus?

Valuation of Pension Liabilities (Local Government Pension Scheme)

The Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice and IAS19 require the Council to make extensive disclosures within its financial statements regarding its membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme administered by Hampshire County Council.

The Council's pension fund deficit is a material estimated balance and the Code requires that this liability be disclosed on the balance sheet. At 31 March 2022 this totalled £57 million. The information disclosed is based on the IAS 19 report issued to the Council by the actuary to the County Council.

Accounting for these schemes involves significant estimation and judgement and therefore management engages an actuary to undertake the calculations on their behalf. ISAs (UK and Ireland) 500 and 540 require us to undertake procedures on the use of management experts and the assumptions underlying fair value estimates.

In the previous year the pension liability disclosed in the accounts was impacted by national issues that necessitated an updated IAS 19 report from the actuary. It was also impacted by material changes to the value of pension assets at the year end, compared to the estimate made by the actuary to inform the original IAS 19 report.

What did we do?

In order to address this risk we carried out a range of procedures including:

- liaising with the auditors of Hampshire County Council Pension Fund, to obtain assurances over the information supplied to the actuary in relation to Test Valley BC.
- assessing the work of the LGPS Pension Fund actuary (AON Hewitt) including the assumptions they have used by relying on the work of PWC - Consulting Actuaries commissioned by the NAO for all Local Auditors, and considering any relevant reviews by the EY actuarial team; and
- reviewing and testing the accounting entries and disclosures made within the Council's financial statements in relation to IAS19, including any updates to the value of year end assets.

In response to the updated requirements of ISA540, we modified our planned approach and undertook alternate procedures to create an auditor's estimate on the gross pension liability.

What are our conclusions?

We have concluded that we could rely on the work of the Pension Fund actuary, and assessed their assumptions as reasonable. The values and entries from the actuarial report were correctly reflected in the Council's financial statements.

The results of the EY pensions specialist has confirmed the actuarial estimate of the gross pension liability to be accurate within a reasonable range.

We note that we have now received the response letter from the Pension Fund auditors in relation to the pension asset valuations and other work. This has identified an overstatement of the pension asset of £74k.



03 Audit Report



Draft audit report

Our opinion on the financial statements

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF TEST VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Test Valley Borough Council ('the Council') for the year ended 31 March 2022 under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended). The financial statements comprise the:

- Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- Movement in Reserves Statement,
- Balance Sheet,
- Cash Flow Statement
- the related notes 1 to 39, and the Expenditure & Funding Analysis
- Collection Fund and the related notes

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22 as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (November 2022).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of Test Valley Borough Council as at 31 March 2022 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22 as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (November 2022).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit

of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Council in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard and the Comptroller and Auditor General's AGN01, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Head of Finance and Revenues' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Council's ability to continue as a going concern for a period to March 2024.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Head of Finance and Revenues with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report. However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this statement is not a guarantee as to the Council's ability to continue as a going concern.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts 2021/22, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Head of Finance and Revenues is responsible for the other information contained within the Statement of Accounts 2021/22.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.



Draft audit report

Our opinion on the financial statements

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements, or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of the other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we report by exception

We report to you if:

- in our opinion the annual governance statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information forthcoming from the audit or our knowledge of the Council
- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended)
- we make written recommendations to the audited body under Section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended)
- we make an application to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended)
- we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended)
- we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended)
- we are not satisfied that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2022.

We have nothing to report in these respects

Responsibility of the Head of Finance and Revenues

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Responsibilities set out on page 11, the Head of Finance and Revenues is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22 as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (November 2022), and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and for such internal control as the Head of Finance and Revenues determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Head of Finance and Revenues is responsible for assessing the Council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Council either intends to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.



Draft audit report

Our opinion on the financial statements

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect irregularities, including fraud. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both those charged with governance of the entity and management.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Council and determined that the most significant are:

- Local Government Act 1972,
- Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 1992),
- Local Government Act 2003,
- The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended in 2018, 2020, and 2022,
- The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended), and
- The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

In addition, the Council has to comply with laws and regulations in the areas of anti-bribery and corruption, data protection, employment Legislation, tax Legislation, general power of competence, procurement and health & safety.

We understood how Test Valley Borough Council is complying with those frameworks by understanding the incentive, opportunities and motives for non-compliance, including inquiring of management, head of internal audit, those charged with governance and obtaining and reading documentation

relating to the procedures in place to identify, evaluate and comply with laws and regulations, and whether they are aware of instances of non-compliance. We corroborated this through our reading of the Council’s committee minutes, through enquiry of employees to confirm Council policies and through the inspection of other information. Based on this understanding we designed our audit procedures to identify non-compliance with such laws and regulations. Our procedures had a focus on compliance with the accounting framework through obtaining sufficient audit evidence in line with the level of risk identified and with relevant legislation.

We assessed the susceptibility of the Council’s financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur by understanding the potential incentives and pressures for management to manipulate the financial statements, and performed procedures to understand the areas in which this would most likely arise. Based on our risk assessment procedures, we identified inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure and management override of controls to be our fraud risks.

To address our fraud risk of inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure we tested the Council’s capitalised expenditure to ensure the capitalisation criteria were properly met and the expenditure was genuine. We also tested a sample of revenue expenditure financed from capital under statute (REFCUS) items to confirm they were appropriately classified.

To address our fraud risk of management override of controls, we tested specific journal entries identified by applying risk criteria to the entire population of journals. For each journal selected, we tested specific transactions back to source documentation to confirm that the journals were authorised and accounted for appropriately. We also assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluated the business rationale of any identified significant transactions that were unusual or outside the normal course of business. These procedures were designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free from fraud or error.



Draft audit report

Our opinion on the financial statements

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Scope of the review of arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice 2020, having regard to the guidance on the specified reporting criteria issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in December 2021, as to whether Test Valley Borough Council had proper arrangements for financial sustainability, governance and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Comptroller and Auditor General determined these criteria as those necessary for us to consider under the Code of Audit Practice in satisfying ourselves whether Test Valley Borough Council put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2022.

We planned our work in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice. Based on our risk assessment, we undertook such work as we considered necessary to form a view on whether, in all significant respects, Test Valley Borough Council had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended) to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

Delay in certification of completion of the audit

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate until we have issued our Auditor's Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2022. We have completed our work on the value for money arrangements and will report the outcome of our work in our commentary on those arrangements within the Auditor's Annual Report.

Until we have completed these procedures, we are unable to certify that we have completed the audit of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended) and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the members of Test Valley Borough Council, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended) and for no other purpose, as set out in paragraph 43 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Council and the Council's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



ANNEX 1

04 Audit Differences



Audit Differences

ANNEX 1

In the normal course of any audit, we identify misstatements between amounts we believe should be recorded in the financial statements and the disclosures and amounts actually recorded. These differences are classified as “known” or “judgemental”. Known differences represent items that can be accurately quantified and relate to a definite set of facts or circumstances. Judgemental differences generally involve estimation and relate to facts or circumstances that are uncertain or open to interpretation.

Summary of adjusted and unadjusted differences

We highlight the following misstatements greater than our nominal value of £69k that were identified during the course of our audit. We note that we have not yet received the updated Accounts from management and therefore the classification of these adjustments i.e. uncorrected or corrected may change.

Uncorrected misstatements

Overstatement of Pension Asset of £74k.

Corrected misstatements

- Overstatement of Kier Loan Debtor/Understatement of Investment Property AUC of £111k.
- Correction of NDR Appeals Provision of £429k.
- Reclassification of asset between Land & Building and Community Assets (this was identified by management)

Amendments to disclosures

- Minor Note adjustments noted in relation to Note 11, Note 14 and Note 21.



ANNEX 1

05

Value for Money



The Council's responsibilities for value for money (VFM)

The Council is required to maintain an effective system of internal control that supports the achievement of its policies, aims and objectives while safeguarding and securing value for money from the public funds and other resources at its disposal.

As part of the material published with its financial statements, the Council is required to bring together commentary on its governance framework and how this has operated during the period in a governance statement. In preparing its governance statement, the Council tailors the content to reflect its own individual circumstances, consistent with the requirements set out in the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. This includes a requirement to provide commentary on its arrangements for securing value for money from their use of resources.

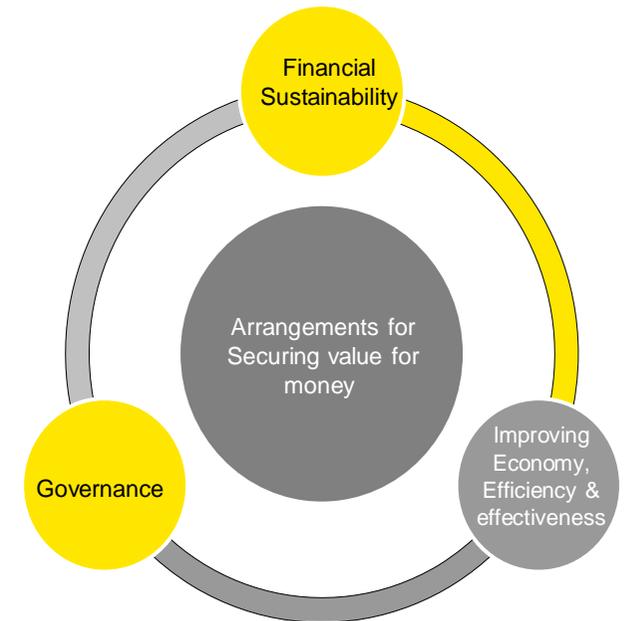
Risk assessment and Status of our VFM work

At the time of writing this report, our planning procedures for our VFM (value for money) risk assessment have been completed. We have not identified any significant weaknesses in your arrangements.

We have completed our work in relation to VFM and note that we have identified one recommendation in the Council's internal procedures in relation to Internal Audit.

Through our work we identified that internal Audit do not produce a separate standalone report for their year-end conclusions and including their Head of Internal Audit Opinion. This is reported to the Audit Committee via the normal Committee papers, on a continuing basis. We note that the information needed to be communicated is included by this method, but we believe it to be better practice (and normally seen elsewhere) to have a separate year-end report.

Our full VFM commentary will be included within our Auditor's Annual Report.





ANNEX 1

Test Valley Borough Council - Audit Committee - 27 March 2023

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06 Other reporting issues

Other reporting issues

Consistency of other information published with the financial statements, including the Annual Governance Statement

We must give an opinion on the consistency of the financial and non-financial information in the Statement of Accounts 2021/22 with the audited financial statements

- Financial information in the Narrative Statement and published with the financial statements was consistent with the audited financial statements

We must also review the Annual Governance Statement for completeness of disclosures, consistency with other information from our work, and whether it complies with relevant guidance.

- We have reviewed the Annual Governance Statement and can confirm it is consistent with other information from our audit of the financial statements and we have no other matters to report.

Whole of Government Accounts

Alongside our work on the financial statements, we also review and report to the National Audit Office on your Whole of Government Accounts return. The extent of our review, and the nature of our report, is specified by the National Audit Office. We are still to perform the procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts submission. These will be completed on completion of the audit. We note that the Council remains below the de-minimis for full procedures, which has been set at £2bn. Therefore, we anticipate having no issues to report.

Other powers and duties

We have a duty under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to consider whether to report on any matter that comes to our attention in the course of the audit, either for the Council to consider it or to bring it to the attention of the public (i.e. "a report in the public interest"). We did not identify any issues which required us to issue a report in the public interest.

We also have a duty to make written recommendations to the Council, copied to the Secretary of State, and take action in accordance with our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. We did not identify any issues.

Other matters

As required by ISA (UK&I) 260 and other ISAs specifying communication requirements, we must tell you significant findings from the audit and other matters if they are significant to your oversight of the Test Valley Borough Council's financial reporting process. We have no other matters to report.

07

Assessment of Control Environment

Financial controls

It is the responsibility of the Test Valley Borough Council to develop and implement systems of internal financial control and to put in place proper arrangements to monitor their adequacy and effectiveness in practice. Our responsibility as your auditor is to consider whether the Test Valley Borough Council has put adequate arrangements in place to satisfy itself that the systems of internal financial control are both adequate and effective in practice.

As part of our audit of the financial statements, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed. As we have adopted a fully substantive approach, we have therefore not tested the operation of controls.

Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control we are required to communicate to you significant deficiencies in internal control.

We have not identified any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of an internal control that might result in a material misstatement in your financial statements of which you are not aware.

We considered whether circumstances arising from COVID-19 resulted in a change to the overall control environment of effectiveness of internal controls, for example due to significant staff absence or limitations as a result of working remotely. We identified no issues which we wish to bring to your attention



08

Independence

Fees

The duty to prescribe fees is a statutory function delegated to Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

This is defined as the fee required by auditors to meet statutory responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Audit Practice and supporting guidance published by the National Audit Office, the financial reporting requirements set out in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting published by CIPFA/LASAAC, and the professional standards applicable to auditors' work.

A breakdown of our fees is shown in the table below.

	Planned fee 2021/22	Final Fee 2020/21
	£	£
Scale Fee	40,679	40,679
Scale Fee Rebasing (note 1)	25,612	38,074
Scale Fee Variation (note 2)	9,808	
Scale Fee Variation - changes in the Code of Audit Practice and Auditing Standards (note 3)	9,098	
Total fees	85,197	78,753

We note that at this stage, the above fees are estimations and are subject to change based on any new information/issues arising.

All fees exclude VAT.

2021/22 Fees:

Note 1: Proposed Scale Fee Rebasing: this relates to our scale fee rebasing for the audit, to take into account changes in professional and regulatory requirements to that date. These have been raised in prior year audits and as these are ongoing requirements, we have included the resource impact again in our 2021/22 requested fees. This is the same request that has been submitted in the prior year.

Note 2: We intend to submit request for an additional fee due to additional work being undertaken by the audit team. For 2021/22 it includes work undertaken on:

- New Significant Risk: Nitrate Credits (estimated £1,223)
- Work of EY expert to calculate an auditors estimate of the pension liability (estimated £605)
- NDR Provision re-work x 2 (estimated £4,885)
- EY Real Estates input (estimated £3,095) for valuations of complex properties

Note 3: This figure shows the impacts of the NAO's 2020 Code of Audit Practice, and the revised ISA540 on estimates. PSAA communicated fee ranges for each type of client, and our assessed impact for Test Valley BC is at the bottom of those ranges.

The FRC Ethical Standard requires that we provide details of all relationships between Ernst & Young (EY) and the Council, and its members and senior management and its affiliates, including all services provided by us and our network to the Council, its members and senior management and its affiliates, and other services provided to other known connected parties that we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on the our integrity or objectivity, including those that could compromise independence and the related safeguards that are in place and why they address the threats.

There are no relationships from 1 April 2021 to the date of this report, which we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence and objectivity.

Other communications

EY Transparency Report 2022

Ernst & Young (EY) has policies and procedures that instil professional values as part of firm culture and ensure that the highest standards of objectivity, independence and integrity are maintained.

Details of the key policies and processes in place within EY for maintaining objectivity and independence can be found in our annual Transparency Report which the firm is required to publish by law. The most recent version of this Report is for the year end 30 June 2022:

[EY UK 2022 Transparency Report | EY UK](#)



ANNEX 1

09 Appendices

Outstanding matters

The following items relating to the completion of our audit procedures are outstanding at the date of the release of this report:

Item 	Actions to resolve 	Responsibility 
PPE and IP Valuations	Final review of PPE Valuations work. EYRE report to be received and communicated with management in relation to 3 investment properties and 1 PPE asset	EY and Management
Receipt of Letter of Representation	Letter of Representation to be signed before the signing of the Audit. Once we are ready to sign, we will discuss the steps to finalise this with management.	EY and Management
Receipts and Review of Final Accounts	Once audit work has been finalised, we will need to receive the final Accounts from Management and check these for any adjustments.	EY and Management

Until all our audit procedures are complete, we cannot confirm the final form of our audit opinion as new issues may emerge or we may not agree on final detailed disclosures in the Annual Report. At this point no issues have emerged that would cause us to modify our opinion, but we should point out that key disclosures on remain to be finalised and audited.

We note that a verbal update can be provided at the March Audit Committee.

Required communications with the Audit Committee

We have detailed the communications that we must provide to the Audit Committee.

 Our Reporting to you

Required communications	 What is reported?	 When and where
Terms of engagement	Confirmation by the Audit Committee of acceptance of terms of engagement as written in the engagement letter signed by both parties.	The statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between the PSAA's appointed auditors and audited bodies.
Our responsibilities	Reminder of our responsibilities as set out in the engagement letter	The statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between the PSAA's appointed auditors and audited bodies.
Planning and audit approach	Communication of the planned scope and timing of the audit, any limitations and the significant risks identified. When communicating key audit matters this includes the most significant risks of material misstatement (whether or not due to fraud) including those that have the greatest effect on the overall audit strategy, the allocation of resources in the audit and directing the efforts of the engagement team	Audit planning report
Significant findings from the audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures • Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit • Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management • Written representations that we are seeking • Expected modifications to the audit report • Other matters if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process 	Audit results report Auditor's Annual Report

Required communications with the Audit Committee (continued)

 Our Reporting to you

Required communications	 What is reported?	  When and where
Going concern	Events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity’s ability to continue as a going concern, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty • Whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements • The adequacy of related disclosures in the financial statements 	Audit results report
Misstatements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion, unless prohibited by law or regulation • The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods • A request that any uncorrected misstatement be corrected • Material misstatements corrected by management 	Audit results report
Subsequent events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enquiries of the audit committee where appropriate regarding whether any subsequent events have occurred that might affect the financial statements 	Audit results report
Fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enquiries of the Audit Committee to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity • Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that a fraud may exist • Unless all of those charged with governance are involved in managing the entity, any identified or suspected fraud involving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Management; b. Employees who have significant roles in internal control; or c. Others where the fraud results in a material misstatement in the financial statements • The nature, timing and extent of audit procedures necessary to complete the audit when fraud involving management is suspected • Any other matters related to fraud, relevant to Audit Committee responsibility 	Audit results report

Required communications with the Audit Committee (continued)

 Our Reporting to you

Required communications	 What is reported?	 When and where
Related parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity's related parties including, when applicable: • Non-disclosure by management • Inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions • Disagreement over disclosures • Non-compliance with laws and regulations • Difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the entity 	Audit results report
Independence	<p>Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on EY's, and all individuals involved in the audit, objectivity and independence</p> <p>Communication of key elements of the audit engagement partner's consideration of independence and objectivity such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principal threats • Safeguards adopted and their effectiveness • An overall assessment of threats and safeguards • Information about the general policies and process within the firm to maintain objectivity and independence <p>Communication whenever significant judgements are made about threats to objectivity and independence and the appropriateness of safeguards put in place.</p>	Audit Planning Report and Audit Results Report

Required communications with the Audit Committee (continued)

 Our Reporting to you

Required communications	 What is reported?	  When and where
External confirmations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management’s refusal for us to request confirmations • Inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures 	Audit results report
Consideration of laws and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to compliance with applicable regulations, matters involving identified or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations, other than those which are clearly inconsequential and the implications thereof. Instances of suspected non-compliance may also include those that are brought to our attention that are expected to occur imminently or for which there is reason to believe that they may occur • Enquiry of the audit committee into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the Audit Committee may be aware of 	Audit results report
Internal controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit 	Audit results report

Required communications with the Audit Committee (continued)

 Our Reporting to you

Required communications	 What is reported?	 When and where
Representations	Written representations we are requesting from management and/or those charged with governance	Audit results report
Material inconsistencies and misstatements	Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise	Audit results report
Auditors report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any circumstances identified that affect the form and content of our auditor's report 	Audit results report Auditor's Annual Report
Fee Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breakdown of fee information when the audit plan is agreed Breakdown of fee information at the completion of the audit Any non-audit work 	Audit planning report Audit results report
Value for Money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risks of significant weakness identified in planning work Commentary against specified reporting criteria on the VFM arrangements, including any exception report on significant weaknesses. 	Audit planning report Audit results report Auditor's Annual Report

About EY

EY is a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. The insights and quality services we deliver help build trust and confidence in the capital markets and in economies the world over. We develop outstanding leaders who team to deliver on our promises to all of our stakeholders. In so doing, we play a critical role in building a better working world for our people, for our clients and for our communities.

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ED None

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Your ref:
Our ref:
Date:

Dear Kevin,

Letter of Representation – Test Valley Borough Council

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Test Valley Borough Council (“the Council”) for the year ended 31 March 2022. We recognise that obtaining representations from us concerning the information contained in this letter is a significant procedure in enabling you to form an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of Test Valley Borough Council as of 31 March 2022 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended in accordance with CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22.

We understand that the purpose of your audit of our financial statements is to express an opinion thereon and that your audit was conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK), which involves an examination of the accounting system, internal control and related data to the extent you considered necessary in the circumstances, and is not designed to identify - nor necessarily be expected to disclose - all fraud, shortages, errors and other irregularities, should any exist.

Accordingly, we make the following representations, which are true to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made such inquiries as we considered necessary for the purpose of appropriately informing ourselves:

A. Financial Statements and Financial Records

1. We have fulfilled our responsibilities, under the relevant statutory authorities, for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22.

2. We acknowledge, as members of management of the Council, our responsibility for the fair presentation of the financial statements. We believe the financial statements referred to above give a true and fair view of the financial position, financial performance (or results of operations) and cash flows of the Council in accordance with [the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22, and are free of material misstatements, including omissions. We have approved the financial statements.
3. The significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are appropriately described in the financial statements.
4. As members of management of the Council, we believe that the Council has a system of internal controls adequate to enable the preparation of accurate financial statements in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22, that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. We have disclosed to you any significant changes in our processes, controls, policies and procedures that we have made to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our system of internal controls and the effects of the conflict and related sanctions in Ukraine, Russia and/or Belarus on our system of internal controls.
5. We believe that the effects of any unadjusted audit differences, summarised in the accompanying schedule, accumulated by you during the current audit and pertaining to the latest period presented are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole. We have not corrected these differences identified by and brought to the attention from the auditor because making the changes identified would not enhance the understanding of the accounts for anyone reading them.
6. We confirm the Council does not have securities (debt or equity) listed on a recognized exchange.

B. Non-compliance with law and regulations, including fraud

1. We acknowledge that we are responsible to determine that the Council's activities are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations and that we are responsible to identify and address any non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.
2. We acknowledge that we are responsible for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls to prevent and detect fraud.
3. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
4. We have disclosed to you, and provided you full access to information and any internal investigations relating to, all instances of identified or suspected non-compliance with law and regulations, including fraud, known to us that may have affected the Council (regardless of the source or form and including, without limitation, allegations by "whistleblowers") including non-compliance matters:
 - involving financial improprieties;
 - related to laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the Council's financial statements;

- related to laws and regulations that have an indirect effect on amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, but compliance with which may be fundamental to the operations of the Council's activities, its ability to continue to operate, or to avoid material penalties;
- involving management, or employees who have significant roles in internal controls, or others; or
- in relation to any allegations of fraud, suspected fraud or other non-compliance with laws and regulations communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

C. Information Provided and Completeness of Information and Transactions

1. We have provided you with:
 - Access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
 - Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
 - Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
2. All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and all material transactions, events and conditions are reflected in the financial statements, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic and including those related to the conflict and related sanctions in Ukraine, Russia and/or Belarus.
3. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of the Council, Cabinet and Audit Committee (or summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared) held through the year to the most recent meeting on the following date: 27th March 2023.
4. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Council's related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware, including sales, purchases, loans, transfers of assets, liabilities and services, leasing arrangements, guarantees, non-monetary transactions and transactions for no consideration for the period ended, as well as related balances due to or from such parties at the year end. These transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements.
5. We believe that the methods, significant assumptions and the data we used in making accounting estimates and related disclosures are appropriate and consistently applied to achieve recognition, measurement and disclosure that is in accordance with CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22.
6. We have disclosed to you, and the Council has complied with, all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance, including all covenants, conditions or other requirements of all outstanding debt.

7. From the date of our last management representation letter through the date of this letter we have disclosed to you, to the extent that we are aware, any (1) unauthorised access to our information technology systems that either occurred or to the best of our knowledge is reasonably likely to have occurred based on our investigation, including of reports submitted to us by third parties (including regulatory agencies, law enforcement agencies and security consultants), to the extent that such unauthorised access to our information technology systems is reasonably likely to have a material impact to the financial statements, in each case or in the aggregate, and (2) ransomware attacks when we paid or are contemplating paying a ransom, regardless of the amount.

D. Liabilities and Contingencies

1. All liabilities and contingencies, including those associated with guarantees, whether written or oral, have been disclosed to you and are appropriately reflected in the financial statements.
2. We have informed you of all outstanding and possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel.
3. We have recorded and/or disclosed, as appropriate, all liabilities related to litigation and claims, both actual and contingent, and have disclosed in the financial statements all guarantees that we have given to third parties.

E. Going Concern

1. Note 38 to the financial statements discloses all the matters of which we are aware that are relevant to the Council's ability to continue as a going concern, including significant conditions and events, our plans for future action, and the feasibility of those plans.

F. Subsequent Events

1. As described in Note 37 to the financial statements, there have been no events, including events related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and including events related to the conflict and related sanctions in Ukraine, Russia and/or Belarus, subsequent to period end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the financial statements or notes thereto.

G. Other information

1. We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the other information. The other information comprises the Narrative Statement and the Annual Governance Statement.
2. We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

H. Climate-related matters

1. We confirm that to the best of our knowledge all information that is relevant to the recognition, measurement, presentation and disclosure of climate-related matters has been considered and reflected in the financial statements.
2. The key assumptions used in preparing the financial statements are, to the extent allowable under the requirements of CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22, aligned with the statements we have made in the other information or other public communications made by us.

I. Reserves

1. We have properly recorded or disclosed in the financial statements the useable and unusable reserves.

J. Use of the Work of a Specialist

1. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we engaged to evaluate the IAS 19 Pension Liability and disclosure, Property Plant and Equipment Valuations and Investment Property Valuations and have adequately considered the qualifications of the specialists in determining the amounts and disclosures included in the financial statements and the underlying accounting records. We did not give or cause any instructions to be given to the specialists with respect to the values or amounts derived in an attempt to bias their work, and we are not otherwise aware of any matters that have had an effect on the independence or objectivity of the specialists.

K. Estimates

1. We confirm that the significant judgments made in making the estimates for the Pension Liability, Property Plant and Equipment Valuations, Investment Property Valuations and NDR Appeals Provision have taken into account all relevant information of which we are aware.
2. We believe that the selection or application of the methods, assumptions and data used by us have been consistently and appropriately applied or used in making the estimates.
3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the estimates appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out any relevant courses of action on behalf of the entity.
4. We confirm that the disclosures made in the financial statements with respect to the accounting estimates, including those describing estimation uncertainty and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, are complete and are reasonable in the context of the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22.
5. We confirm that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in making the estimates.
6. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimates and disclosures in the financial statements, including due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

L. Retirement benefits

1. On the basis of the process established by us and having made appropriate enquiries, we are satisfied that the actuarial assumptions underlying the scheme liabilities are consistent with our knowledge of the business. All significant retirement benefits and all settlements and curtailments have been identified and properly accounted for.

Yours faithfully,

Head of Finance and Revenues

Chairman of the Audit Committee



STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021/22

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NARRATIVE STATEMENT

ANNEX 3

This narrative statement provides a brief explanation of the Council's overall financial position and some key messages and aims to assist the readers in the interpretation of the accounting statements.

The Borough of Test Valley

Test Valley covers 62,758 hectares on the western side of Hampshire. The borough contains a mixture of urban, semi-urban and rural areas, with a large proportion of residents living in either Andover or Romsey and the surrounding areas, or in towns and villages scattered across the borough.

Key facts about Test Valley

Population 133,400 (SAPF 2021 base)¹

Average house price £398,500 March 2022 (£278,200 National Average)²

83.0% of 16 – 64 Year olds in employment (78.4% National Average)³

Average gross weekly (Full time) earnings £633.60 (£613.10 National Average)³

1,445 (1.9%) of working age residents claiming job seekers allowance or universal credit (3.9% National Average)³

6,330 Business Enterprises³

16,998 tonnes of waste recycled or composted in 2021/22

1,848 planning applications received in 2021/22

Source:

1. *Hampshire County Council*
2. *Land Registry*
3. *NOMIS – Official Labour Market Statistics*

Governance

During 2021/22, Test Valley Borough Council consisted of 43 elected Councillors representing 20 wards. The political structure at the end of the year was:

Conservative 26
Liberal Democrat 12
Independent 3
Andover Alliance 1
Liberal party 1

Full details of the governance arrangements in place at the Council are contained in the Annual Governance Statement accompanying these accounts.

Council Priorities, Corporate Plan and Performance

ANNEX 3

Test Valley's Corporate Plan '*Growing Our Potential*' outlines the Council's vision and strategic priorities for the four year period 2019 – 2023. The Corporate Plan focuses on how we can build upon the strengths of the borough so that we can grow the potential of:

- *Town Centres* to adapt and be attractive, vibrant and prosperous places
- *Communities* to be empowered, connected and able to build upon their strengths
- *People* to be able to live well and fulfil their aspirations
- *The Local Environment* for current and future generations

The Corporate Plan is underpinned by a Corporate Action Plan (CAP) which runs for the lifetime of the plan and is updated annually. It shows in detail how the Council is making progress against these priority aims and includes a range of corporate performance indicators.

Each year, a review is undertaken to update the CAP to ensure it continues to highlight the significant projects that the Council is taking forward in pursuit of its four corporate priorities.

Annual reports and details of the Corporate Plan are published on the Council website:

[Growing Our Potential - the Corporate Plan 2019-23](#)

Achievements against the Corporate Action Plan

Work has continued on the projects within the CAP over the last year. Given the scale and scope of the projects that form the CAP, it is expected that most projects that feature on the CAP will do so for multiple years.

Headline examples of progress in year three include:

- Continued to work to deliver the two ambitious masterplans for Andover Town Centre and the South of Town Centre area in Romsey.
- In Andover, we have commissioned a feasibility study into the delivery of the masterplan to inform the phasing, process and costs attached to bringing forward the proposals of the masterplan. Additionally, the council are developing a suite of design guides that will set out the framework for what the Council will expect our town centre to look like.
- As part of the Andover Town Centre Masterplan, we have commissioned HemingwayDesign and their partners, CTConsults, to create a new place brand for the town that will bring to life all of the really positive things that come to mind when we think about Andover and helps us to define how we want the town to develop and be perceived.
- Meanwhile in Romsey, investigation work commenced on the more detailed plans for public realm improvements at Sterling Walk and Holbrook Stream. Consultants have also been commissioned to work up plans for the re-provision of the Crosfield Hall. This is a vital first step in providing a larger, multi-functional community facility for the town.
- The Council is one of 4 Hampshire districts participating in Low Carbon Across the South East (LoCASE) which is enabling businesses to reduce their carbon footprint through a combination of support and grants. The scheme launched in September, with 12 Test Valley businesses having already submitted applications, with one approved so far.

- We piloted changing the mowing regimes of approximately 7 hectares of open space as part of the urban meadows project – the area managed in this way will be increased in 2022
- As part of our modernisation agenda, the Council is continuing to progress to smarter and more agile working, with the climate emergency as a strategic influence and recognising that the way people engage with services has changed and is constantly evolving.
- Along with the other districts in Hampshire, the council approved the refreshed Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy in October 2021. This paves the way for the transformation of local recycling services, scheduled to take place in 2024.
- Opened a new adventure golf course at Charlton Leisure Centre and refurbished the athletics track at the same site.
- Purchased land south of Bury Hill to improve access to the countryside
- Planted over 19,000 trees as part of our commitments set out in the Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- The council continued to support the work of the borough's two community partnerships, Andover Vision and Romsey Future. In Romsey, the council worked with other stakeholders as the partnership launched its refreshed vision document that will guide its work for the year ahead. Meanwhile in Andover, the partnership saw the completion of the Town Mills Riverside Park project and is now working to support the development of the place-brand for Andover. In addition, significant work is taking place with health and voluntary and community sector partners through the vision to support better health through the healthy communities project.
- TVBC exceeded its affordable housing target for the eighth year in a row. 408 units of affordable housing were delivered in 2021/22 exceeding the target by just over 100%.
- TVBC continued to provide use of our Shepherds Spring Lane Car Park as a symptomatic COVID-19 test centre until 30th March 2022, when testing ceased following changes in the national COVID policy.
- The council continued to provide venues in both Andover and Romsey for the delivery of Covid-19 vaccines. In Romsey, over 12,000 people received vaccinations at the Crosfield Hall whilst over 100,000 doses of vaccine were delivered in Andover at The Lights and then the Chantry Centre.
- Delivered £9.65M of grants to local business in response to Covid-19 as well as £220,000 in Test and Trace support payments to those self-isolating.
- In conjunction with Aster and Vivid, the council received nearly £1M as part of the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme to purchase 10 one bedroom properties to increase the supply of affordable accommodation to those high risk of, or current experience of rough sleeping.
- To support those with complex needs on the verge of losing their social housing tenancy, the council has employed a Prevention Support Officer who has so far successfully worked to prevent 19 households from becoming homeless.
- With three days' notice we established a programme of wrap around onsite support for Afghan families evacuated through the ACRAP and ACRS scheme, following the fall of Kabul. Since September last year we have supported 60 evacuees through the scheme. We have supported them to access health care, education, employment and social activities. 36 evacuees have been supported from the hotel into independent living in temporary accommodation.
- Worked with our voluntary and statutory partners to coordinate community-based support for refugees arriving through the Home for Ukraine scheme.
- Undertaken a fundamental review of the revenue funding we provide to charity and voluntary organisations across the borough, paving the way for a more modern,

accessible programme which will do more to support the sustainability and growth of the voluntary sector.

ANNEX 3

Financial Performance

The Council monitors its budgets under two major headings: Revenue and Capital. Revenue spending relates to items consumed in the year and is financed from Council Tax, business rates, fees & charges, government grants and other income. Capital spending creates assets with a life of longer than one year and is financed from the sale of assets, government grants, developer contributions and transfers from the revenue account.

Revenue Outturn for 2021/22

The initial forecast of General Fund revenue requirements began soon after the budget for 2020/21 was approved. A significant range of essential savings / improved income opportunities were identified and included in the budget and this is likely to be required again in the medium term.

The detailed budget was approved by Council on 26th February 2021 and anticipated net additional costs due to the Covid-19 pandemic after additional government support of £1.050M. The approved net expenditure forecast for 2021/22 totalled £5.887M. A draw of £142,000 from the Budget Equalisation Reserve was approved to offset part of this budget pressure.

The actual outturn for 2021/22 reported to Cabinet on 22nd June 2022 was £1.637M better than expected. The main reasons for this variance were:

- £392,000 lower than anticipated net impact of Covid-19
- £547,000 lower than budgeted employee costs
- £665,000 additional income from services
- £206,000 additional investment income
- £112,000 lower than budgeted supplies & services costs
- £155,000 higher than anticipated government grants

Due to the above variances, budgeted draws from reserves of £392,000 in respect of investment income and the impacts of the pandemic were not taken.

This surplus was transferred to the following reserves.

	£'000
Budget Equalisation Reserve	500
Environment Act Reserve	300
Asset Management Reserve	150
Capacity Building Reserve	150
Regeneration Reserve	537
Total to be transferred to reserves	1,637

The Budget Equalisation Reserve is used to mitigate against additional budget pressures. A top up of £500,000 will be used as a contingency against higher than forecast inflationary pressures.

A new Environment Act reserve will be established to help ensure that funds are available to successfully implement the changes to waste that will be required under the Environment Act. A transfer of £300,000 is made.

Recent work undertaken by the IT service has identified a number of additional areas of work that may be required to be added to the Asset Management Plan or service budgets over the next two / three years. Transfers of £150,000 to the Asset Management Plan and £150,000 to the Capacity Building Reserve were made to accommodate these.

The Regeneration Reserve is forecast to have a balance at March 2023 of approximately £2M. A top up of £537,000 was made to support the development and implementation of masterplan projects in Andover and Romsey.

A summary of the approved budget and final outturn for revenue activities is shown in the following table.

	Approved Budget 2021/22 £'000	Actual 2021/22 £'000	Variance £'000
Service expenditure (including investment property income and expenditure)	17,254	16,109	1,145
Corporate Items			
Reversal of capital charges including depreciation	(5,058)	(3,976)	(1,082)
Investment income, borrowing and MRP	110	(98)	208
Non-service related grants	(6,136)	(9,262)	3,126
Business rates levy	2,025	2,613	(588)
Retention of business rates for renewable energy schemes	(398)	(193)	(205)
Transfers to earmarked / capital reserves	(1,910)	3,409	(5,319)
Transfers to earmarked reserves arising from surplus in year	0	1,637	(1,637)
Transfer to / (from) Pension Reserve	0	(4,359)	4,359
Other	0	7	(7)
GENERAL FUND REQUIREMENTS	5,887	5,887	0
Met By			
Locally retained business rates	5,042	5,042	0
Council Tax	7,825	7,825	0
Other Collection Fund	(6,980)	(6,980)	0
TOTAL REVENUE RESOURCES	5,887	5,887	0

Accounting for Business Rates

Under the accounting arrangements for business rates, the Council retains 40% of the business rates collected; this was estimated in the original estimate to be £22.193M for 2021/22. From this amount the Council was required to pay the government a 'tariff' of £17.151M, leaving net budgeted income in the year of £5.042M compared to a baseline of £2.381M.

A complicated system of grants in respect of small business rates and other reliefs along with a levy for growth over the baseline figure is also in place. The budget assumed, after taking account of these reliefs and grants, a growth above the baseline of £4.050M resulting in a levy of £2.025M being payable. The actual retained income after taking account of the grants was

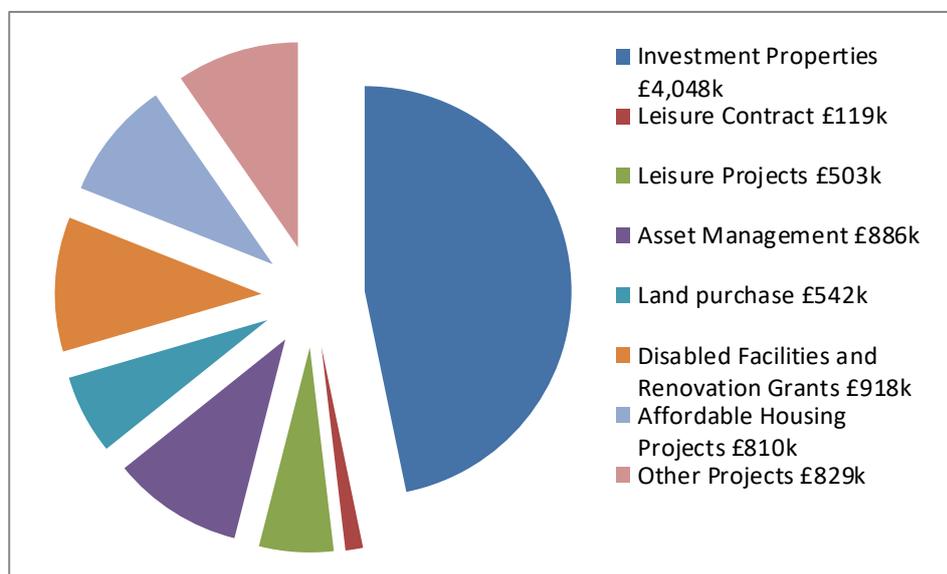
£7.607M, a growth of £5.226M over the baseline figure. Of this, 50% is payable to the government as a levy on growth, after which the Council will retain a net surplus of £2.613M.

A summary of the position is shown in the following table.

	£'000
Total retained income from business rates	7,607
Baseline	(2,381)
Net growth on business rates	5,226
Levy @ 50% payable to government	(2,613)
Income retained by Test Valley	2,613

Capital Programme

Capital spending for the year totalled £8.655M, as summarised in the following chart:



The Council has invested substantially in capital projects in the year. The most significant was expenditure on investment properties with a total value of £4.048M.

The Council finances its capital expenditure from a mixture of usable capital receipts, capital grants and contributions, and borrowing. In 2021/22, 46% came from usable capital receipts (£4.006M). The remainder of the capital expenditure was funded from contributions from revenue (£2.227M) and capital grants and contributions (£2.422M). The Council has set aside reserves for the future maintenance of its assets; budgeted asset management costs in 2022/23 and beyond will be funded from these reserves.

Major capital investment is planned over the next financial year as follows:

ANNEX 3

	2022/23 £'000
Asset Management Projects	2,977
Disabled Facilities & Renovation Grants	1,250
Public Art	321
Leisure Contract	582
Sports & Recreation - Ganger Farm & Picket Twenty	1,524
Community & Leisure Projects	2,132
Hampshire Community Bank	125
Investment Properties	20,109
Other Capital Projects	711
TOTAL	29,731

Financial Position at the Year End

General Fund reserves stood at £2.604M at 1st April 2021. This is considered to be a prudent minimum level of general reserves and this figure remains unchanged at 31st March 2022.

In addition to the General Fund balances mentioned above, the Council held earmarked reserves of £35.655M available for specific revenue purposes and capital reserves of £14.985M available to spend on capital schemes.

Valley Housing Limited

On 30th April 2016, Valley Housing Limited, a Housing Development and Management Company which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Test Valley Borough Council was incorporated. Group accounts have not been prepared for the year ended 31st March 2022 as the value of transactions is not considered to be material.

COVID-19 Pandemic

The impact of the pandemic on the Council's budgets was less than expected in the year. This mainly related to under-estimates of income from a number of service areas which were able to recover faster than expected.

The budget for 2022/23 reported to Council in February 2022 was balanced. With the exception of car parking income, which remains at pre-pandemic levels, all service budgets have been set in line with pre-pandemic levels for 2022/23. No further requirement for pandemic-related budget adjustments is expected.

The Council's usable reserves position as at 31st March 2022 is shown in note 29 to the accounts. The Head of Finance & Revenues has reviewed these reserves and is satisfied that in the short to medium term there is no risk to the Council's "going concern" assessment.

Conclusion

The coronavirus pandemic continued to have a profound impact on the Council's communities throughout the financial year to which this Statement of Accounts relates. Budget impacts have been felt in all service areas and led to a number of significant changes from normal income and expenditure levels, particularly with regard to Collection Fund transactions.

However, the Council has continued to perform its services to a high level whilst adapting to local governance changes and the wider community response. It is well placed to meet the challenges of leading our communities in a post-pandemic environment.

Reserves remain at a level which will ensure that service provision in the medium term is secure and that all known liabilities can be met.

ANNEX 3

I would like to extend my appreciation to all those that have contributed to the timely production of this year's Statement of Accounts.

C. Whatley FCCA

Head of Finance & Revenues

EXPLANATION OF THE ACCOUNTING STATEMENT EX 3

The purpose of the Council's Statement of Accounts is to give interested parties clear information about the Council's finances.

There have been no major changes in accounting policy in 2021/22.

The accounts for 2021/22 consist of the following key statements:

- **The Statement of Responsibilities** declares the respective responsibilities of the Council and the Head of Finance & Revenues for the production of the Statement of Accounts.
- **The Expenditure and Funding Analysis** is a note to the financial statements, rather than a key statement. It shows all income and expenditure incurred by the Council throughout the year under statutory funding provisions and the adjustments that are required to these figures to produce the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement under generally accepted accounting practices.
- **The Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement** shows all income and expenditure incurred by the Council throughout the year; it includes day-to-day transactions from running the organisation as well as gains / losses on assets and pension liabilities. The total comprehensive income and expenditure shown represents the total movement in the Council's reserves during the year.
- **The Movement in Reserves Statement** summarises the changes in balances on the Council's reserves in the year. Reserves are classified as either usable or unusable. Usable reserves include the unallocated General Fund Balance, Earmarked Revenue Reserves and the Capital Receipts Reserve. These are the reserves that the Council can apply to future expenditure subject to statutory conditions (e.g. the Capital Receipts Reserve can only be used to finance capital expenditure). Unusable reserves such as the Capital Adjustment Account and Revaluation Reserve generally reflect the timing differences between the purchase and the consumption of economic benefits of assets.
- **The Balance Sheet** shows the financial position of the Council and discloses the assets and liabilities for all Council Services. At the balance sheet date the net worth of the Council was £258.6M.
- **The Cash Flow Statement** summarises the Council's cash transactions for the year.
- **The Collection Fund** records all income from Council Tax and business rates. Expenditure includes payments to central government, Hampshire County Council (HCC), Hampshire Fire & Rescue (HFRA) and the Council's General Fund in respect of business rates' income; and precepts to HCC, HFRA, Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner, local parish/town councils and the Council's own demand on the Collection Fund in respect of Council Tax. The Collection Fund is not incorporated within the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as it reflects the statutory requirement for billing authorities to maintain a separate Collection Fund.

The Independent Auditor's Report explains how the Council's auditors, Ernst & Young, plan their audit and the basis on which they provide an opinion on the Council's Statement of Accounts. It also gives the auditor's opinion on the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources in the year.

The Annual Governance Statement accompanies the Statement of Accounts and explains how the Council ensures that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. It is not covered by the auditor's opinion but is considered by the auditor and reported on by exception in the auditor's report if it is not compliant with proper practice.

The accounts are supported by the notes to the financial statements. These notes include a summary of significant accounting policies, further detail relating to matters in the main financial statements, assumptions made about the future and major estimations made.

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021/22

ANNEX 3

The Council's Responsibilities

The Council is required to:

- make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this Council, that officer is the Head of Finance & Revenues.
- manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.
- approve the Statement of Accounts

The Head of Finance & Revenues' Responsibilities

The Head of Finance & Revenues is responsible for the preparation of the Council's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom* (the Code).

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, the Head of Finance & Revenues has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- complied with the Code.

The Head of Finance & Revenues has also:

- kept proper accounting records which were up to date;
- taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Certification of the Head of Finance & Revenues

I hereby certify that the Statement of Accounts gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31st March, 2022.

Signed Date.....
C Whatley, FCCA, Head of Finance & Revenues

Signed Date.....
Cllr C Borg-Neal, Chairman of the Audit Committee

EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS ANNEX 3 YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2022

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis is a note to the financial statements, rather than a key statement. It shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, council tax and business rates) by the Council in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by the Council in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the Council's services. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on page 13.

2020/21			2021/22			Note
Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
3,349	996	4,345	1,796	1,357	3,153	
3,542	1,743	5,285	3,682	2,137	5,819	
1,873	345	2,218	2,287	602	2,889	
1,533	1,955	3,488	1,266	2,294	3,560	
1,490	697	2,187	1,244	619	1,863	
928	82	1,010	1,152	187	1,339	
(7,814)	10,138	2,324	(8,757)	8,836	79	
(13)	31	18	(36)	(15)	(51)	
4,630	354	4,984	4,789	675	5,464	
2,965	(2,187)	778	3,151	(1,588)	1,563	
12,483	14,154	26,637	10,574	15,104	25,678	5
		Net Cost of Services				
(23,217)	(16,385)	(39,602)	(11,349)	(22,635)	(33,984)	5
(10,734)	(2,231)	(12,965)	(775)	(7,531)	(8,306)	5,8
		Surplus				
(26,750)		Opening General Fund	(37,484)			
(10,734)		Surplus on General Fund in Year	(775)			
(37,484)		Closing General Fund	(38,259)			

2020/21 £'000		2021/22 £'000
(2,604)	General Fund Balance	(2,604)
(34,880)	Earmarked Reserves Balance	(35,655)
(37,484)	Total General Fund	(38,259)

ANNEX 3

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. The Council raises taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different to the accounting cost. The reconciliation to the Council Tax position is shown in both the Expenditure and Funding Analysis and the Movement in Reserves Statement.

2020/21		Net Exp.	Services	2021/22		Net Exp.	Note
Exp.	Income £'000	2020/21 £'000		Exp. £'000	Income £'000	2021/22 £'000	
5,263	(918)	4,345	Community & Leisure	4,348	(1,195)	3,153	
7,448	(2,163)	5,285	Environmental Service	7,847	(2,028)	5,819	
9,161	(6,943)	2,218	Finance & Revenues	5,043	(2,154)	2,889	
4,673	(1,185)	3,488	Housing & Environmental Health	5,220	(1,660)	3,560	
3,549	(1,362)	2,187	Planning & Building	3,541	(1,678)	1,863	
1,094	(84)	1,010	Planning Policy & Economic Development	1,386	(47)	1,339	
6,800	(4,476)	2,324	Property & Asset Management	5,179	(5,100)	79	
20,526	(20,508)	18	Benefits	19,313	(19,364)	(51)	
5,746	(762)	4,984	Corporate & Support	6,484	(1,020)	5,464	
2,933	(2,155)	778	Central Costs	3,394	(1,831)	1,563	
67,193	(40,556)	26,637	Net Cost of Services	61,755	(36,077)	25,678	
			Other Operating Income and Expenditure				
0	(572)	(572)	Profit on disposal of Property, Plant & Equipment	0	(1,120)	(1,120)	20
1,717	(1,717)	0	Parish Precepts	1,763	(1,763)	0	
			Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure				
0	(407)	(407)	Interest Income	0	(448)	(448)	31
160	0	160	Interest Payable	155	0	155	31
336	0	336	Impairment Losses / (Gains)	193	0	193	
4,020	(2,605)	1,415	Pension Fund Interest Costs	4,464	(2,961)	1,503	14
0	(4,816)	(4,816)	Changes in Fair Value of Investment Properties	0	(5,187)	(5,187)	17
295	(7,820)	(7,525)	Net Investment Property Income	309	(8,053)	(7,744)	17
73,721	(58,493)	15,228	Net Operating Expenditure	68,639	(55,609)	13,030	
			Taxation and non-specific grant income				
0	(7,733)	(7,733)	Council Tax Income	0	(7,980)	(7,980)	9
21,166	(17,531)	3,635	Business Rates Income & Expenditure	26,846	(27,542)	(696)	9
0	(16,898)	(16,898)	Non Ringfenced Government Grants	0	(9,262)	(9,262)	9
0	(7,197)	(7,197)	Capital Grants and Contributions	0	(3,398)	(3,398)	9,21
94,887	(107,852)	(12,965)	Surplus on the provision of services	95,485	(103,791)	(8,306)	
			Other comprehensive income and expenditure				
0	(8,572)	(8,572)	Net gains on revaluation of Property, Plant & Equipment	0	(3,413)	(3,413)	16
6,389	0	6,389	Re-measurement of the net defined benefit pension liability	0	(21,698)	(21,698)	14
101,276	(116,424)	(15,148)	Total comprehensive income and expenditure	95,485	(128,902)	(33,417)	

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

ANNEX 3

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Council, analysed into "usable reserves" (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or local taxation) and "unusable reserves".

The statement shows how the movements in the year of the Council's reserves are broken down between gains and losses incurred in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and the statutory adjustments required to return to the amounts chargeable to Council Tax for the year. The Net Increase / (Decrease) line shows the statutory General Fund Balance movements in the year following those adjustments.

	General Fund Balance £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Unusable Reserves £'000	Total Authority Reserves £'000	Note
<u>Movements during 2020/21</u>							
Balance as at 31st March 2020	26,750	11,805	4,956	43,511	166,920	210,431	
Total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure	12,965	0	0	12,965	2,183	15,148	
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	(2,231)	(988)	1,116	(2,103)	2,103	0	8
Increase / (Decrease) in Year	10,734	(988)	1,116	10,862	4,286	15,148	29,30
Balance as at 31st March 2021	37,484	10,817	6,072	54,373	171,206	225,579	
<u>Movements during 2021/22</u>							
Total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure	8,306	0	0	8,306	25,111	33,417	
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	(7,531)	(2,881)	977	(9,435)	9,435	0	8
Increase / (Decrease) in Year	775	(2,881)	977	(1,129)	34,546	33,417	29,30
Balance as at 31st March 2022	38,259	7,936	7,049	53,244	205,752	258,996	

2020/21 £'000		2021/22 £'000
2,604	General Fund Balance	2,604
34,880	Earmarked Reserves Balance	35,655
37,484	Total General Fund	38,259

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

ANNEX 3

The Balance Sheet summarises the assets and liabilities recognised by the Council as at the Balance Sheet date. The net assets are matched by a combination of usable and unusable reserves. These are shown in more detail in notes 29 and 30.

2020/21			2021/22		Note
£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000	
90,284		Land & Buildings	93,735		16
3,631		Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	3,312		16
11,918		Community Assets	12,595		16
663		Infrastructure Assets	634		16
325		Surplus Assets	320		16
	106,821	Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE)		110,596	
	148,571	Investment Properties		156,181	17
	101	Intangible Assets		108	18
724		Long-Term Debtors	710		31
5,403		Long-Term Investments	15,411		31
	6,127	Long-Term Assets		16,121	
15,831		Cash and Cash Equivalents	5,386		22
50,450		Short-Term Investments	75,507		31
202		Inventories	1,711		23
26,871		Debtors	15,610		24
(2,364)		Less: Impairment Allowance	(2,496)		24
	90,990	Current Assets		95,718	
(44,940)		Creditors	(54,037)		25
(264)		Short-Term Borrowing	(269)		31
(2,110)		Provisions	(1,814)		26
	(47,314)	Current Liabilities		(56,120)	
	305,296	Total Assets less Current Liabilities		322,604	
(6,784)		Long-Term Borrowing	(6,543)		31
(72,933)		Net Liability to Pension Fund	(57,065)		14
	(79,717)	Long-Term Liabilities		(63,608)	
	225,579	Net Assets		258,996	
		Usable Reserves			
2,604		General Fund Balance	2,604		29
34,880		Revenue and Earmarked Reserves	35,655		29
10,817		Capital Receipts Reserve	7,936		29
6,072		Capital Grants Unapplied	7,049		29
	54,373	Total Usable Reserves		53,244	
		Unusable Reserves			
29,749		Revaluation Reserve	32,589		30
220,293		Capital Adjustment Account	230,921		30
7		Deferred Credits	7		30
(5,714)		Collection Fund Adjustment Account	(504)		30
(196)		Accumulated Absences Account	(196)		30
(72,933)		Pension Fund Reserve	(57,065)		30
	171,206	Total Unusable Reserves		205,752	
	225,579	Total Equity		258,996	

These financial statements replace the unaudited financial statements certified on 30th June 2022.

Signed:..... Date:

C Whatley, FCCA, Head of Finance & Revenues

CASH FLOW STATEMENT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

ANNEX 3

This statement summarises the movements in the Council's cash transactions. It shows the volume of financial activity that takes place between the Council and its stakeholders.

The Cash Flow Statement is different to the other statements because it is on a cash basis and some of the figures may not agree with other figures in the accounts which are all on an accruals basis (i.e. based on amounts payable and receivable rather than actually paid or received). The bottom section of the statement shows a reconciliation of the movement in Cash and Cash Equivalents in the year to the figures shown in the Balance Sheet.

2020/21			2021/22		Note
£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000	
		Revenue Activities			
	12,965	Net surplus on the provision of services		8,306	
		Adjustments for non-cash transactions			
2,921		Depreciation of PPE / Amortisation of intangibles	3,024		16,18
(4,816)		Revaluation Gains on Investment Properties	(5,187)		17
898		Impairment & downward / (upward) Valuations of PPE & intangibles	(1,286)		16,18
3,753		Pension Fund Transfers	5,830		14
(4,514)		Other non-cash items	(273)		28
	(1,758)			2,108	
	(3,798)	Adjustments in respect of Investing Activities		(4,518)	
		Adjustments for items on an accruals basis			
(9,525)		(Increase) / Decrease in Debtors	5,966		
(10)		(Increase) / Decrease in Inventories	(1,509)		
14,537		Increase in Creditors	7,941		
	5,002			12,398	
	12,411	Net Cash Inflow from Operating Activities		18,294	
		Investing Activities			
(47,882)		Purchase of Short-term and Long-term Investments	(104,986)		
53,750		Proceeds from Short-term and Long-term Investments	70,000		
(5,497)		Purchase of Assets	(4,836)		
18		Sale of Assets	66		
3,579		Other Capital Cash Received	3,965		
	3,968	Net Investing Activity Cashflow		(35,791)	
		Financing Activities			
(230)		Cash payments to reduce outstanding borrowing	(230)		
(10,976)		Other receipts / (payments) for financing activities	7,282		28
	(11,206)	Net Financing Activity Cashflow		7,052	
	5,173	Net Increase in Cash and Cash Equivalents		(10,445)	
	10,658	Cash and Cash Equivalents at the start of the reporting period		15,831	
	15,831	Cash and Cash Equivalents at the end of the reporting period		5,386	

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS ANNEX 3

1. **Accounting Policies**

1.1. This note sets out the accounting policies followed in compiling the Council's accounts. The aim of the note is to explain the basis of the figures in the accounts and to disclose policies that are significant and relevant to the Council.

1.2. **General Principles**

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2021/22 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2022. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts (by the Accounts and Audit regulations 2015) in accordance with proper accounting practices.

These practices primarily comprise; the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22 ('the Code') and the Service Reporting Code of Practice 2021/22 supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and statutory guidance.

The Statement of Accounts has been prepared on a going concern basis. 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.

1.3. **Prior Period Adjustments**

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policy or to correct a material error. Changes in accounting estimates are accounted for prospectively, i.e. in the current and future years affected by the change and do not give rise to a prior period adjustment.

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 performance.

1.4. **Accruals of Income & Expenditure**

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

- Revenue from contracts from service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods, is accounted for when (or as) the goods or service are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the performance obligations in the contract.
- 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 provided are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.
- Interest 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 income and expenditure has 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 it is doubtful that debts will be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

ANNEX 3

1.5. **Cash and Cash Equivalents**

Cash is represented by cash in hand.

Cash equivalents are deposits with financial institutions payable without penalty or notice, maturing in not more than one day and are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

In the Cash Flow Statement the 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.

1.6. **Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets**

Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Council a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits and a reliable estimate of the potential liability can be reasonably calculated.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement in the year that the Council recognises the obligation and are shown at the best estimate of the eventual outcome at the Balance Sheet date.

Payments to settle the obligation are charged against the provision. Any difference between the provision and the actual settlement figure are charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement when the obligation is settled.

Contingent Liabilities

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 where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount cannot be measured reliably.

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts.

Contingent Assets

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.

Contingent assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts where it is probable that there will be an inflow of economic benefits or service potential.

1.7. Reserves

ANNEX 3

The Council sets aside specific and general amounts as reserves for future 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 revenue account in that year to be included in the surplus / deficit on the provision of services in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then appropriated back in to the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement 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 and retirement benefits and do not represent usable resources to the Council. Transactions with these reserves are explained in the relevant accounting policies below.

1.8. Government Grants and Contributions

Whether paid on account, by instalments or in arrears, government grants and third party contributions and donations are recognised as due to the Council when there is reasonable assurance that;

- the Council will comply with the conditions attached to the payments and
- the grants / contributions will be received.

Amounts recognised as due to the Council are not credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement until conditions attached to the grant / contribution have been satisfied. Conditions are stipulations that specify that the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset acquired using the grant / contribution are required to be consumed by the Council as specified, or future economic benefits or service potential must be returned to the transferor.

Monies advanced as grants / contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors.

When conditions are satisfied, the grant / contribution is credited to the relevant Service line or Taxation and Non-Specific Grant income in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When the grant has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Business Improvement District

A business improvement district (BID) scheme applies across Andover Town Centre. The scheme is funded by a BID levy paid by non-domestic ratepayers. The Council acts as an agent under this scheme. Only the following amounts are recognised in the Council's Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement:

- BID levy amounts payable on the Council's properties within the BID scheme area are shown as service expenditure under the relevant service.
- BID levy collection costs are shown in the net cost of services under the relevant service.

ANNEX 3

Community Infrastructure Levy

The Council has elected to charge a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The levy is charged on new builds (chargeable developments for the Council) with appropriate planning consent. The Council charges for and collects the levy, which is a planning charge. The income from the levy is used to fund infrastructure projects to support the development of the area.

CIL is received without outstanding conditions; it is therefore recognised at the commencement date of the chargeable development in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in accordance with the accounting policy for government grants and contributions set out above. CIL charges will be largely used to fund capital expenditure. However, a small proportion of the charges (5% for the Council) may be used to fund revenue expenditure.

1.9. **Employee Benefits**

Benefits Payable During Employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within twelve months of the year end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits (e.g. cars) for current employees and 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 holiday entitlement and accrued flexible working hours (based on an average per employee) earned by employees but not taken before the year end which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is charged to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement so that holiday benefits are charged to revenue in the financial year that the absence occurs.

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 to the appropriate service line in the net cost of services in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

Post-Employment Benefits

The Council's employees are entitled to join the Local Government Pension Scheme administered by Hampshire County Council. This scheme provides defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions) earned as employees work for the Council.

The liabilities of the pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet based on an actuarial valuation.

Full details of the valuation method are shown in note 14 to the core financial statements.

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 standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, this means that there are appropriations to and from the Pension Reserve to remove notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners. The negative balance that arises on the Pension 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.

ANNEX 3

1.10. **Events after the Balance Sheet Date**

Events after the Balance Sheet date are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the 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 end of 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 of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

1.11. **VAT**

Income and expenditure excludes any amounts related to VAT to the extent that it is recoverable from HM Revenue & Customs.

1.12. **Overheads and Support Services**

The cost of overheads and support services are accounted for under two separate headings, Corporate & Support and Central Costs, in the Expenditure & Funding Analysis and the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as part of the net cost of services. They are not charged to service segments.

1.13. **Intangible Assets**

Expenditure on non-monetary assets that do not have physical substance but are controlled by the Council (e.g. software licences) is capitalised when it is expected that the future economic benefits will flow to the Council.

Intangible assets are measured initially at cost. The balance is amortised over the useful life of the asset to the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement to reflect the pattern of consumption of benefits.

Amortisation is not permitted to have an impact on the General Fund Balance. These charges are reversed out of the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account.

1.14. **Investment Property**

Investment properties are those that are used solely to earn rental income and / or capital appreciation. The definition is not met if the property is used in any way to facilitate the delivery of services.

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value based on the amount at which the asset could be exchanged between knowledgeable parties at arm's-length. Investment properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually according to market conditions. Gains and losses on revaluation are posted to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure section in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains / losses on disposal.

Investment properties under construction are measured at fair value once it is possible to measure reliably the fair value of the investment property, and at cost before that date.

Rentals received in respect of leases on investment properties are credited to the financing and investment income section and result in a gain for the General Fund balance. However, revaluation and disposal gains / losses are not permitted to have an impact on the General Fund balance. The gains / 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 sale proceeds) the Capital Receipts Reserve.

1.15. **Property, Plant and Equipment**

Assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the provision of services, for rental to others or for administrative purposes on a continuing basis are classified as property, plant and equipment (PPE).

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of PPE 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 secures but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

A de minimis level of £10,000 is applied to capital expenditure. Any expenditure on land, equipment or other chattels below this amount is not recognised as an asset.

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

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

- infrastructure and community assets – depreciated historical cost
- all other assets – fair value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value).

Where there is no market-based evidence of fair value because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost is used as an estimate of fair value.

ANNEX 3

Where non-property assets have short useful lives or low values (or both), depreciated historical cost basis is used as a proxy for fair value.

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at fair value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their fair value at the year end, but as a minimum every five years. Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains. (Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement where they arise from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service.)

Where decreases in value are identified, they are accounted for as follows:

- 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 lines in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

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

Impairment

Assets 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 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 lines in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

Where an impairment loss is reversed subsequently, the reversal is credited to relevant service lines in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement, up to the amount of the original loss, adjusted for depreciation that would be charged if the loss had not been recognised.

Disposals

When an asset is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet is written off to Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income & 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 & 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.

ANNEX 3

Amounts received for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. Receipts are required to be credited to the Capital Receipts Reserve, and can then only be used for new capital investment. 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 fixed 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 assets by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives. An exception is made for assets without a determinable finite useful life (i.e. freehold land and certain Community Assets).

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

Componentisation of an asset will be considered where:

- The carrying value of an asset is greater than £1M and
- The component is at least 20% of the carrying value of the asset and
- The change in depreciation after componentisation is greater than £10,000 per annum.

Revaluation gains 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.

1.16. **Heritage Assets**

Heritage assets are assets held primarily for their historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities and maintained for their contribution to knowledge and culture.

The Council does not have a policy in respect of the purchase, preservation, management and disposal of Heritage Assets.

Heritage assets are either excluded from the Balance Sheet or included within Community Assets, valued at historic cost. The Code requires Heritage Assets to be classified separately on the Balance Sheet and to be valued at fair value. The Council has not re-stated Heritage Assets in accordance with the Code due to their immaterial overall value. The impact of this is explained in note 19.

1.17. **Charges to Revenue 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 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 losses can be written off.
- Amortisation of intangible assets attributable to the service.

ANNEX 3

The Council is not required to raise Council Tax to cover depreciation, impairment losses, revaluation or amortisation. Depreciation, impairment losses, revaluation and amortisation are therefore replaced in the General Fund Balance by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserve Statement.

1.18. Revenue Expenditure Funded From Capital Under Statute

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but that does not result in the creation of a non-current asset has been charged as expenditure to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement in the year. Where the Council has determined to meet the cost of these charges from existing capital resources, 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 there is no impact on the level of Council Tax.

1.19. Leases

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.

Criteria for determining whether a lease is finance or operating in nature

A number of factors are considered in determining whether a lease should be classified as finance or operating. Three of these are over-riding, the remainder are considered holistically to assess the nature of a lease.

Leases of land will be considered operating leases unless the land will be permanently impaired as a result of the lease (e.g. the land is used for mining).

Where it is almost certain that the lessee will retain the asset in perpetuity or until the end of the asset's useful economic life, the lease will be classified as a finance lease.

Where the Council leases a building to a tenant, the building element of the lease will be considered to be operating in nature if the lessee is required to return the building in a repaired condition at the end of the lease.

Factors that indicate a lease might be a finance lease include:

- Where the net present value of lease payments is more than 80% of the asset's purchase price.
- Where the lease period is longer than 75% of the asset's useful life.
- Where there are options to extend the primary lease at rates substantially lower than market rents.
- Where ownership transfers to the lessor at the end of the lease or there are options to buy the asset at the end of the lease term on favourable conditions which are reasonably certain to be taken up.
- Terms included in the lease which penalise the lessee more than the lessor in the event that the lessee cancels the lease.

Council as Lessee – Finance Leases

ANNEX 3

Assets held under finance leases are recognised on the Balance Sheet at the commencement of the lease at fair value measured at the lease's inception (or the present value of the minimum lease payments if lower). The asset recognised is matched by a liability for the obligation to pay the lessor.

Lease payments are apportioned between;

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the asset – applied to write down the lease liability and
- a finance charge (debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement).

Assets recognised under finance leases are 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 useful life (where ownership of the asset does not transfer to the Council at the end of the lease period).

The Council is not required to raise Council Tax to cover depreciation or revaluation and impairment losses arising on leased assets. Instead, a prudent annual contribution is made from revenue funds towards the deemed capital investment in accordance with statutory requirements. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses are therefore substituted by a revenue contribution in the General Fund balance, by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

Council as Lessee – Operating Leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefitting from the use of leased assets. Charges are made on a straight line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a rent-free period at the commencement of the lease).

Council as Lessor – Finance Leases

There are no leases that qualify as finance leases where the Council is the lessor.

Council as Lessor – 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 & 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 (e.g. there is a premium paid at the commencement of the lease).

1.20. **Financial Instruments**

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 their fair value and subsequently carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the

instrument. The effective rate is the rate that exactly discounts future cash payments over the life of the instrument to the amount at which it was originally recognised. ANNEX 3

For most of the borrowings that the Council has, the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal repayable (plus accrued interest) and interest charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

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 and expenditure (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 their 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 & Expenditure Statement for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective interest rate 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 Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

Where the Council makes a soft loan (i.e. at less than market rate or with an interest free period), the loan will be shown in the balance sheet at carrying value rather than amortised value unless the value of the advance is greater than £500,000 or there is significant discounting of interest rates.

Any gains or losses that arise on the derecognition 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 its financial assets held at amortised cost either on a 12-month or lifetime basis. Only lifetime losses are recognised for trade receivables.

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 the risk has not increased significantly or remains low, losses are assessed on the basis of 12-month expected losses.

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit or Loss

ANNEX 3

Financial assets that are measured at Fair Value through Profit or Loss 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 arise in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services.

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

- Instruments with quoted market price – 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 authority 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 the derecognition of the asset are credited or debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

1.21. Inventories

Inventories are included in the Balance Sheet at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

1.22. Fair Value Measurement

The Council measures some of its non-financial assets such as surplus assets and investment properties, and some of its financial instruments, such as equity share holdings, at fair value at each reporting date. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. The fair value measurement assumes that the transaction to sell the asset or transfer the liability takes place either

- In the principal market for the asset or liability, or
- In the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market for the asset or liability.

The Council measures the fair value of an asset or liability 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 it in its highest and best use.

The Council uses appropriate valuation techniques for each circumstance, maximising the use of relevant known data and minimising the use of estimates and unknowns. This takes into account the three levels of categories for inputs to valuations for fair value assets:

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

2. Accounting Standards that have been issued but have not yet been adopted

The Code requires the Council to identify Accounting Standards that have been issued but have yet to be adopted. The Council is also required to assess the possible impact that application of the Standards will have when they are applied.

There are no Accounting Standards that have been issued but not yet adopted that would have a material effect on this year's Statement of Accounts were they in effect for the year ended 31st March 2022, nor are they expected to have a material effect on the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2023.

3. Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

In applying the accounting policies set out in Note 1, the Council has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events.

The critical judgements that have the most significant effect on the amounts in the financial statements are:

Asset classifications – the Council has made judgements on whether assets are classified as Investment Property or PPE. These judgements are based on the main reason that the Council is holding the asset. If the asset is used in the delivery of services or is occupied by third parties who are subsidised by the Council they are deemed to be PPE assets whereas if full market rent is being charged this would indicate that the asset is an Investment Property. The classification determines how revalued amounts are shown in the accounts and whether depreciation is chargeable on the asset.

Future funding for local government - there is a high degree of uncertainty about future levels of funding for local government. The Council has determined that this uncertainty is not sufficient to provide an indication that its assets might be impaired as a result of a need to close facilities and reduce levels of service provision.

Providing for potential liabilities – the Council has made judgements about the likelihood of pending liabilities and whether a provision should be made or whether there is a contingent liability. The judgements are based on the degree of certainty concerning future and past events and the Council's control over them.

4. Assumptions made about the Future and Other Major Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Council about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant

factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates. **ANNEX 3**

The items in the Council's Balance Sheet at 31st March 2022 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are explained in the following table.

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if actual results differ from assumptions
Impairment Allowance	The Council has made allowances for doubtful debts of £2.496M in 2021/22 (2020/21 £2.364M) based on what it believes to be a prudent but realistic level.	If collection rates were to deteriorate or improve, a 5% change would require an adjustment to the allowance of £124,800 (2020/21 £118,200).
Pension Liability	Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgments relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns from pension fund assets. A firm of actuaries is engaged by the pension fund administrator to provide expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.	More information can be found in Note 14 about the sensitivity to changes in assumptions in respect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The discount rate used • Salary inflation • Rates of increase to pensions in payment • Mortality rates
Provisions	The Council has made a provision of £1.814M in 2021/22 (2020/21 £2.110M) in respect of its share of appeals made by ratepayers for past business rates' costs. It is not certain how many of the appeals will be upheld.	A 10% increase or decrease in the actual number of appeals upheld would result in a change to the provision of £181,400 (2020/21 £211,000).
Property, Plant & Equipment	The Council carries out a rolling programme of valuations for PPE required to be measured at current value and £93.735M of assets were valued at current value in 2021/22.	Every 1% change in the valuation of land and buildings would require an adjustment of £937,300.
Investment Properties	The Council values its investment properties annually and the fair value at 31 st March 2022 was £156.181M. Assets are depreciated over useful lives that are dependent on assumptions about the level of repairs and maintenance that will be incurred in relation to individual assets.	Every 1% change in the valuation of investment properties would require an adjustment of £1.562M. If the useful life of assets is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying value of the asset falls. It is estimated that the annual depreciation charge for buildings would increase by £15,000 if the useful lives were reduced by one year.

5. **Note to the Expenditure and Funding Analysis**

ANNEX 3

This note provides a reconciliation of the main adjustments to Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund to arrive at the amounts in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The relevant transfers between reserves are explained in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Transactions in 2021/22

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis				
2021/22				
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts	Adjustments for Capital Purposes (Note a)	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments (Note b)	Other Differences (Note c)	Total Adjustments
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Community & Leisure	748	355	254	1,357
Environmental Service	629	1,095	413	2,137
Finance & Revenues	0	602	0	602
Housing & Environmental Health	1,829	465	0	2,294
Planning & Building	2	617	0	619
Planning Policy & Economic Development	0	187	0	187
Property & Asset Management	678	415	7,743	8,836
Benefits	0	0	(15)	(15)
Corporate & Support	84	591	0	675
Central Costs	5	0	(1,593)	(1,588)
Net Cost of Services	3,975	4,327	6,802	15,104
Other income and expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	(12,122)	1,503	(12,016)	(22,635)
Difference between General Fund surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(8,147)	5,830	(5,214)	(7,531)

Comparative Transactions for 2020/21

ANNEX 3

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis				
2020/21				
	Adjustments for Capital Purposes (Note a) £'000	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments (Note b) £'000	Other Differences (Note c) £'000	Total Adjustments £'000
Community & Leisure	629	194	173	996
Environmental Service	719	611	413	1,743
Finance & Revenues	0	345	0	345
Housing & Environmental Health	1,691	264	0	1,955
Planning & Building	352	345	0	697
Planning Policy & Economic Development	0	82	0	82
Property & Asset Management	2,370	243	7,525	10,138
Benefits	0	0	31	31
Corporate & Support	100	254	0	354
Central Costs	0	0	(2,187)	(2,187)
Net Cost of Services	5,861	2,338	5,955	14,154
Other income and expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	(16,815)	1,415	(985)	(16,385)
Difference between General Fund surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(10,954)	3,753	4,970	(2,231)

a) Adjustments for Capital Purposes

This column adds in depreciation and impairment, revaluation gains and losses and revenue expenditure financed by capital under statute in the services lines, and for:

- **Other operating expenditure** – adjusts for capital disposals with a transfer of income on disposal of assets and the amount written off for those assets
- **Financing and investment income and expenditure** – the statutory charges for capital financing i.e. Minimum Revenue Provision and other revenue contributions are deducted from other income and expenditure as these are not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices.
- **Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure** – capital grants are adjusted for income not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices. Revenue grants are adjusted from those receivable in the year to those receivable without conditions or for conditions which were satisfied throughout the year. The taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure line is credited with capital grants receivable in the year without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied in the year.

b) Net Change for the Pensions Adjustments

This column shows the net change for the removal of pension contributions and the addition of IAS19 Employee Benefits pension related expenditure and income:

- For **services** – this represents the removal of the employer pension contributions made by the authority under statute and the replacement with current service costs and past service costs.
- For **Financing and investment income and expenditure** – the net interest on the defined benefit liability is charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

c) Other differences

Other differences between amounts debited / credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and amounts payable / receivable to be recognised under statute:

- For **services** – this represents items not reported to management in the revenue outturn report, such as Section 106 commuted income and the movement in the untaken leave accrual, and amounts which were reported to management but are not included in the net cost of services in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

Committed income from Section 106 grants of £1.423M was received in the year from developers but not included in the report to management. This is transferred to earmarked reserves to pay for future maintenance of community facilities, parks and open spaces as required under the terms of those Section 106 agreements. The amount used to pay for maintenance in the year was £667,000.

- For **Financing and investment income and expenditure** – this column recognises adjustments to the General Fund for net investment property income of £7.743M which is reported in the General Fund in Net Cost of Services.
- For **Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure** - this column represents the difference of £5.210M between what is chargeable under statutory regulations for Council Tax and NDR that was projected to be received at the beginning of the year and the income recognised under generally accepted accounting practices in the Code of Practice. This is a timing difference, as any difference will be brought forward in future Surpluses or Deficits on the Collection Fund.

6. Segmental Income

Income received from external customers is analysed on a segmental basis in the following table:

Service	2020/21	2021/22
	Revenues from external customers £'000	Revenues from external customers £'000
Community & Leisure	568	940
Environmental Service	2,104	2,028
Finance & Revenues	131	271
Housing & Environmental Health	586	682
Planning & Building	1,350	1,678
Planning Policy & Economic Development	24	(3)
Property & Asset Management	12,210	13,141
Benefits	288	481
Corporate & Support	685	931
Central	1,855	1,424
Total income analysed on a segmental basis	19,801	21,573

ANNEX 3

7. Expenditure and Income analysed by nature

The Council's expenditure and income is analysed in the following table:

Expenditure / Income	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Expenditure		
Employee benefits expenses	21,749	23,835
Other service expenses	40,219	34,322
Depreciation, amortisation, impairment	3,820	1,738
Other capital charges	2,041	2,232
Interest payable	160	155
Precepts and levies	1,717	1,763
Pension fund interest costs	1,415	1,503
Total expenditure	71,121	65,548
Income		
Fees, charges and other service income	(19,801)	(21,573)
Interest and investment income	(407)	(448)
Changes in fair value of investment properties	(4,816)	(5,187)
Income from council tax and non-domestic rates	(5,815)	(10,439)
Government grants and contributions	(52,675)	(35,087)
Gain on the disposal of assets	(572)	(1,120)
Total income	(84,086)	(73,854)
Surplus on the Provision of Services	(12,965)	(8,306)

8. Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulation

This note details the adjustments that are made to the total comprehensive income and expenditure recognised by the Council in the year in accordance with proper accounting practice to the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Council to meet future capital and revenue expenditure.

Transactions in 2021/22

ANNEX 3

	General Fund Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Note
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Adjustment Account						
Depreciation of non-current assets	3,012	0	0	3,012	(3,012)	16
Amortisation of intangible assets	12	0	0	12	(12)	18
Impairment of non-current assets	(1,286)	0	0	(1,286)	1,286	16
Movement in the fair value of investment property	(5,187)	0	0	(5,187)	5,187	17
Profit on disposal of non-current assets	(1,120)	0	0	(1,120)	1,120	20
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	1,338	(1,108)	(230)	0	0	30
Impairment of capital loans	5	0	0	5	(5)	30
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt	(196)	0	0	(196)	196	30
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Receipts Reserve						
Proceeds from disposal of non-current assets	0	1,123	0	1,123	(1,123)	29
Financing of new capital expenditure	(3,522)	(2,896)	0	(6,418)	6,418	21
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve						
Capital grants credited to CIES for which expenditure has not yet been incurred	(1,203)	0	1,203	0	0	29
Capital loan repayments transferred to Capital Grants Unapplied reserve for future use	0	0	4	4	(4)	29
Adjustments primarily involving the Pensions Reserve						
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits charged to the CI&ES	8,325	0	0	8,325	(8,325)	14
Employer's contribution to pension fund / directly to pensioners	(2,495)	0	0	(2,495)	2,495	14
Adjustments primarily involving the Collection Fund Adjustment Account						
Amount by which Council Tax and Business Rates income credited to the CI&ES is different from Council Tax and Business Rates income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements.	(5,210)	0	0	(5,210)	5,210	30
Insertion of items not shown in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement						
Other adjustments	(4)	0	0	(4)	4	
	(7,531)	(2,881)	977	(9,435)	9,435	

Comparative Transactions for 2020/21

ANNEX 3

	General Fund Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Note
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Adjustment Account						
Depreciation of non-current assets	2,914	0	0	2,914	(2,914)	16
Amortisation of intangible assets	7	0	0	7	(7)	18
Impairment of non-current assets	898	0	0	898	(898)	16
Movement in the fair value of investment property	(4,816)	0	0	(4,816)	4,816	17
Loss on disposal of non-current assets	(572)	0	0	(572)	572	20
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	1,386	(1,016)	(370)	0	0	30
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt	(191)	0	0	(191)	191	30
Capital grants, contributions and income in relation to donated assets credited to the CI&ES	(3,971)	0	0	(3,971)	3,971	21
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Receipts Reserve						
Proceeds from disposal of non-current assets	0	585	0	585	(585)	29
Financing of new capital expenditure	(5,198)	(557)	0	(5,755)	5,755	21
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve						
Capital grants credited to CI&ES for which expenditure has not yet been incurred	(1,411)	0	1,411	0	0	29
Capital loan repayments transferred to Capital Grants Unapplied reserve for future use	0	0	75	75	(75)	29
Adjustments primarily involving the Pensions Reserve						
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits charged to the CI&ES	6,288	0	0	6,288	(6,288)	14
Employer's contribution to pension fund / directly to pensioners	(2,535)	0	0	(2,535)	2,535	14
Adjustments primarily involving the Collection Fund Adjustment Account						
Amount by which Council Tax and Business Rates income credited to the CI&ES is different from Council Tax and Business Rates income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements.	4,943	0	0	4,943	(4,943)	30
Adjustments primarily involving the Accumulated Absences Account						
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the CI&ES on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements.	25	0	0	25	(25)	30
Insertion of items not shown in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement						
Other adjustments	2	0	0	2	(2)	
	(2,231)	(988)	1,116	(2,103)	2,103	

9. Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income

The Council received income from Council Tax and revenue grants from various central government departments including the Department for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). These are summarised in the following table.

Taxation / Non-Ringfenced Grants	Awarding Body	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Council Tax Income	Council Taxpayers	7,733	7,980
New Homes' Bonus	DLUHC	3,561	2,568
Small Business Rate Relief	DLUHC	1,712	1,662
Rural Rate Relief	DLUHC	5	6
Supporting Small Businesses	DLUHC	6	6
Discretionary Relief	DLUHC	4	0
Telecomms Relief	DLUHC	0	2
Expanded Retail Discount	DLUHC	7,691	3,088
Nursery Relief	DLUHC	102	65
Council Tax Family Annex Grant	DLUHC	111	138
COVID Support Grants	DLUHC	1,571	533
COVID Sales, Fees & Charges Compensation Grant	DLUHC	2,165	437
Lower Tier Services Grant	DLUHC	0	574
Multiplier Cap	DLUHC	(30)	183
		24,631	17,242

The net income shown in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement for business rates is comprised of a number of transactions that are summarised in the table below.

Business Rates Income & Expenditure	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Share of income transferred from Collection Fund	17,531	27,541
Tariff paid to government	(17,151)	(17,151)
Share of deficit on Collection Fund in the year	(1,102)	(7,081)
Levy payable to government in respect of growth in the year	(2,913)	(2,613)
Net Business Rates Income	(3,635)	696

Capital grants and contributions were received in the year as shown in the following table. The comparative for 2020/21 includes £3.972M in donated assets under section 106 agreements whilst 2021/22 is NIL.

Capital Grants and Contributions	Awarding Body	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Disabled Facilities Grant	DLUHC	1,369	1,376
Contributions to works on property	Tenants / Other developers	359	465
Plug-in Grant	Government	9	9
Contributions under s106 and CIL agreements / capital grants	Developers	5,460	1,548
		7,197	3,398

Other grants received in the year and included in the Net Cost of Services are shown in the following table.

Specific Grants included in the Net Cost of Services	Awarding Body	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Housing Benefit Subsidy	DWP	20,021	18,728
Housing Benefit Administration Subsidy	DWP	228	227
Localising Council Tax Admin Subsidy	DLUHC	83	179
Discretionary Housing Payments	DWP	198	155
Business Rates Collection	DLUHC	186	187
Biodiversity Net Gain Grant	DEFRA	0	10
Redmond Review Implementation Grant	DLUHC	0	21
Council Tax Hardship Fund	DLUHC	574	0
COVID Civil Enforcement Grant	DLUHC	48	0
COVID Outbreak Management Fund	DLUHC	126	138
COVID Clinically Extremely Vulnerable	DLUHC	185	36
COVID Emergency Assistance	DLUHC	89	0
COVID Track & Trace Discretionary Grant	DHSS	83	61
Track & Trace New Burdens Admin Grant	DHSS	58	36
COVID Business Grants New Burdens Grants	DLUHC	437	131
COVID Business Grants - Additional Restrictions Grant	DLUHC	3,644	1,438
COVID Business Grants - OPS	DLUHC	413	0
COVID Business Grants - Discretionary Scheme	DLUHC	1,405	0
Disabled Facilities Grant	DLUHC	6	0
Individual Electoral Registration	Cabinet Office	10	29
Local Election Funding (COVID)	Cabinet Office	0	35
Flexible Homelessness Support Grant	DLUHC	201	372
COVID Household Support Fund & Self isolation Voucher	DWP	0	108
Private Rented Sector Access Grant	DLUHC	100	0
Cold Weather and Protect Plus Grant	DLUHC	10	0
Domestic Abuse - Support to Victims	DLUHC	0	33
Rough Sleepers Initiative Grant	DLUHC	103	315
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	HMRC	251	23
Brexit Grant	DLUHC	53	0
Apprenticeships Incentives	DFE	0	3
Transparency Code Set-Up	DLUHC	8	8
New Burdens - Pavement Licensing	DLUHC	0	2
Neighbourhood Planning Grants	DLUHC	60	40
Compliance & Enforcement Grant	BEIS	0	30
Welcome Back Funding	DLUHC	0	82
		28,580	22,427

The Council also received grants of £6.585M during 2021/22 (£38.912M – 2020/21) where it acted as an agent of central government in distributing Covid-19 grants to

businesses and individuals. These grants are not included in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement and are detailed in the following table. **ANNEX 3**

Grants not included in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	Awarding Body	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
COVID-19 Business Support Grants	DLUHC	27,255	0
COVID-19 Local Restrictions Grants	DLUHC	6,961	0
COVID-19 Closed Business Lockdown Grants	DLUHC	4,644	0
COVID-19 Restart Grants	BEIS	0	5,321
COVID-19 Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Grants	BEIS	0	1,188
COVID-19 Track & Trace Main Scheme Grant	DHSS	52	76
		38,912	6,585

10. Special Expenses

Income from the special Council Tax Levy which applies in the Andover Town Council area was £333,300 in 2021/22 (£344,500 – 2020/21).

11. External Audit Costs

The Council incurred the following fees in relation to external audit and inspection.

Class of Work	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
External Audit Fees	59	90
Certification of Grants Claim and Returns	10	25
Public Sector Audit Authority refund	0	(8)
	69	107

Public Sector Audit Appointments determined a higher figure for the 2020/21 audit which has been shown within the 2021/22 figure.

12. Members' Allowances

The Council paid the following amounts to members of the Council during the year.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Allowances	392	418
Expenses	0	5
Total Members' Allowances	392	423

13. Officers' Remuneration and Termination Benefits

The number of employees whose remuneration, including termination benefits but excluding pension contributions, was £50,000 or more in bands of £5,000 in 2021/22 was:-

ANNEX 3

Remuneration Band	2020/21 Number of Employees	2021/22 Number of Employees
£50,000 - £54,999	8	16
£55,000 - £59,999	8	4
£60,000 - £64,999	4	7
£65,000 - £69,999	0	1
£70,000 - £74,999	1	1
£75,000 - £79,999	1	1
£80,000 - £84,999	1	1
£85,000 - £89,999	8	7
£90,000 - £109,999	0	0
£110,000 - £114,999	1	0
£115,000 - £119,999	0	1
£120,000 - £124,999	1	0
£125,000 - £134,999	0	0
£135,000 - £139,999	0	1

The following table sets out the remuneration of senior officers in the year. A senior officer is described as 'a person who has responsibility for the management of the Council to the extent that the person has power to direct or control the major activities of the body, whether solely or collectively with other persons.' For the purposes of these accounts, Test Valley Borough Council has determined that senior officers are those included in the Management Team, which comprises the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Heads of Service.

The 'Total Remuneration excluding pension contributions' of the following officers is included in the pay bandings in the previous table.

Post	Salary (Including Fees and Allowances)		Car Allowance and Other Expenses		Total Remuneration Excluding Pension Contributions		Pension Contributions		Total Remuneration Including Pension Contributions	
	20/21	21/22	20/21	21/22	20/21	21/22	20/21	21/22	20/21	21/22
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive 1 - Note (a)	25	0	2	0	27	0	3	0	30	0
Corporate Director / Chief Executive 2 - Note (b)	117	135	5	4	122	139	21	21	143	160
Corporate Director / Deputy Chief Executive - Note (c)	108	112	6	5	114	117	19	19	133	136
Head of Community & Leisure	84	84	4	4	88	88	15	14	103	102
Head of Environmental Services	84	85	5	5	89	90	15	14	104	104
Head of Property & Asset Management (1) - Note (d)	83	49	4	2	87	51	15	7	102	58
Head of Property & Asset Management 2 - Note (e)	0	11	0	1	0	12	0	2	0	14
Head of Finance - Note (f)	45	0	3	0	48	0	8	0	56	0
Head of Housing & Environmental Health	83	84	4	4	87	88	15	14	102	102
Head of IT - Note (g)	83	28	4	1	87	29	15	5	102	34
Head of Legal & Democratic	82	86	4	4	86	90	14	14	100	104
Head of Planning & Building	83	84	4	4	87	88	15	14	102	102
Head of Planning Policy & Economic Development	79	85	4	4	83	89	14	14	97	103
Head of Revenues / Head of Finance & Revenues - Note (h)	83	85	4	4	87	89	15	14	102	103
Head of Strategy & Innovation - Note (i)	32	77	1	4	33	81	5	13	38	94

Note (a) – The costs for 2020/21 are for part of the year only as the postholder left the Council during the year.

Note (b) – During 2020/21, one of the Corporate Directors became the new Chief Executive. The costs for 2020/21 therefore reflect part year Corporate Director and part year Chief Executive, whilst 2021/22 reflects Chief Executive. The total remuneration of the Chief Executive includes both a salary for work carried out as Head of Paid Service for the Council and also

fees payable as the Local Returning Officer for elections held in the year. Payments as returning officer in 2021/22 were £8,600 (2020/21 £NIL).

ANNEX 3

Note (c) – During 2020/21, the second Corporate Director became Deputy Chief Executive. The costs for 2020/21 therefore reflect part year Corporate Director and part year Deputy Chief Executive, whilst 2021/22 reflects Deputy Chief Executive.

Note (d) – During 2021/22, the Head of Property & Asset Management (1) left the Council so the costs for 2021/22 are part year only.

Note (e) – The Head of Property & Asset Management (2) joined the Council part way through the year so the costs for 2021/22 are part year only.

Note (f) – The Head of Finance left the Council during 2020/21.

Note (g) – The Head of IT left the Council during the year, so costs for 2021/22 are for part year only. The Council shared the costs of the Head of IT with Winchester City Council and received £19,100 as a contribution towards the employment costs of the postholder (2020/21 £57,600).

Note (h) – During 2020/21, following the departure of the Head of Finance, the Head of Revenues became the Head of Finance & Revenues.

Note (i) – During 2020/21, a new post of Head of Strategy & Innovation, was created. The costs in the table for 2020/21 are therefore for part of the year only.

The number of exit packages and total cost per band are set out in the following table.

Exit Package Band	Number of Redundancies		Number of Other Departures		Total Cost of Exit Packages by Band	
	2020/21	2021/22	2020/21	2021/22	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
£0 - £20,000	0	0	2	1	9	N/A (note (j))
Total	0	0	2	1	9	0

Note (j) – The total value of exit packages in 2021/22 is not disclosed due to there being only one such package and the potential for linking the value to the individual concerned.

All the costs above were charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement in the year.

14. **Defined Benefit Pension Scheme**

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its officers, the Council contributes towards the cost of post-employment benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Council has a commitment to make the payments and this needs to be disclosed at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

The Council participates in the Local Government Pension Scheme, administered by Hampshire County Council – this is a funded defined benefit scheme with benefits up to 31st March 2014 being linked to final salary and benefits after this date based on a Career Average Revalued Earnings scheme, meaning that the Council and its

employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level estimated to balance the pensions' liabilities with investment assets. ANNEX 3

The accounts recognise the cost of retirement benefits in the Net Cost of Services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge made against the Council Tax is based on cash payable in the year, so the real cost of retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The following transactions have been included in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement and Movement in Reserves Statement during the year:

<u>Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement</u>	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
<u>Cost of Services</u>		
Current Service Costs	5,065	7,013
Unfunded Benefits Paid Out	(192)	(191)
<u>Financing & Investment Income & Expenditure</u>		
Interest Cost	4,020	4,464
Interest Income	(2,605)	(2,961)
Total amount included in the Surplus on Provision of Services	6,288	8,325
<u>Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure</u>		
Actuarial (gains) / losses due to change in financial assumptions	34,466	(13,067)
Actuarial gains due to demographic assumption changes	0	(2,112)
Experience (gains) / losses on liabilities	(2,071)	684
Remeasurement (gains) / losses on assets	(26,006)	(7,203)
Total amount charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	12,677	(13,373)
<u>Movement In Reserves Statement</u>		
Reversal of net charges made to the deficit on the provision of services in accordance with the Code	(6,288)	(8,325)
Actual employer's contributions payable	2,535	2,495
Total Amount included in the Movement in Reserves Statement (note 8)	(3,753)	(5,830)

In previous years, the Council awarded discretionary post-retirement benefits upon early retirement. This is an unfunded defined benefit arrangement, meaning that no assets exist in the pension fund to meet the ongoing liabilities.

The Council contributes to the Pension Fund at a common rate applicable to a group of employees which is set having regard to the assets and liabilities of the group as a whole.

The Council pre-paid employer contributions to the Pension Fund relating to Scheme years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 as a single lump sum payment in April 2020. The total prepayment was £6.930M of which £2.296M related to Scheme year 2021/22 with a contribution rate of 17.9%.

ANNEX 3

It is forecast that pension contributions payable by the employer in 2022/23 in respect of unfunded liabilities will amount to £197,000.

The allowance for administration expenses included in the Current Service Cost is £43,000 (2020/21 £42,000).

Assets & Liabilities in relation to retirement benefits

The following tables show the Council's liabilities to the Pension Fund and its share of the Fund's assets at the year end. The net liability at 31st March 2022 was £57.065M (2020/21 - £72.933M).

Liabilities	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Opening present value of funded liabilities	173,606	211,543
Current Service Cost	5,065	7,013
Interest Cost	3,956	4,404
Contributions by Participants	970	1,003
Actuarial (gain) / loss on liabilities due to change in financial assumptions	34,224	(12,989)
Actuarial gain on liabilities due to change in demographic assumptions	0	(2,070)
Experience (gains) / losses on liabilities	(2,030)	673
Net benefits paid out	(4,248)	(4,684)
Closing present value of funded liabilities	211,543	204,893
Opening present value of unfunded liabilities	2,895	2,968
Interest Cost	64	60
Actuarial (gain) / loss on liabilities due to change in financial assumptions	242	(78)
Actuarial gains on liabilities due to change in demographic assumptions	0	(42)
Experience (gains) / losses on liabilities	(41)	11
Net benefits paid out	(192)	(191)
Closing present value of unfunded liabilities	2,968	2,728
Total present value of scheme liabilities	214,511	207,621

Assets	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Opening fair value of assets	113,710	141,578
Interest income on assets	2,605	2,961
Actuarial gain on assets	26,006	7,203
Contributions by the employer	2,535	2,495
Contributions by participants	970	1,003
Net benefits paid out	(4,248)	(4,684)
Closing fair value of assets	141,578	150,556

The expected return on scheme assets is determined by considering the expected returns available on the assets underlying the current investment policy. Expected yields on fixed interest investments are based on gross redemption yields as at the Balance Sheet date. Expected returns on equity investments reflect long-term real rates of return experienced in the respective markets.

The actual return on assets in the year is shown in the following table.

Assets	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Interest income on assets	2,605	2,961
Actuarial gain on assets	26,006	7,203
Actual return on assets	28,611	10,164

Basis for estimating assets and liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, etc. The Fund's liabilities have been assessed by an independent firm of actuaries, based on the latest full valuation of the scheme carried out as at 31 March 2019 and a duration of liabilities of 20.0 years.

The principal assumptions used by the actuary were:

	2020/21	2021/22
Discount rate for funded liabilities	2.1%	2.7%
Discount rate for unfunded liabilities	2.1%	2.7%
Rate of Inflation - CPI (funded)	2.7%	3.0%
Rate of Inflation - CPI (unfunded)	2.7%	3.0%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.7%	4.0%
Rate of increase in pensions in payment	2.7%	3.0%
Rate of increase in pensions in deferment	2.7%	3.0%
Mortality Assumptions		
Longevity at 65 for current pensioners (years)		
Men	23.1	22.9
Women	25.5	25.4

It is assumed that each member will surrender pension on retirement, such that the total cash received (including any accrued lump sum from pre-2008 service) is 70% of the permitted maximum.

The proportions of total assets held in each asset type, shown below, reflect the proportions held by the Fund as a whole at 31st March 2022.

	2020/21	2021/22
Equities	57.0%	56.9%
Bonds	17.3%	17.2%
Property	6.1%	6.9%
Other	19.6%	19.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The figures in this note are sensitive to the assumptions used. The approximate impact of changing the key assumptions on the present value of the funded defined benefit obligation as at 31st March 2022 and the projected service cost for the year ending 31st March 2023 is set out in the following table. In each case, only the assumption mentioned is altered; all other assumptions remain the same.

Discount rate		
Adjustment to rate	+0.1% pa	-0.1% pa
Present value of total obligation (£M)	200.80	208.99
% change in present value of total obligation	-2.0%	2.0%
Projected service cost (£M)	6.28	6.74
Approx % change in projected service cost	-3.5%	3.6%
Rate of increase in salaries		
Adjustment to salary increase rate	+0.1% pa	-0.1% pa
Present value of total obligation (£M)	205.30	204.48
% change in present value of obligation	+0.2%	-0.2%
Projected service cost (£M)	6.50	6.50
Approx % change in projected service cost	0.0%	0.0%
Rate of increase to pensions in payment		
Adjustment to pension rate	+0.1% pa	-0.1% pa
Present value of total obligation (£M)	208.58	201.21
% change in present value of obligation	+1.8%	-1.8%
Projected service cost (£M)	6.74	6.28
Approx % change in projected service cost	3.6%	-3.5%
Post retirement mortality assumptions (follow pattern of person one year older or younger)		
Adjustment to pension rate	-1 year	+1 year
Present value of total obligation (£M)	211.86	197.93
% change in present value of obligation	+3.4%	-3.4%
Projected service cost (£M)	6.76	6.25
Approx % change in projected service cost	+4.0%	-3.9%

15. Leases

Operating Leases

The Council leases out land and property under operating leases for a number of purposes. These include generation of income from investment properties and for the provision of recreational facilities.

The future minimum lease rentals receivable under non-cancellable leases in future years are shown in the table below.

	2020/21	2021/22
	£'000	£'000
Receivable within one year	8,386	8,817
Receivable within one to five years	30,226	30,532
Receivable after five years	425,495	430,664
Total minimum lease rentals receivable	464,107	470,013

The minimum lease payments receivable do not include rents that are contingent on performance or based on a percentage of turnover.

In 2021/22 the Council recognised income from contingent rents of £NIL (2020/21 £25,000).

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16. Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE)

These are tangible assets which are held or used in the production or supply of goods and services, for rental to others, or for administrative purposes, and are expected to be used during more than one period.

They are further classified into:

- Operational assets
 - Land & buildings (e.g. offices and car parks)
 - Vehicles, Plant & Equipment
 - Infrastructure assets (e.g. footpaths and cycle ways)
 - Community assets (e.g. parks and open spaces); and
- Non-Operational assets
 - Surplus assets (i.e. assets that are not being used to deliver services, but which do not meet the criteria to be classified as either investment properties or assets held for sale)

The following table shows the movement in balances of items of property, plant and equipment in the year.

2021/22	ANNEX 3					
	Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Infra structure	Community	Surplus Assets	Total
Cost / Valuation	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Historic Cost b/f	71,208	8,694	903	13,899	528	95,232
Revaluation Increases shown in the Revaluation Reserve b/f	28,329	0	54	0	0	28,383
Revaluation Decreases shown in the CI&ES b/f	(8,901)	(36)	(16)	(923)	(203)	(10,079)
Additions	819	484	0	936	0	2,239
Revaluations	3,413	0	0	0	0	3,413
Disposals - Historic Cost	0	(4)	0	0	0	(4)
Reclassification	(147)	0	0	0	0	(147)
Reverse depreciation on disposed / revalued assets	(1,574)	(464)	0	0	0	(2,038)
Reversal of previous impairments	1,286	0	0	0	0	1,286
Cost / Valuation at 31st March 2022	94,433	8,674	941	13,912	325	118,285
Depreciation						
Historic Cost Depreciation b/f	(125)	(5,027)	(236)	(1,058)	0	(6,446)
Depreciation on Revaluations b/f	(227)	0	(42)	0	0	(269)
Charge in year - Historic Cost	(1,347)	(799)	(29)	(259)	(5)	(2,439)
Charge in year - Revalued Amounts	(573)	0	0	0	0	(573)
Reverse depreciation on disposed / revalued assets	1,574	464	0	0	0	2,038
Depreciation at 31st March 2022	(698)	(5,362)	(307)	(1,317)	(5)	(7,689)
Net Book Value at 31st March 2022	93,735	3,312	634	12,595	320	110,596
Net Book Value at 31st March 2021	90,284	3,631	663	11,918	325	106,821

Comparative Information for 2020/21

ANNEX 3

2020/21	Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Infra structure	Community	Surplus Assets	Total
Cost / Valuation	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Historic Cost b/f	70,052	7,984	902	11,370	559	90,867
Revaluation Increases shown in the Revaluation Reserve b/f	22,141	0	54	0	0	22,195
Revaluation Decreases shown in the CI&ES b/f	(8,104)	(35)	(16)	(923)	(107)	(9,185)
Additions	3,989	1,224	0	2,528	0	7,741
Revaluations	8,572	0	0	0	0	8,572
Disposals - Historic Cost	(16)	(3)	0	0	0	(19)
Disposals - Impairment Costs	6	0	0	0	0	6
Reverse depreciation on disposed / revalued assets	(2,100)	0	0	0	0	(2,100)
Reclassification	(3,102)	(512)	0	0	(32)	(3,646)
Impairments in year	(802)	0	0	0	(96)	(898)
Cost / Valuation at 31st March 2021	90,636	8,658	940	12,975	324	113,533
Depreciation						
Historic Cost Depreciation b/f	(1,130)	(4,639)	(208)	(874)	(25)	(6,876)
Depreciation on Revaluations b/f	(528)	0	(40)	0	0	(568)
Charge in year - Historic Cost	(1,335)	(900)	(28)	(183)	(6)	(2,452)
Charge in year - Revalued Amounts	(461)	0	(1)	0	0	(462)
Reverse depreciation on disposed / revalued assets	3,102	512	0	0	32	3,646
Depreciation at 31st March 2021	(352)	(5,027)	(277)	(1,057)	1	(6,712)
Net Book Value at 31st March 2021	90,284	3,631	663	11,918	325	106,821
Net Book Value at 31st March 2020	82,431	3,310	692	9,573	427	96,433

Depreciation is charged based on the following assumed useful economic lives

- Land – Not depreciated
- Buildings – 10 to 60 years
- Vehicles – 3 to 7 years
- Plant & Equipment – 3 to 15 years
- Infrastructure Assets – 10 to 30 years

The impairments shown above are due to changes in the market value of assets as a result of current market conditions or as a result of changes to lease or other conditions which have altered an asset's carrying value. No assets were materially impaired as a result of structural damage.

The following table shows, for each class of PPE asset, the value of assets based on their respective methods of valuation. Where assets are carried at revalued amounts, the value is shown based on the year of the most recent revaluation.

ANNEX 3

	Cost £'000	Depreciated Cost £'000	Reval 2018/19 £'000	Reval 2019/20 £'000	Reval 2020/21 £'000	Reval 2021/22 £'000	Total value of PPE £'000
Land and Buildings	0	0	2,065	3,949	8,099	79,622	93,735
Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	484	2,828	0	0	0	0	3,312
Infrastructure	104	530	0	0	0	0	634
Community	10,012	2,583	0	0	0	0	12,595
Surplus Assets	98	222	0	0	0	0	320
Total PPE Assets	10,698	6,163	2,065	3,949	8,099	79,622	110,596

The Council carries out a rolling programme of valuations that ensures all PPE assets are valued at least once every five years. Revaluations in 2021/22 were carried out by the Council's internal RICS registered valuer and an external valuer, Carter Jonas. All revaluations were carried out as at 31st March 2022.

The majority of information for PPE valuations comes from assessing active markets for similar properties. However, there is still some need for estimation as no two properties can be treated the same. The Council's valuers make assumptions on certain areas including the asset's useful remaining life and degree of specialism in calculating the asset's value for the accounts.

Surplus assets are measured at fair value.

At the 31st March 2022 contractual commitments on existing capital schemes totalled £3.883M (2020/21 £7.942M). The most significant item is £1.307M in relation to a property development.

17. Investment Properties

The following items of income and expense have been accounted for in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Rental income from Investment Property	7,820	8,053
Investment Property direct costs	(295)	(309)
Net Investment Property income	7,525	7,744

There are no restrictions on the Council's ability to realise the value inherent in its investment property portfolio or in the Council's right to the remittance of income and the proceeds of disposal.

The following table summarises the movement in the fair value of investment properties in the year.

	2020/21 £'000	ANNEX 3 2021/22 £'000
Balance at start of year	139,815	148,571
Purchase of new property	1,720	0
Expenditure on existing property	(6)	180
Expenditure on property under construction	126	2,096
Reclassification from Property, Plant & Equipment	2,100	147
Net changes in fair value of property	4,816	5,187
Disposals	0	
Balance at end of year	148,571	156,181

Fair Value Hierarchy and Valuation Techniques

The Council's investment property portfolio has been assessed as Level 2 for valuation purposes (see Note 1.22 for an explanation of Fair Value levels).

The fair value of the investment property portfolio has been measured using the investment method of valuation. Valuations have taken into account existing lease terms and rentals from the tenancy schedule, research into market evidence, market rentals and yields. Changes in yields have led to a material increase in the valuation of some of the Council's investment properties.

In estimating the fair value of the Council's investment properties, the highest and best use of the properties is deemed to be their current use.

Investment property under construction is measured at cost.

There has been no change in the valuation techniques used during the year for investment properties.

The fair value of the Council's investment property is measured annually at each reporting date. All valuations are carried out internally by the Council's RICS registered valuer, or an external valuer, Carter Jonas, in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

18. Intangible Assets

Intangible Assets represent the value of development costs and software licences for computer programmes used and the Council's right to hold markets in Andover Town Centre.

Market rights are not amortised as they are considered to have a life longer than 50 years; however a periodic impairment review is carried out on this asset to ensure the carrying value is prudent.

Software licences are amortised over their estimated useful economic life on a straight line basis.

The following table summarises the movement in balances for intangible assets in the year.

	Software Licences £'000	Market Rights £'000	Total ANNEX 3 £'000
Cost or Valuation			
Cost / Fair Value b/f	830	57	887
Additions	19	0	19
Cost / Valuation at 31st March 2022	849	57	906
Amortisation			
Amortisation of Historic Cost b/f	(786)	0	(786)
Charge for the year	(12)	0	(12)
Amortisation at 31st March 2022	(798)	0	(798)
Net Book Value as at 31st March 2022	51	57	108
Net Book Value as at 31st March 2021	44	57	101

Comparative information for 2020/21

	Software Licences £'000	Market Rights £'000	Total £'000
Cost or Valuation			
Cost / Fair Value b/f	811	57	868
Additions	19	0	19
Cost / Valuation at 31st March 2021	830	57	887
Amortisation			
Amortisation of Historic Cost b/f	(779)	0	(779)
Charge for the year	(7)	0	(7)
Amortisation at 31st March 2021	(786)	0	(786)
Net Book Value as at 31st March 2021	44	57	101
Net Book Value as at 31st March 2020	32	57	89

19. Heritage Assets

The Council holds a number of heritage assets. Some of these are carried at historical cost and others are not included on the Balance Sheet. The total estimated value of Heritage Assets at the balance sheet date is shown in the table below split according to their treatment in the Balance Sheet.

	Carrying Value	Fair Value	Carrying Value	Fair Value
	2020/21 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Included in Community Assets	362	537	382	557
Not included in the Balance Sheet	0	190	0	190
Total	362	727	382	747

The most significant Heritage Assets owned by the Council are the silver maces which form part of the Council's civic regalia. Other Heritage Assets include the war memorials in Andover and Romsey, a Japanese cannon in Romsey War Memorial Park and various pieces of public art.

FRS30 (Heritage Assets) requires that, where material, Heritage Assets be shown at valuation as a separate category of non-current asset on the Balance Sheet. The total

estimated value of Heritage Assets is not material; therefore the Council has elected not to re-state the accounts to the extent required by the Standard. **ANNEX 3**

20. Profit on Disposal of Assets

During the year, the Council made a net profit on the disposal of fixed assets of £1.120M (2020/21 net profit of £572,000). An analysis of this profit is shown in the following table.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Right To Buy Contributions	567	1,057
Net profit on disposal of property, plant & equipment	5	63
Total Profit on Disposal of Assets	572	1,120

21. Capital Expenditure and Financing

Total Capital Expenditure to be financed in 2021/22 amounted to £8.655M. This can be analysed as expenditure on new assets (£4.534M), revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute (£2.232M) and expenditure classified as financial instruments (£1.889M).

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	6,585	6,394
Capital Expenditure		
Property, Plant & Equipment	7,741	2,239
Investment Property	1,840	2,276
Intangible Assets	19	19
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute	2,040	2,232
Capital loan	125	1,889
Sources of Finance		
Capital Receipts	(1,647)	(4,006)
Government Grants and Other Contributions	(6,081)	(2,421)
Contributions from Revenue / Reserves	(4,037)	(2,227)
Movement in Minimum Revenue Provision	(191)	(196)
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	6,394	6,199

The movement in the Capital Financing Requirement represents the movement in the minimum revenue provision of £196,000.

The Property, Plant & Equipment line and the Government Grants and Other Contributions line above for 2020/21 include the assumed costs and contribution of donated assets valued at £3.972M (2021/22 £NIL) which the Council did not purchase but which were adopted as part of a S106 agreement.

The Government Grants and Other Contributions line shown in the previous table represents the total 'Capital Grants and Contributions' figure per the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement less the net transfer to the capital grants unapplied reserve of £977,000.

Total capital expenditure has been analysed on a service basis in the following table:

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	2021/22 Long-Term Assets	2021/22 Revenue Expenditure Funded From Capital	2021/22 Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Community & Leisure	689	518	1,207
Environmental	498	0	498
Property & Asset Management	3,347	0	3,347
Housing & Env. Health	0	1,714	1,714
Total Expenditure	4,534	2,232	6,766

The table above excludes the capital expenditure on financial instruments which are included in note 31.

22. Cash and Cash Equivalents

The balance of Cash and Cash Equivalents is made up of the following elements.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Cash held by the Council	5	5
Bank Current Accounts	4,704	5,328
Short-term deposits	11,122	53
Total Cash & Cash Equivalents	15,831	5,386

23. Inventories

The balance of inventories is as shown in the following table.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Stock held by services	202	228
Nitrate credits	0	1,483
Total Inventories	202	1,711

Following the Court of Justice of the European Union judgments, Natural England advised in June 2019 that in order to comply with the Habitats Regulations, all new residential and overnight accommodation development should be nutrient neutral.

The Council has, therefore, purchased credits to provide off site mitigation solutions in order to achieve nutrient neutral development. These credits will be sold to developers as part of S106 agreements as part of a nitrate mitigation solution. It is anticipated they will be sold at cost and are held as inventory at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

24. Analysis of Debtors

ANNEX 3

	2020/21	2021/22		Net £'000
	£'000	Debtor £'000	Impairment Allowance £'000	
Central Government Bodies	292	319	0	319
Sundry Debtors	12,459	10,822	(1,546)	9,276
Pension Fund Prepayment	4,605	2,310	0	2,310
Collection Fund	7,109	2,035	(876)	1,159
Housing	7	63	(56)	7
Car Leasing and Loans	35	61	(18)	43
Total Debtors	24,507	15,610	(2,496)	13,114

Included within car leasing and loans in the previous table are loans to employees for vehicle purchases. At 31st March 2022, £62,000 (2020/21 - £44,000) was outstanding.

The Collection Fund balances relate to Council Tax and Business Rates. There are two elements. The first is the Council's share of amounts due from taxpayers in respect of 2021/22. The second is the balance of the cash that is owed by the other preceptors on the Collection Fund in respect of the movements on the Collection Fund in the year. In 2020/21, there was a balance of cash owing from the other preceptors, but in 2021/22, there is money owing to the other preceptors as shown in note 25. For more details on the Collection Fund, please see pages 71 to 74.

The Collection Fund balances are shown in the following table.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Council's share of Council Tax debtors	523	574
Council's share of Business Rates' debtors	1,204	1,461
Other preceptors' share of Business Rates movement	6,132	0
Total Collection Fund balances	7,859	2,035

25. Analysis of Creditors

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Sundry Creditors	9,357	13,820
Collection Fund	815	2,507
Central Government	11,731	11,502
Section 106 Balances	22,841	26,012
Compensated Absences Accrual	196	196
Total Creditors	44,940	54,037

The Collection Fund balances relate to Council Tax and Business Rates. There are two elements. The first is the Council's share of payments from taxpayers in respect of 2022/23 that have been received before the end of 2021/22. The second is the balance of the cash that is owed to the other preceptors on the Collection Fund in respect of the movements on the Collection Fund in the year. In 2020/21, there was a balance of cash owing from the other preceptors, as shown in note 24, but in 2021/22, there is

money owing to the other preceptors, as shown in the table below. For more details on the Collection Fund, please see pages 71 to 74.

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The Collection Fund balances are shown in the following table.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Council's share of Council Tax receipts in advance	123	128
Other preceptors' share of Council Tax movement	468	992
Council's share of Business Rates' receipts in advance	224	453
Other preceptors' share of Business Rates movement	0	934
Total Collection Fund balances	815	2,507

The balances due to Central Government are shown in the following table.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
PAYE / NI / VAT	26	26
Housing Benefit Subsidy	559	614
NDR levy	2,913	2,613
NDR S31 Grants 2019/20	59	0
NDR S31 Grants 2020/21	7,741	8,198
NDR Transitional Payment Protection	433	51
Total Central Government balances	11,731	11,502

Section 106 balances relate to contributions made by developers as part of certain planning agreements. These sums are included as creditors because many contributions have time conditions within which expenditure must be made.

The section 106 balances are comprised of the following types of contribution.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Open Spaces / Recreation	12,915	15,728
Highways / Cycle Routes / Green Travel	3,613	3,490
Affordable Housing	1,670	1,817
Education & Skills' Development	189	595
Public Art	413	389
Community Facilities	3,967	3,864
Other	74	129
Total Section 106 balances	22,841	26,012

The major balances on the section 106 contributions relate to big housing developments at East Anton, Abbotswood, Picket Twenty and Picket Piece.

26. Provisions

The following table details the movement in the provisions.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Balance at start of year	3,151	2,110
Amounts charged to the provision	(593)	(1,362)
Increase / (decrease) in provision	(448)	1,066
Balance at end of year	2,110	1,814

ANNEX 3

The Council's share of backdated business rates appeals that are expected to be awarded in future years is £841,000 at the end of the year (2020/21 £2.110M). It is not possible to determine when appeals will be settled; therefore the whole balance is shown in current liabilities.

A new rating list was introduced by the Valuation Office Agency with effect from April 2017.

The provision in respect of outstanding appeals from the 2010 list has been prepared in a similar manner to previous years. The calculation is based on a weighted average of resolved appeals from that list, which is then extrapolated across the remaining appeals outstanding at 31st March 2022. £3.849M of the total provision relates to outstanding appeals against the 2010 list.

Alongside the new rating list, the Valuation Office introduced a new method for businesses to appeal against their rateable value from April 2017; this is known as 'Check, Challenge, Appeal'.

A similar weighted average approach has been used for calculating the provision for the 2017 ratings list. However, some key information is not available, including the number and value of cases which have reached the appeal stage with the Valuation Office. There is also uncertainty as to how many further challenges will be lodged before the list closes in 2023. For this reason, a risk factor of 100% has been applied to the weighted average calculation.

27. Trust Funds

The Council operates a number of trusts for civic purposes. The balances at the end of the year were £62,000 (2020/21 - £66,000). The most significant balance is in respect of the Romsey Walk and Pleasure Ground - £58,400 (2020/21 - £58,100).

28. Notes to the Cash Flow Statement

An analysis of items included in the Cash Flow Statement is shown in the following tables.

Net Cash inflow from Operating Activities includes:	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Interest received	407	448
Interest paid	(160)	(155)

Other Non-Cash items	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Movement in Bad Debt Allowance	391	132
Movement in provisions	(1,041)	(296)
Donated assets under s106 agreements	(3,971)	0
Other non-cash items	107	(109)
Other Non-Cash items	(4,514)	(273)

Other income / (payments) for financing activities	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Movement in Council Tax debtors	(104)	(51)
Movement in amounts owed to Council Tax preceptors	(540)	524
Movement in Business Rates debtors	(758)	(257)
Movement in amounts owed to Business Rates preceptors	(9,574)	7,066
Other income / (payments) for financing activities	(10,976)	7,282

29. Usable Reserves

The Council's usable reserves represent the level of funding the Council has at its disposal to allocate to future expenditure, subject to the requirement to retain prudent reserve levels for unforeseen future events.

The amounts making up the Council's usable reserves are summarised in the following table. More information on each reserve is given in the following paragraphs.

Reserve	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
General Fund Balance	2,604	2,604
Revenue & Earmarked Reserves	34,880	35,655
Capital Receipts Reserve	10,817	7,936
Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve	6,072	7,049
Total Usable Reserves	54,373	53,244

General Fund Balance

This is a contingency fund – money set aside for emergencies or to cover any unexpected costs that may occur during the year.

Revenue & Earmarked Reserves

Earmarked reserves are held for specific purposes for costs which will be incurred in future years.

A breakdown of the movement in Earmarked Reserves is shown in the following table.

	Balance as at 31/03/2020	Transfers In 2020/21	Transfers Out 2020/21	Balance as at 31/03/2021	Transfers In 2021/22	Transfers Out 2021/22	Balance as at 31/03/2022
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income Equalisation Reserve	300	0	0	300	0	0	300
Budget Equalisation Reserve	682	0	0	682	500	0	1,182
Investment Equalisation Reserve	250	0	0	250	0	0	250
Pension Equalisation Reserve	0	500	0	500	0	0	500
Collection Fund Equalisation Reserve	3,555	6,564	(864)	9,255	3,122	(7,872)	4,505
Capacity Building Reserve	256	0	(26)	230	150	(5)	375
Special Projects Reserve	245	0	(18)	227	80	(12)	295
New Homes' Bonus Reserve	6,400	3,561	(1,586)	8,375	2,568	(467)	10,476
Asset Management Plan	3,375	2,522	(2,675)	3,222	1,950	(2,102)	3,070
Chantry Centre Planned Maintenance Reserve	1,449	374	(598)	1,225	342	(86)	1,481
Budget Carry Forward Reserve	107	111	(94)	124	125	(111)	138
Borough Election Reserve	0	35	0	35	35	0	70
All Risks Self-Insurance Reserve	94	0	(1)	93	0	0	93
Business Support (Floods)	147	0	0	147	0	0	147
Local Development Framework Reserve	596	38	(60)	574	33	(59)	548
Developer contribution for future years' maintenance costs	5,272	1,855	(586)	6,541	1,423	(667)	7,297
Enterprise and Innovation Reserve	315	0	0	315	0	0	315
Valley Housing Ltd Reserve	250	0	0	250	0	0	250
Housing Reserve	446	301	(264)	483	680	(395)	768
Private Rented Sector Access Reserve	114	0	(71)	43	0	0	43
Rejuvenation Projects Reserve	0	1,258	(123)	1,135	1,281	(149)	2,267
COVID Grants Reserve	0	564	0	564	137	(28)	673
Environment Act Reserve	0	0	0	0	300	0	300
Other Earmarked Reserves	293	52	(35)	310	26	(24)	312
Total Earmarked Revenue Reserves	24,146	17,735	(7,001)	34,880	12,752	(11,977)	35,655

The property insurance policy has an excess of £5,000 per claim. The Council self-insures 'All Risks' items for which an earmarked reserve of £92,900 (2020/21 £93,000) is set aside. In the case of car loans, the risk of default or death of the borrower is on a self-insured basis.

Capital Receipts Reserve

The movement of the balance of the Capital Receipts Reserve reflects the transactions in the year in generating capital receipts and incurring capital expenditure. These transactions are summarised in the following table.

	2020/21		2021/22	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance at start of year		11,805		10,817
Capital Receipts				
Sale of Assets	18		66	
Right to Buy Receipts	567		1,057	
		585		1,123
Capital Expenditure				
Purchase of Assets	(557)		(2,896)	
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital Under Statute	(1,016)		(1,108)	
		(1,573)		(4,004)
Balance at end of year		10,817		7,936

ANNEX 3

Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve

The Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve holds the grants and contributions received towards capital projects for which the Council has met the conditions that would otherwise require payment of the monies, but which have yet to be applied to meet expenditure. The balance is restricted by grant terms as to the capital expenditure against which it can be applied.

The movement in the balance of the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve is shown in the following table.

	2020/21		2021/22	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance at start of year		4,956		6,072
Capital Grants Received:				
Disabled Facilities Grants	715		466	
Community Infrastructure Levy	696		737	
Capital Loan Repayment	75		4	
		1,486		1,207
Capital Expenditure				
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital Under Statute	(370)		(230)	
		(370)		(230)
Balance at end of year		6,072		7,049

30. Unusable Reserves

There are a number of unusable reserves that make up part of the Council's net worth. The balances on these accounts are calculated according to proper accounting practices but the balance cannot be used by the Council for future expenditure on delivering services.

The amounts making up the Council's unusable reserves are summarised in the following table. More information on each reserve is given in the following paragraphs. ANNEX 3

Reserve	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Revaluation Reserve	29,749	32,589
Capital Adjustment Account	220,293	230,921
Deferred Credits	7	7
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	(5,714)	(504)
Accumulated Absences Account	(196)	(196)
Pension Fund Reserve	(72,933)	(57,065)
Total Unusable Reserves	171,206	205,752

Revaluation Reserve

The balance on the Revaluation Reserve represents the unrealised gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant & Equipment. The balance is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

- revalued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost
- used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation
- disposed of and the gains realised
- reclassified as investment properties.

The reserve contains only revaluation gains accumulated since 1st April 2007, the date that the reserve was created. Accumulated gains arising before that date are consolidated into the balance of the Capital Adjustment Account.

	2020/21		2021/22	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance at start of year		21,638		29,749
Upward revaluations of assets in the year	8,572		3,596	
Downward revaluations of assets in the year	0		(183)	
Depreciation of previous years' revaluation gains	(461)		(573)	
		8,111		2,840
Balance at end of year		29,749		32,589

Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the purchase, subsequent expenditure, depreciation and impairment of assets compared with the financing of those assets under statutory provisions.

	2020/21		ANNEX 3 2021/22	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance at start of year		209,008		220,293
Transfer from Revaluation Reserve	461		573	
Revaluation gains / (losses) on Investment Property	4,816		5,187	
Assets purchased in the year	9,600		4,534	
Capital loan advanced in year	124		1,889	
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt	191		196	
Transfer from Capital Receipts Reserve	1,016		1,108	
Transfer from Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve	370		230	
		16,578		13,717
Disposal of assets	(13)		(4)	
Repayment of capital loan	(75)		(4)	
Impairment of capital loan	0		(5)	
Depreciation of non-current assets	(2,914)		(3,012)	
Amortisation of intangible assets	(7)		(12)	
Impairments	(898)		1,286	
Revenue expenditure funded from capital	(1,386)		(1,338)	
		(5,293)		(3,089)
Balance at end of year		220,293		230,921

Deferred Credits

This represents the balance of the remaining mortgages given by the Council that will become usable capital receipts when they are repaid.

Collection Fund Adjustment Account

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement shows the Council's share of the income generated from Council Tax and Business Rates in the year. However, statutory accounting arrangements require that any variances from budget cannot be treated as income or expenditure by the Council until later years. To ensure the correct accounting treatment for this, a transfer is made to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account for the movement in the surplus or deficit in the year.

This account shows the Council's share of the accumulated difference between the estimated and actual returns in the Collection Fund (see pages 71 to 74).

The surplus on the Council Tax part of the Collection Fund at 31st March 2022 was £2.541M, of which the Council's share is £263,000. The deficit in respect of business rates was £1.904M of which the Council's share was £762,000.

The Council is entitled to retain 100% of the business rates collected from Renewable Energy schemes within the Borough. However, any variance to the original budget cannot be treated as income until later years and is therefore transferred to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account. The amount retained at 31st March 2022 was £5,000 higher than the actual income from Renewable Energy Schemes and this will be returned from the General Fund in 2022/23.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Share of Council Tax Surplus b/f	219	209
Movement in the year	(10)	54
Share of Council Tax Surplus c/f	209	263
Share of Business Rates' Deficit b/f	(987)	(5,719)
Movement in the year	(4,732)	4,957
Share of Business Rates' Surplus / (Deficit) c/f	(5,719)	(762)
Renewable Energy Business Rates retained b/f	(3)	(204)
Movement in year	(201)	199
Renewable Energy Business Rates retained c/f	(204)	(5)
Balance at end of year	(5,714)	(504)

Accumulated Absences Account

This represents the reversal of the accrual for compensated absences (annual leave not taken at the year-end). The accrual is required under the Code but under regulations is not allowed to count as expenditure against the General Fund and the subsequent level of Council Tax.

Pension Fund Reserve

The Pension Fund Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for retirement benefits and for funding those benefits under statutory provisions.

The Council accounts for retirement benefits in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees; however, statutory arrangements require that benefits are financed as the Council makes contributions to the pension fund.

The debit balance on this reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall between the benefits earned by past and current employees of the Council and the resources set aside to meet them. Statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

The transactions relating to the Council's pension liability are shown in more detail in note 14.

31. Financial Instruments

Financial instruments are contractual arrangements that give rise to a financial asset in one entity and a financial liability in another. For the Council this primarily relates to financial assets in the form of investments and debtors and financial liabilities in the form of creditors.

During the year all investment funds were managed internally.

Financial Instrument Balances

The following categories of financial instrument are carried in the Balance Sheet.

	31st March 2021		ANNEX 13 31st March 2022	
	Current £'000	Long-Term £'000	Current £'000	Long-Term £'000
Financial Assets:				
<u>Investments</u>				
Fair Value through Profit or Loss	0	375	0	375
Amortised Cost	50,450	5,028	75,507	15,036
<u>Debtors</u>				
Amortised cost - Sundry Debtors	13,709	724	10,386	709
Amortised cost - Housing	63	0	63	0
Amortised cost - Car Leasing and Loans	52	0	61	0
Financial Liabilities:				
<u>Creditors</u>				
Amortised cost - Borrowings	(264)	(6,784)	(269)	(6,543)
Amortised cost - Sundry Creditors	(5,916)	0	(3,479)	0

Fair Value of Financial Instruments that are Measured at Fair Value through Profit and Loss

The Council has a shareholding in HCB Holding Ltd. The company was formed in July 2014 and has no established trading history. There are also no established companies with similar aims in the Council's area whose shares are traded and which might provide comparable market data. The Council has no intention to dispose of the shareholding. The 375 A Class Common Shares are measured at their cost of £1,000 per share (being the par value of £1 plus a premium of £999 per share) as a best estimate of fair value.

Fair Value of Financial Instruments that are not Measured at Fair Value

Except for the financial assets carried at fair value (described in the table above), all other financial assets and liabilities held by the Council are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost. Their fair value can be assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that take place over the remaining life of the instruments, using the following assumptions:

- For loans receivable prevailing benchmark market rates have been used to provide the fair value
- No early repayment or impairment is recognised
- Where an instrument has a maturity of less than 12 months or is a trade or other receivable, the fair value is taken to be the carrying amount or billed amount
- For loans from the PWLB, their prevailing market rates have been applied to provide the fair value under PWLB debt redemption procedures.

The fair values are calculated as follows:

Financial assets	31st March 2021		31st March 2022	
	Carrying Value	Fair Value	Carrying Value	Fair Value
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cash	5	5	5	5
Cash Equivalents	15,826	15,826	5,381	5,381
Deposits with banks and building societies	30,424	30,424	30,442	30,420
Short term Loans and Receivables	20,026	20,069	45,065	44,934
Long term Loans and Receivables	5,028	5,771	15,036	14,725
Total	71,309	72,095	95,929	95,465

The fair value is lower than the carrying amount because the Council's portfolio of investments includes a number of fixed rate loans where the interest rate receivable is lower than the rates available for similar loans at the Balance Sheet date. This shows a notional future loss (based on economic conditions at 31st March 2022) attributable to the commitment to receive interest below market rates.

Financial liabilities	31st March 2021		31st March 2022	
	Carrying Value	Fair Value	Carrying Value	Fair Value
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Borrowings - PWLB debt	(7,048)	(7,333)	(6,812)	(6,622)
Total	(7,048)	(7,333)	(6,812)	(6,622)

The fair value of the liabilities is lower than the carrying amount because the Council's loans are fixed rate loans where the interest rate payable is lower than the rates available for similar loans in the market at the Balance Sheet date. This shows a notional future gain (based on economic conditions at 31st March 2022) arising from a commitment to pay interest to lenders below current market rates.

It is considered that the carrying value is equal to the fair value for all other financial assets and liabilities not included in the table above.

The valuation basis adopted uses Level 2 Inputs – i.e. inputs other than quoted process that are observable for the financial instruments.

Items of income, expense, gains or losses

The gains and losses recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in relation to financial instruments measured at amortised cost are made up as follows:

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Interest received	407	448
Interest paid	(160)	(155)

32. Nature and Extent of Risks Arising From Financial Instruments

The Council's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks. The key risks are:

- credit risk – the possibility that other parties might fail to pay amounts due to the Council
- liquidity risk – the possibility that the Council might not have funds available to meet its commitments to make payments
- market risk – the possibility that financial loss might arise for the Council as a result of changes in such measures as interest rates

Overall procedures for managing risk

The Council's overall risk management programme focuses on the unpredictability of financial markets and seeks to minimise potential adverse effects on the resources available to fund services. Risk management is carried out by the treasury management team, under policies approved by the Council prior to the commencement of each financial year in the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy.

The Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy was approved by Council in February 2022 and is available on the Council's website.

Credit Risk

Treasury Investments

Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and building societies, as well as credit exposures to the Council's customers.

The risk is minimised through the policy of the Council to place deposits only with a limited number of institutions that meet strict criteria as defined in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy. The Council also had a policy through the majority of the year of limiting deposits with institutions to a maximum of £30M. In February 2022 this limit was reduced to £20M.

The Council's maximum exposure to credit risk in relation to its investments cannot be assessed generally as the risk of any financial institution failing to make interest payments or repay the principal sum will be specific to each individual institution. With regard to deposits with banks and building societies, the Council has no recent experience of defaults. Although a risk of irrecoverability applies to all of the Council's deposits, there was no evidence at 31st March 2022 that this was likely to crystallise and the credit impairment losses have been assessed as nil.

The following table summarises the credit risk of the Council's investment portfolio at 31st March 2022 by credit rating.

Credit rating	£'000s
AA-	30,048
A+	55,492
A	5,003
Shares in unlisted company	375
Total	90,918

Trade Receivables**ANNEX 3**

As per the requirements of the Code, Trade Receivables excludes balances arising from statutory functions (e.g. Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates) as they have not arisen from contractual trading activities.

Trade debtors are not subject to internal credit rating and are collectively assessed on the purposes of calculating expected credit losses using a provision matrix based on historical data.

The Council's maximum exposure to credit risk is shown on the following table.

	Amount at 31st March 2022	Historical Experience of Default	Historical Experience Adjusted for Market Conditions	Estimated Maximum Exposure to Default
	£'000	%	%	£'000
Long Term Debtors	709	0.00	0.00	0
Sundry Debtors	10,386	14.89	14.89	1,546
Housing Debtors	63	88.89	88.89	56
Other Debtors	61	29.51	29.51	18
Total	11,219			1,620

The Council does not allow credit for customers. The following table provides a breakdown of amounts past due but not impaired included in Sundry Debtors.

	31st March 2021 £'000	31st March 2022 £'000
Less than three months	6,962	1,584
Three months to one year	1,234	832
More than one year	780	733
Total	8,976	3,149

Liquidity Risk

The Council has a comprehensive cash flow management system that seeks to ensure that cash is available as needed and has ready access to borrowing from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). There is a minimal risk that the Council will not be able to meet its commitments under financial instruments.

The Council has loans from the PWLB on a repayment basis. The maturity analysis is as follows:

ANNEX 3

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Less than one year	235	240
Between one and five years	994	1,016
Between five and ten years	1,373	1,404
Between ten and fifteen years	1,535	1,570
Between fifteen and twenty years	1,716	1,755
Between twenty and twenty five years	1,165	799
Total	7,018	6,784

All trade and other payables are due to be paid in less than one year.

Market Risk

The Council is exposed to a small risk in terms of its exposure to interest rate movements on its deposits with banks and building societies. An interest rate rise / fall would result in the interest credited to the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services increasing / decreasing.

The Council does not generally invest in equity shares but does have a small shareholding in HCB Holding Ltd as detailed in note 31. The £375,000 shares are classified at fair value through profit and loss, meaning that all movements in the fair value of the shares will impact on gains and losses recognised in the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services.

Foreign Exchange Risk

The Council has no financial assets or liabilities denominated in foreign currencies and therefore has no exposure to loss arising from movements in exchange rates.

33. Related Party Transactions

The Council is required to disclose material transactions with related parties - bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the Council or to be controlled or influenced by the Council. Disclosure of these transactions allows readers to assess the extent to which the Council might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party's ability to bargain freely with the Council.

Central Government has effective control over the general operations of the Council – it is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Council operates, provides significant funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Council has with other parties. Grants received from Government departments are set out in more detail in note 9.

Members of the Council have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies. The amount paid to Councillors is disclosed in note 12. All Councillors, non-Council members and Heads of Service have confirmed that they have not had material transactions with the Council during the financial year.

During 2021/22 £324,500 (2020/21 £321,500) in grants was paid to voluntary organisations in which four Councillors were officially appointed. The grants were made with proper consideration of declarations of interest. The relevant Members did

not take part in any discussion or decision relating to the grants. The most significant of these grants are reported annually to Cabinet prior to the start of the financial year.

ANNEX 3

34. Group Accounts

On 30th April 2016, Valley Housing Limited, a Housing Development and Management Company which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Test Valley Borough Council was incorporated.

Group accounts have not been prepared for the year ended 31st March 2022 as the value of transactions between Test Valley Borough Council and Valley Housing Limited is not considered to be material.

35. Contingent Assets

As part of the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer Agreement (LSVT), the Council is entitled to receive income generated from Right-to-Buy sales of former Council properties. In 2021/22 the income generated from this source was £1.057M (2020/21 £567,000). The generation of this income is outside of the Council's control and is not quantifiable for future years.

36. Contingent Liabilities

Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT)

As part of the LSVT the Council was required to provide environmental warranties to both Testway Housing and their lenders for a period of 36 years (to expire 19th March 2036). There was no local knowledge of serious problems in this regard, and considering the likely costs involved in obtaining insurance cover, it is currently not considered to be cost effective to purchase insurance against this risk.

The Council also provided a guarantee to Testway Housing in respect of any pension deficit arising in respect of staff transferred from the Council to Testway Housing in the event that Testway Housing is wound up. 164 staff were transferred as part of LSVT.

Testway Housing has since merged with two other Housing Associations to form a new company – Aster Communities. At the time of the merger in 2011 the Council re-affirmed its commitment in respect of this guarantee. At that time the guarantee related to 63 staff (11 active members and 52 deferred pensioners).

There is no information to suggest that Aster Communities is not a going concern, neither is it possible to assess the potential deficit. As a result it is not considered appropriate to provide for any liability in this regard.

Municipal Mutual Insurance Ltd – Scheme of Arrangement

In 1992 Municipal Mutual Insurance Ltd. (MMI), which the Council and many other local authorities had insured with, experienced trading difficulties. The Company's creditors agreed a "Scheme of Arrangement" which allowed the Company to work towards a solvent run-off (of the company) until all outstanding claims were settled.

On 28th March 2012, the Supreme Court ruled the Employers' Liability Policy Trigger Litigation relating to mesothelioma claims which found against MMI. The judges ruled that the insurer who was on risk at the time of an employee's exposure to asbestos was liable to pay compensation for the employee's mesothelioma.

To date, the Council has paid two levies to the Scheme Administrator totalling £76,400, representing 25% of the maximum liability applicable to the Council; these costs were

shown in non-distributed costs in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. **ANNEX 3**

No indications have been given as to whether future levies will be necessary. The Council's maximum remaining liability is £228,000.

37. Events After the Balance Sheet Date

There are no events after the balance sheet date which would have a material impact on the accounts for 2021/22.

38. Going Concern

The going concern assumption in the Accounting Code of Practice is based on the expectation that a local authority's services will continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

Throughout the 2021/22 financial year, work was undertaken on a monthly basis to assess the impact of spending pressures and reductions in planned income levels caused by Covid-19. The overall impact was £392,000 lower than originally estimated due to some service income levels recovering more quickly than anticipated.

The Council's budget for 2022/23 reported to Council on 25th February 2022 includes all service income levels, with the exception of car parking income, at pre-pandemic levels. The budget was balanced and no further pandemic related adjustments are anticipated.

In a worst case scenario where the Council's finances are more severely impacted, then as a last resort, the Council has four equalisation reserves and the New Homes Bonus Reserve which are forecast to total £12.969M at the end of March 2023, providing the financial headroom to manage its affairs and resources effectively over the medium term.

A cash flow forecast has been undertaken, using all currently known or expected transactions that will take place over the next year to the end of March 2024. In summary, this forecast clearly establishes that:

- Over the going concern period the Council is predicted to have positive cash balances at all times.
- There is no expectation that external borrowing will be required.

Following the completion of the review of available reserves and the cash flow forecast for the next twelve months, the Council considers that there is no risk to the Council as a going concern.

39. Date Accounts Authorised for Issue

The pre-audited Statement of Accounts was authorised for issue by the Head of Finance & Revenues on 30th June 2022.

THE COLLECTION FUND**ANNEX 3**

This account reflects the statutory requirement for billing authorities to maintain a separate Collection Fund which shows the transactions of the billing authority in relation to the collection from taxpayers and distribution to local authorities and the government of Council Tax and Business Rates.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT				
	2020/21		2021/22	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>COUNCIL TAX</u>				
Opening Balance		2,043		1,988
Income Council Tax		88,815		94,693
Expenditure				
Hampshire County Council	64,127		67,949	
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service	3,443		3,544	
Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner	10,542		11,395	
Test Valley Borough Council	7,644		7,826	
Parishes	1,717		1,763	
Payments to preceptors in respect of previous surpluses	923		1,061	
Increase in Bad Debt Allowance	474		602	
Total Expenditure		88,870		94,140
Council Tax Surplus / (Deficit) For The Year		(55)		553
Closing Balance		1,988		2,541
<u>BUSINESS RATES</u>				
Opening Balance		(2,468)		(14,298)
Income Business Ratepayers		39,205		50,889
Expenditure				
Central Government	27,560		27,740	
Hampshire County Council	4,961		4,993	
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service	551		555	
Test Valley Borough Council	22,048		22,192	
Payments preceptors in respect of forecast deficit	(2,756)		(17,165)	
Increase/(reduction) in provision for backdated appeals	(2,603)		(741)	
Transitional Protection Payments due to / (from) Central Govt	473		82	
Increase in Bad Debt Allowance	400		259	
Cost of Collection Allowance	186		187	
Amount retained in respect of renewable energy schemes	215		393	
Total Expenditure		51,035		38,495
Business Rates' Surplus / (Deficit) For The Year		(11,830)		12,394
Closing Balance		(14,298)		(1,904)
COLLECTION FUND SUMMARY				
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year		(11,885)		12,947
Balance at the start of the year		(425)		(12,310)
Surplus / (Deficit) at the end of year		(12,310)		637

NOTES TO THE COLLECTION FUND**ANNEX 3**Business Rates

The starting point for the income from Business Ratepayers is the Rateable Value of each hereditament multiplied by the (national) Business Rating Multiplier for the year, which was 51.2p in 2021/22.

Net income is derived following adjustments in respect of:

- Transitional Relief
- Mandatory and Discretionary Relief in respect of charities and kindred organisations
- Small Business Relief
- Rural Rate Relief
- Supporting Small Businesses Reliefs
- Covid-19 reliefs for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure discount and
- Bad debts

The total non-domestic rateable value at the 31st March 2022 was £138,510,224.

The Collection Fund balance on the 31st March 2022 in respect of Non Domestic Rates (NDR) was a deficit of £1.904M which is included within the Balance Sheet. Amounts in respect of Test Valley Borough Council are contained within the reserves section of the Balance Sheet; amounts due from the other major preceptors are shown within debtors.

This deficit will be shared amongst the major preceptors on a fixed apportionment basis (Central government 50%, Test Valley Borough Council 40%, Hampshire County Council 9% and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority 1%) in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

The payments to the major preceptors in 2021/22 are shown in the following table.

Non Domestic Rates Collection Fund				
2020/21				2021/22
Total	Major Preceptors	Precept	Share of 2020/21 Forecast Deficit	Total
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000
26,182	Central Government	27,740	(8,582)	19,158
4,713	Hampshire County Council	4,993	(1,545)	3,448
523	Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service	555	(172)	383
20,946	Test Valley Borough Council	22,192	(6,866)	15,326
52,364	Total	55,480	(17,165)	38,315

Council Tax

The income from Council Tax is directly linked to the banding of properties based on their valuations. The number of chargeable dwellings in each valuation band was converted to an equivalent number of Band D dwellings, which was used to calculate the Council Tax base of 50,316 for 2021/22.

The Collection Fund balance on the 31st March 2022 in respect of Council Tax was a surplus of £2.541M which is included within the Balance Sheet. Amounts in respect of Test Valley

Borough Council are contained within the reserves section of the Balance Sheet; amounts due to the other major preceptors are shown within creditors. **ANNEX 3**

This surplus will be shared amongst the major preceptors in proportion to their respective precepts (Test Valley's share is 10.37% for 2021/22 and 10.35% for 2022/23) and will be included in the Council Tax calculations for 2022/23 and 2023/24.

The payments to the major preceptors in 2021/22 are shown in the following table.

Council Tax Collection Fund				
2020/21			2021/22	
	Major Preceptors	Precept	Share of 2020/21 Surplus	Total
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000
64,804	Hampshire County Council	67,949	778	68,727
3,480	Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service	3,544	42	3,586
10,652	Hampshire Police & Crime Commissioner	11,395	128	11,523
7,743	Test Valley Borough Council	7,826	113	7,939
86,679	Total	90,714	1,061	91,775

COUNCIL TAX BASE - ANALYSIS OF PROPERTIES

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BAND	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	TOTAL
Full Charge	0	1,323	4,932	10,345	8,084	6,957	4,286	3,247	453	39,627
10% Discount	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25% Discount	2	1,409	4,498	4,595	2,755	1,567	731	530	51	16,138
50% Discount	0	182	16	18	8	19	17	18	6	284
100% Exempt	0	17	40	58	45	36	17	13	1	227
50% Premium	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	3
100% Premium	0	4	2	0	1	1	0	3	0	11
200% Premium	0	3	4	5	2	1	2	1	0	18
Net Adjustment for Properties Charged at a Lower Band	3	24	45	(3)	(1)	(40)	10	(25)	(13)	0
Total Number of Properties	5	2,963	9,537	15,018	10,895	8,542	5,063	3,787	498	56,308
Chargeable Number of Properties	3	2,825	9,431	14,445	10,621	8,365	4,999	3,692	483	54,864
Equivalent Number of Properties after discounts, exemptions, premiums and disabled relief	3	2,375	8,269	13,239	9,889	7,931	4,795	3,543	466	50,509
Ratio to Band D	5/9	6/9	7/9	8/9	1	11/9	13/9	15/9	2	
Band D Equivalents	1	1,584	6,431	11,768	9,889	9,694	6,926	5,904	932	53,129
Provision for Council Tax Support										(3,129)
Provision for Bad Debts										(358)
Crown Contributions										674
Total Band D Equivalents										50,316

GLOSSARY OF TERMS**ANNEX 3**

Accounting Period	The period of time covered by the accounts, normally a period of twelve months, commencing on 1 st April for local authority accounts.
Accruals	This is the accounting concept that income and expenditure are recorded as they are earned or incurred, rather than when money is received or paid.
Actuarial Gains & Losses	Actuaries assess financial and non-financial information provided by the Council to project levels of future pension fund requirements. Changes in actuarial deficits or surpluses can arise leading to a loss or gain because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - events have not coincided with the actuarial assumptions made for the last valuation (experience gains and losses) - the actuarial assumptions have changed.
Assets	Items of worth which are measurable in terms of value.
Balances	The reserves of the Council, both revenue and capital, which represent the accumulated surplus of income over expenditure on any of the funds.
Business Rates	Businesses pay Business Rates instead of Council Tax. Each year, the Government sets the charge based on a fixed percentage of the business's rateable value, and the charge is collected by the Council. Since 1 st April 2013, the Council retains a proportion of the rates collected.
Capital Expenditure	Expenditure on the acquisition or improvement of tangible assets which yield benefits to the Council for more than one year.
Capital Receipts	Monies received from the sale of non-current assets, which may be used to finance new capital expenditure.
Cash and Cash Equivalents	Cash and deposits held in banks that are readily convertible into known amounts of money without penalty or time delays.
Collection Fund	This is a statutory fund separate from the main accounts of the Council. It records all income due from Council Tax and Business Rates. It shows all precepts and statutory payments to other bodies.
Contingent Assets	Future income owed to the Council arising from a past event for which the amounts cannot be accurately quantified at the balance sheet date.
Contingent Liabilities	Amounts potentially payable to individuals or organisations which may arise in the future but which at this time cannot be determined accurately.
Contingent Rent	A rental income that is based on performance. This could be as a % of turnover of net profit.
Creditors	Amounts owed by the Council for work done, goods received or services rendered within the accounting period, but for which payment was not made by the year end.
Current assets	Assets which may change in value on a day to day basis (e.g. stocks), or which are expected to be fully recovered within one year (e.g. short-term deposits with banks).
Current Service Cost	The increase in the present value of the pension scheme liabilities expected to arise from employee service in the current period.
Debtors	Amounts owed for work or services rendered by the Council within the financial year which were not paid by the year end.
Depreciated Replacement Cost	A valuation method used as a proxy for market value of assets of a specialised nature where no market exists to gauge fair value. It is based on the estimated cost to replace the asset less an allowance for the age of the asset being valued.

Depreciation	The measure of the wearing out, consumption, or other reduction in the useful economic life of a fixed asset.
Effective Interest Rate	The average rate of interest over the life of a loan. It takes into account known changes in interest rates over the period of a loan, e.g. discounted rates in early periods.
Expenditure	Amounts paid by the Council for goods received or services rendered of either a capital or revenue nature. This does not necessarily involve a cash payment since expenditure is deemed to have been incurred once the goods or services have been received even if they have not been paid for.
Fair Value	The value an asset or liability could reasonably be transferred for in an arm's length transaction with another party who is properly informed about that item.
Financial Instruments	These represent any item that will cause the Council to receive or pay money. This ranges from sundry debtors and creditors to cash investments. The only items that are excluded from this are Council Tax and Business Rates.
General Fund	This is the main revenue fund of the Council includes the net cost of all services financed by local taxpayers and government grants.
Heritage Assets	Assets held primarily for their historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities and maintained for their contribution to knowledge and culture.
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards are the guidelines within which the Council's accounts have to be prepared.
Impairment Allowance	An allowance that is made against income that is due to the Council that it is considered is unlikely to be recovered.
Impairment of Assets	The reduction of the value of an asset through either market price changes or reduction in the asset's ability to deliver services e.g. if affected by fire or flood. Impairments as a result of market price changes from previous years may be reversed as market conditions change.
Income	Amounts due to the Council for goods supplied or services rendered of either a capital or revenue nature. This does not necessarily involve cash being received since income is deemed to have been earned once the goods or services have been supplied even if cash has not been received.
Intangible Assets	Assets that have no physical form but which provide economic benefits to the Council. Examples include software licences (that last over one year) and rights to hold markets in Andover High Street.
Inventories	Stocks and work-in-progress are included under this heading.
Investment Property	Properties owned by the Council which are held solely for income generation purposes or for appreciation in sale value.
Leases	Where a rental is paid for the use of an asset for a specified period of time. Two forms of lease exist. Under a Finance Lease the asset is treated as the property of the lessee. Under an Operating Lease the asset remains the property of the lessor and the lease costs are a revenue expense of the Council.
Liabilities	Amounts due to individuals or organisations which will have to be paid at some time in the future. Current liabilities are usually payable within one year of the Balance Sheet date.
Minimum Revenue Provision	Amounts set aside as a statutory provision for the repayment of debt.

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Non-Current Assets	Assets which are owned by the Council which have a useful life of more than one year.
Past Service Cost	Discretionary benefits awarded on early retirement are treated as past service costs.
Precepts	The method by which an authority obtains the income it requires by making a levy on an appropriate billing authority. The billing authority (this Council) must then charge for the precepted amount. For example, the Council Tax bills raised by the Council include the amounts precepted by Hampshire County Council, Fire and Police Authorities and Parish Councils.
Present Value	The current estimated value of future assets or liabilities taking into account the estimated effects of the time value of money.
Property Plant and Equipment	Tangible assets which yield benefit to the Council for a period of more than one year. They can be further classified into:
Land and Buildings	Property assets held and occupied, used or consumed by the Council in the direct delivery of services for which it has either statutory or discretionary responsibility e.g. Council offices.
Vehicles and Equipment	Items of plant and machinery used by the Council in the delivery of services e.g. refuse vehicles, grounds maintenance equipment.
Community assets	Assets that the Council intends to hold in perpetuity, which have no determinate finite useful life and may have restrictions on their disposal e.g. parks, works of art.
Infrastructure assets	These are inalienable assets, the benefit of which is received only by their continued use e.g. cycle routes, footpaths.
Surplus assets	These are assets that are not being used to deliver services, but which do not meet the criteria to be classified as either investment properties or assets held for sale.
Asset under Construction	Assets that are not yet completed.
Provision	An amount set aside for expenditure in a future financial period as a result of an obligation arising from a past event. The obligation must be expected to result in a payment that can be reasonably estimated.
Reserves	
Usable	Amounts set aside for future purposes over which the Council has full discretion, subject to statutory regulations which require capital reserves to be used only to finance new capital expenditure.
Unusable	Amount included in the balance sheet that the Council is not able to apply to future expenditure.
Revenue Contributions to Capital	The method of financing capital expenditure directly from the General Fund.
Revenue Expenditure	Expenditure incurred on the day to day running of the Council. This mainly includes employee costs, general running expenses and contract payments.
Revenue Expenditure Funded From Capital Under Statute	Items of expenditure that are categorised as capital expenditure but do not generate new assets for the Council. The main examples of this are Disabled Facilities' Grants and grants to affordable housing projects.

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Annual Governance Statement 2021/22**1 Scope of responsibility**

- 1.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3 The Council has approved and adopted a local code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. A copy of the Local Code of Corporate Governance is on the Council's website at: <http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/local-codecorporate-governance>, or can be obtained from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services. This statement explains how the Council has complied, and continues to comply, with the principles underlying this code and also meets the requirements of regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement.

2 The purpose of the governance framework

- 2.1 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, value for money services.
- 2.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk at a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks occurring and the impact should they happen, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.
- 2.3 The governance framework that has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2022 is explained in the following section along with changes that have been implemented in the year. It will continue to be developed during the coming year.

3 The impact of Covid19 on the governance framework

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- 3.1 The Council's governance arrangements have continued to be impacted by the coronavirus pandemic during 2021/22. Response and Recovery Plans initially established at the onset of the pandemic during 2020/21 have been subject to regular review and update during the year and the Council has put in place and adapted robust and effective measures for managing these impacts including:
- Taking an active role in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum (LRF) contributing to the wider LRF response and recovery programmes.
 - Establishing clear roles and responsibilities with the Council's Cabinet who are the recovery sponsors and the Management Team meeting specifically as a response and recovery programme group to review and guide the delivery of the action plans derived from the strategic priorities set out in the recovery plan.
 - Continuing to support community response and recovery through funding and bringing together community partners on a regular basis.
 - Working with its strategic partners to support testing and vaccination centres which are now in operation within the borough.
 - Identifying priorities and work streams and fully assessing and regularly reviewing the impacts and mitigating actions.
 - Drawing upon some of the lessons learned throughout the pandemic, the Council has commissioned a New Ways of Working programme to support the Council's onward modernisation. The programme has utilised the experience gained from working more remotely and developed plans for working in a more agile way. Following a pilot phase the Council is embedding this new approach through three key work streams: people & culture, business infrastructure and innovation in service delivery.
- 3.2 The Council has continued to embed the practices learned throughout the pandemic and control measures have worked well throughout the waves of the virus. Forming part of the corporate risk register means that Management Team have been reviewing Covid19 impacts alongside other key strategic risks on a quarterly basis as part of the corporate dashboard. A lessons learned / project closure report for the recovery project is being produced as response arrangements are scaled down and/or embedded as part of business as usual activities. Wider more systemic / long term recovery issues which the council is not solely responsible for (e.g. economic recovery) are to be addressed through ongoing policy and strategy development.

4 The governance framework

- 4.1 The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the Council's governance arrangements are as follows:
- The Council has fulfilled the following key roles (now formally adopted as part of the Local Code of Governance):
 - To promote the well-being of the area and provide leadership to the community;
 - To ensure the provision of high quality services provided in-house, by private sector companies, (where the ability to influence exists), jointly with other Councils or agencies, or by the voluntary sector;

- To be accountable and provide stewardship for the use of public funds and resources;
 - To build a strong sense of community.
- 4.1.1 In fulfilling these roles the Council is committed to following the six core principles of good corporate governance identified in the CIPFA/SOLACE Guidance and how the Council is working towards achieving these principles is set out in the document “Principles of Good Governance”
- 4.2 A single strategic partnership for the Borough is in place called the Test Valley Partnership. It brings together the key partner agencies from across the public and voluntary and community sector. It meets twice a year and provides a place in which the key strategic issues facing the borough can be discussed, joint work developed and statutory duties met.
- 4.2.1 The Test Valley Partnership and its umbrella groups (community safety management group, community resilience forum and the newly established civilian military forum) all continued to meet throughout the pandemic. During 2021 the main partnership met on two occasions. The partnership has started to review its programme of work in-light of the pandemic and where evidence is demonstrating a focus is required.
- 4.2.2 A significant piece of work this year has been on mental health with the partnership finalising the process for signing up to the mental health concordat which requires an action plan to be developed and endorsed by all partners. The Community Resilience Forum has continued its work and met in 2021 to review how community resilience models developed within the pandemic could shape future planning which is also contributing to a wider Local Resilience Forum review.
- 4.3 The Council has a clear vision of its purpose and desired outcomes for the short, medium and long term. These are encapsulated in its Corporate Plan through a range of corporate and service strategies and through four areas of focus as part of the Council’s commitment to the Test Valley Partnership.
- 4.3.1 There has been considerable consultation and stakeholder involvement in the development and progression of these plans and strategies and they are made available to the public through a variety of means including the Council’s website and Test Valley News.
- 4.3.2 The Council has published a Corporate Plan for 2019 / 2023 “Growing Our Potential” which was approved by the Council on 10th April 2019. It has four main aims and an action plan detailing how these aims will be delivered. In developing the plan, previous priorities were reviewed, extensive consultation was undertaken with local people and elected Councillors whilst also considering external influences on the borough, such as government policy.
- 4.3.3 The Council has a longstanding strategic commitment to work with its communities collaboratively. At the centre of this is the democratic role elected councillors play in bringing communities together to ensure inclusivity when undertaking local action planning and priority setting. The Council’s Member and Community Development Group, chaired by the Leader of the Council, supports community councillors to engage more effectively with local residents and communities.

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- 4.3.4 This has enabled the Council to develop innovative practice such as being one of only three Local Authorities in the country to be part of the Innovation in Democracy Programme in 2019/20 in which a Citizens Assembly was held in Romsey focused on the priorities for the South of Town Centre Masterplan. The Council continues to build upon the experience gained from the Innovation in Democracy Programme.
- 4.3.5 In 2021 the Council's senior managers who form the Senior Managers Forum took part in a one-day workshop hosted by the Southern Policy Centre with contributions from a former government minister on how the Council could use deliberative engagement techniques as a way to ensure effective evidence-led engagement with residents and move beyond traditional survey models. This includes applying the principles of lived experience and deliberation as part of our approach to developing key policy areas such as the next corporate plan. In addition the Council is also piloting further deliberative engagement activities such as:
- Contributing to the Local Resilience Forum review of community resilience through a series of deliberative events to shape a future model of community resilience.
 - A youth engagement project in Andover
 - A commitment to three deliberative events as part of the development of the next corporate plan.
 - embedding deliberative community engagement as part of the consultation process for the 2023 Corporate Plan.
- 4.3.6 The Council formally reviews its progress and performance against its corporate priorities through an Annual Corporate Action Plan Report <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/corporate-plan-for-2019-to-2023> which is presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSCOM) and the Cabinet.
- 4.4 The Corporate Plan is supported by a performance management framework (including performance indicators) to measure progress. 2021 saw the introduction of a new Corporate Dashboard which brings top-line strategic information for the Council's Management Team to review each quarter and act as a catalyst for the onward Management Team work programme. The Dashboard applies the good governance principles and uses the framework developed by the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny (CFGS) of "anticipate, manage and adapt" to help structure discussion. The dashboard focuses on the following key areas:
- Finance
 - Emerging issues and hot topics (strategic oversight)
 - Organisational health – people
 - Democratic matters
 - Corporate Performance
 - Corporate Action plan delivery
 - Governance and Risk management
- 4.5 Members of OSCOM undertake task and finish panel reviews. Once an area for review has been identified, the lead member/chairman of the panel presents the draft scoping document for the review to the full committee for consideration.

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- 4.5.1 A full report is then subsequently presented to OSCOM once the review has been completed or reached an appropriate stage. This process has ensured more effective and focused reviews and a clear line of responsibility to the main committee. In addition, there are standing panels; the Audit Panel and the Budget Panel which meet regularly throughout the year and cover scrutiny of all the financial activities of the Council. The standing Panels report to OSCOM on a regular basis and bring any issues of concern to the attention of the Committee.
 - 4.6 The Council has in place a Medium Term Financial Strategy, updated annually, which supports the aims of the Corporate Plan. The Medium Term Financial Strategy has been materially affected by the impacts of the coronavirus, though most income and expenditure is returning to pre-pandemic levels. The greatest risk to the MTFS is the uncertainty surrounding the potential for a business rates re-set which could see a material reduction in a key income stream, the timing and extent of which is beyond the Council's control.
 - 4.7 The quality and value for money of services provided to users is measured through the Authority's performance management system. This includes the measurement and review of performance against national and local performance indicators and actions taken to address areas for improvement. Performance is monitored regularly throughout the year by Performance Boards and as part of the Corporate Dashboard process.
 - 4.8 The roles of the Cabinet, OSCOM, and other committees of the Council as well as specific roles assigned to the Leader, Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holders and senior officers of the Council are defined and documented within the Council's Constitution.
 - 4.8.1 The Leader undertook a Portfolio Holder review and update on 27th October 2021. The Constitution also clearly identifies the powers, duties and responsibilities delegated to the Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holders and Officers, and includes rules for how Council and committee meetings should operate and the relationship between Members and Officers.
 - 4.8.2 Arrangements have been put in place to reinstate physical Council and Committee meetings after the Government ended the ability to hold remote meeting in May 2021. This included incorporating Covid-19 protection measures, as appropriate, as guidance changed.
 - 4.8.3 Having regard to the benefits of remote meetings, the Council has responded to the Government's consultation/call for evidence on the subject. The Council has been able to continue to avail itself of the ability to conduct non-committee business remotely or in a hybrid fashion where appropriate.
 - 4.9 During 2021 the Council established a Strategy and Innovation Service to strengthen the Council's ability to develop and manage its corporate planning processes. In its first year of operation the Service led on key projects and programmes including the Council's approach to new ways of working.
 - 4.10 The conduct of Members and Officers is regulated by separate codes of conduct within the Council's Constitution. The Council's General Purposes Committee together with the General Purposes Employment Appeals and Ethics Sub-Committee promote high standards of conduct by Members and consider complaints made against Members.

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- 4.10.1 A comprehensive set of Human Resources policies ensures compliance with employment legislation and promotes good personnel practices. These include disciplinary and capability processes to deal with conduct or performance which is unacceptable. These policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and revised.
 - 4.11 The conduct of day to day Council business is regulated through policies and procedures such as Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The delegations to Members and Officers are kept continually under review and revised as appropriate.
 - 4.12 Elected members and all officers are aware of their obligations under equality legislation, as well as the standards of behaviour and language which are expected from representatives and employees of the Council. Ongoing training is provided for both Members and officers.
 - 4.12.1 Equality impact assessments are built into the Council's decision making process. The Council has reviewed its corporate equalities objectives, alongside its duties under the new gender pay gap publication requirements. The Council continues to deliver training on the Equality Act 2010 to new members of staff and to Members.
 - 4.12.2 As part of his Portfolio Review in October 2021 the Leader introduced a new area of Portfolio responsibility "Diversity and Inclusion". The responsibility for being the Council's lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion has been allocated to the Council's Management Team. The Council has published information that demonstrates compliance with the Equality Duty as defined by the Equality Act 2010 on its website.
<https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/equality---diversity/equalities>
 - 4.13 The Council has established Disability Focus Groups that contributed towards the development of the new Corporate Plan. The groups are helping the Council and its partners on an ongoing basis.
 - 4.14 The Council is a statutory partner with regards safeguarding its residents of all ages under both The Children Act 2004 and The Care Act 2015. The Council has in place a Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and this and the associated procedures are monitored regularly to ensure compliance with these duties. The Council also liaises with both the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board to ensure this.
 - 4.15 On a bi-annual basis the Council is required by the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership to complete the required Section 11 audit as a self-assessment of its position with regards its safeguarding duties. The last full audit which took place in 2020 was reviewed in 2021 and identified that the Council is compliant with Section 11 of the Children Act.
 - 4.15.1 On a bi-annual basis the Council is also required by the Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board to undertake an audit of its position with regards its safeguarding duties, the last undertaken in 2020 with the 2022 assessment in progress.

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- 4.16 The Council approved a Climate Emergency Action Plan in 2020 to identify the steps it will be taking to work towards achieving carbon neutrality. The ability to make progress on the actions has been affected by the challenges posed by Covid19. However, because of the circumstances created by the pandemic certain areas have progressed quicker than anticipated such as new ways of working. In other areas, evidence is being gathered to create greenhouse emissions and a decarbonisation plan for the Council's buildings.
- 4.17 The Council's approach to risk management is outlined in its Risk Management Strategy. Corporate and Service specific risks are reviewed on a quarterly basis by the Council's Service Performance Boards and progress in managing the corporate risk register is reported to OSCOM on an annual basis. Risk management also forms part of quarterly Corporate Dashboard discussions with the Council's Management Team which includes the review and update of corporate risks.
- 4.17.1 The Finance & Resources Portfolio Holder is the Council's Member Champion for risk management and risk management is embedded within the Council's processes e.g. reports to decision-making committees use a template which includes a section on risk assessment which must be completed before the report can be considered.
- 4.18 The requirement to achieve Nutrient Neutrality from new residential development, overnight accommodation and tourist attractions affects the Council's strategic priority to deliver housing.
- 4.18.1 Measures to secure the use of land to provide off-site mitigation solutions necessary to protect the internationally designated nature conservation sites in and around the Solent have included the purchase of nitrate credits from a third party which can be purchased from the Council directly through an approved mitigation framework. The Council is investigating the amount of nitrate credits arising from recent land purchases and how any credits could be used. Work has also continued with the Environment Agency, Southern Water and other partners to review permit limits at Wastewater Treatment Works serving the Borough.
- 4.19 The Council's OSCOM Audit Panel met three times in the year to undertake the core functions of an "audit committee". The terms of reference for the Audit Panel include:
Audit Activity
- To consider the Internal Audit Manager's annual report and opinion, and a summary of internal audit activity (actual and proposed) and the level of assurance it can give over the Council's corporate governance arrangements.
 - To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.
 - To consider reports dealing with the management and performance of the providers of internal audit services.
 - To consider a report from internal audit on agreed actions not implemented within a reasonable timescale.
 - To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance.
 - To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.
 - To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
 - To commission work from internal and external audit.

Regulatory Framework

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- To review any issue referred to it by the Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive, or any Council body.
 - To monitor the effective development and operation of corporate governance in the Council.
 - To monitor Council policies on whistleblowing and the anti-fraud, anti-corruption and anti-bribery strategies and the Council's complaints process.
 - To oversee the production of the authority's Annual Governance Statement and to recommend its adoption.
 - To consider the Council's arrangements for corporate governance and agreeing necessary actions to ensure compliance with best practice.
 - To consider the Council's compliance with its own and other published standards and controls.
- 4.19.1 At its meeting on 6th April 2022, Council resolved to establish an Audit Committee with effect from 18th May 2022. This will replace the arrangements that have been in place throughout the 2021/22 financial year and will be reported in more detail in the next Annual Governance Statement.
- 4.20 The Chief Executive is the Council's Head of Paid Service and has overall corporate management and operational responsibility for the way in which the Council delivers its services. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services is designated as the Council's Monitoring Officer and has responsibilities under section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 for ensuring that the Council complies with relevant laws and regulations and internal policies such as Contract Standing Orders. The Head of Finance and Revenues is designated as the Council's Section 151 Officer with responsibility for ensuring the "proper administration of financial affairs".
- 4.20.1 The Head of Finance and Revenues also has responsibility under section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 for reporting to the Council and the external auditor if the Council has made, or is about to make, expenditure which is unlawful.
- 4.20.2 These three statutory officers meet regularly throughout the year (plus as required on an ad hoc basis) to discuss significant corporate issues.
- 4.21 The CIPFA statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government requires the Chief Finance Officer to report directly to the Chief Executive and be a member of the 'Leadership Team', of equal status to other members. The Council does not strictly comply with this requirement in that the Head of Finance and Revenues reports to the Deputy Chief Executive. However, in practice, the Head of Finance and Revenues is able to report directly to the Chief Executive and Members as and when required, is a member of the Management Team, and is involved and consulted in all matters which have financial implications for the Council.
- 4.22 The Council's Constitution contains a Confidential Reporting Code for Employees which safeguards "whistle-blowers" who raise legitimate concerns about the Council's actions and specifies how their concerns should be addressed.

- 4.22.1 Financial Regulations require all staff to raise concerns about the use or misuse of Council resources with the Head of Finance and Revenues or Internal Audit who will carry out an independent investigation of the circumstances. Internal Audit also actively encourages staff to raise matters of concern through "Speak Up" campaigns. A form is available on the Council's intranet for staff to raise concerns (anonymously if desired) about the use of Council resources and this facility has been extended to the website so that members of the public can raise concerns in this area.
- 4.22.2 The Council also has a formal complaints procedure for members of the public to raise issues, e.g. where they are dissatisfied with the service they have received, and an annual report is prepared for OSCOM summarising these complaints and how they were resolved.
- 4.23 The Council has a detailed Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy which sets out the roles, responsibilities of officers and Members and actions to be taken when fraud or corruption is discovered. In addition, an Anti-Bribery Policy has been approved to address the requirements of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 4.24 The Democratic Services Manager is responsible for identifying and providing for Councillors' training needs. The Council has a cross-party Member and Community Development Group which is supported by officers from a range of services.
- 4.24.1 This Group has continued to work to promote an enhanced role for Councillors that focuses on them acting as a catalyst for change to encourage communities to reach their full potential. This work has brought together the needs and expectations of our communities in order to make balanced decisions, and has ensured a culture of democratic accountability is embraced throughout the Council.
- 4.24.2 The Group enables the Council to develop a programme of Councillor training and development that is shaped by the Councillors themselves, ensuring that training and development activities offered is tailored to individual Councillor needs as well as the needs of Councillors generally, the council and communities. This work has been shared with the Councillor Commission and has become a key part of the ongoing work that supports this national project.
- 4.24.3 All new Councillors are provided with induction training to assist them with understanding and successfully carrying out their different roles, with an ongoing programme of training and development provided on specific issues where appropriate e.g. planning, and to build key skills and knowledge.
- 4.24.4 All officers also receive induction training and appropriate professional and skills training and development identified, for instance, through annual performance discussions.
- 4.25 A People Strategy was produced in 2020/21 which shapes the cultural direction and people management practices for the future to enable the Council to achieve its ambitions over the next 3-5 years. Whilst being able to respond to the changing needs of local government and the borough's residents this forms part of the Council's Corporate Framework with close links to the Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 4.26 The Council has in place various channels of communication with the community and other stakeholders. The Council's Consultation Portal provides a single link to all our current 'live' consultations, giving residents the opportunity to get involved, as well as access to details of the feedback from previous consultations.

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4.26.1 There are a number of tools in place to enable the Council to hear the widest range of views from local communities, in a consistent way, as part of an evidence led approach to decision making. These include: ANNEX 3

- Statement of community involvement.
- Community Planning Toolkit.
- Specialist advice and support through Community Engagement Officers and policy Team.
- Equality objectives which set out how the Council will ensure an inclusive approach to consultation.

4.26.2 As the Council's place-based approach has grown, partnership websites such as Andover Vision and Romsey Future have been developed, where appropriate, due to the collaborative nature of the projects e.g. Romsey South of Town Centre. Consultation and project information has been posted to these websites with clear links back to relevant Council Services.

<https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/consultations>

4.26.3 Publications such as Test Valley News are sent to all households and the Council's website is an important source of information about the Council and its services. The Council's website has been designed to make it more accessible to residents and businesses of Test Valley and to make it easier to undertake transactions online. An External Communications Strategy has been produced to support the emerging Corporate Plan.

4.27 The Council has identified its key partnerships and promotes good governance in those. The Council's Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations contain specific sections on partnerships and identify officer responsibilities in relation to the management and involvement in partnerships. Protocols and agreements are put in place for the management of significant partnerships.

4.28 Covid19 Governance - The coronavirus pandemic and social distancing requirements have necessitated some interim amendments to processes and controls in response to an increase in remote working and access to meetings. These are being delivered in a controlled manner with appropriate advice to managers regarding the risk of error and fraud.

4.28.1 The crisis has required the Council to be innovative and flexible in releasing funds in a swift and controlled way. Interim processes have been put in place to maximise the benefits to residents and businesses. Crises like this will inevitably attract individuals who see the opportunity for fraud. All managers have been reminded of the risk of fraud and the various forms it may take. Interim processes are designed with this particular risk in mind.

5 Review of effectiveness

5.1 The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the senior managers within the Authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the annual report of the Internal Audit Manager, and also by comments made by the external auditor and other review agencies and inspectorates.

- 5.2 The effectiveness of the governance framework is maintained and reviewed through a number of mechanisms and processes:
- 5.2.1 Full Council is ultimately responsible for approving amendments to the Council's Constitution. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the Constitution which is undertaken at least annually to ensure that it is up to date with current legislation and best practice.
- 5.2.2 The Cabinet has responsibility for the day to day operation of the Council's business unless that business is delegated specifically to another committee (e.g. Planning, Licensing) and ensuring that governance arrangements and compliance is adequate for the conduct of that business.
- 5.2.3 As part of the Council's open and transparent approach, Overview and Scrutiny Committee has responsibility for scrutinising the decisions of the Cabinet and reviewing the Council's policies and functions and making recommendations to the Cabinet as appropriate.
- 5.2.4 The Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee and its Audit Panel takes responsibility for audit and risk management issues, reviewing the Council's work in these areas and monitoring the progress and performance of both Internal and External Audit.
- 5.2.5 The Council's General Purposes Committee together with the General Purposes Employment Appeals and Ethics Sub-Committee have the role of promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst Members and assisting them to observe the Authority's Code of Conduct. The work of the Sub-Committee is supported by the appointment of three Independent Persons and Parish representatives as required by the Localism Act 2011. The General Purposes Committee may receive reports as to the operation of the Code of Conduct. In addition, the General Purposes Employment Appeals and Ethics Sub-Committee will be required to determine complaints which are referred to it by the Monitoring Officer following investigation and direct or recommend any further action required consistent with the Localism Act 2011 and associated regulations.
- 5.2.6 The Council's Internal Audit team, located within the Finance & Revenues Service, carries out a continuous review of the Council's systems to provide independent assurance that the control environment is effective in achieving the Council's objectives. The team objectively examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of the control environment as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of the Authority's resources. The performance of the Internal Audit team is monitored by the Council's Audit Panel and Section 151 Officer. The Internal Audit Manager presents the Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Audit Plan to the Audit Panel and produces an Annual Report giving an opinion of the adequacy of the Council's systems of internal control.
- 5.3 A self-assessment of the internal audit function's conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) was carried out in March 2022. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards are a mandatory requirement, the objectives of which are to:
- define the nature of internal auditing within the UK public sector, o set basic principles for carrying out internal audit in the UK public sector,

- ANNEX 3
- establish a framework for providing internal audit services, which address to the organisation, leading to improved organisational processes and operations, and
 - establish the basis for evaluation of Internal Audit performance to drive improvement planning.
- 5.3.1 The self-assessment concluded that the function “generally” conforms to the standards.
- 5.3.2 There is evidence that the work the Internal Audit function has delivered is effective; especially around risk and performance. It contributes to and has influence in the Authority on these areas. It is a highly respected service that is engaged with the organisation and which provides ongoing support in key areas, as well as effective assurance on controls.
- 5.4 The Internal Audit Manager has provided substantial assurance in respect of the Council’s risk management, control and governance arrangements. “Substantial Assurance” means that systems in place are generally sound, but some best practice developmental areas have been identified to strengthen the Council’s governance arrangements. These form the basis of the action plan appended to this Statement.
- 5.5 As noted throughout this statement, the Council’s governance arrangements have been impacted during 2021/221 by the coronavirus pandemic and the need for Response and Recovery Plans to be adapted and implemented. Internal Audit have continued to monitor the governance arrangements relating to this response during 2021/22 and the adoption of impact assessments into business as usual.
- 5.6 The Council has been required to administer business rates, Test and Trace and other Covid-related grants and schemes within extremely short timescales, multiple times during 2021/22. Internal Audit conducted post-assurance reviews to determine eligibility compliance, whether there were any errors or fraudulent claims and if any money is to be recovered from fraudulent or incorrectly administered grants. These audits resulted in a substantial assurance opinion being given.
- 5.7 The Council is regularly audited by the External Auditor (Ernst and Young LLP) who independently examines the Council’s accounts and financial systems and who presents an [Annual Audit Report](#) to Members, the latest available covering the financial year 2020/21. This was a positive report with an unqualified opinion on the Council’s accounts, system of internal control and arrangements to achieve value for money.
- 5.8 The Covid19 pandemic has continued to have an unprecedented impact on the Council’s governance arrangements for 2021/22. These impacts have been evaluated, in line with government guidance and mitigation measures, and developed alongside the Council’s strategic partners and Local Resilience Forum.
- 5.9 The date for final publication of the Council’s Annual Accounts and Annual Governance Statement is 30th September 2022.

6 **Declaration**

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- 6.1 We have been advised on the implications of this review of the effectiveness of the governance framework and of any significant governance issues. A plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place as shown in the attached annex.

- 6.2 We propose over the coming year to take steps to address these matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed: **Signed:**

Leader of the Council

Chief Executive

Governance Actions for 2022-23

No significant governance issues have been identified. The following are best practice developmental areas to strengthen the Council's governance arrangements

Issue	Action to be Taken	Timescale	Lead Officer
Lessons learned: Learning any relevant lessons arising from high profile local authority governance failures (elsewhere in the country).	To develop in-house training session for senior managers on the lessons to be learnt.	31/03/23	Chief Executive
Member Learning & Development: Developing Member awareness around the key principles of good governance.	The key principles of good governance to be incorporated, as appropriate, into the Member Induction programme for 2023-24.	31/03/23	Head of Legal & Democratic and Democratic Services Manager
	To develop some form of performance information to be provided to Members through its Overview and Scrutiny function.	31/03/23	Head of Strategy & Innovation
Robustness of Council policies: Ensuring Council policies remain aligned to new and alternative ways of working.	Council policies to be reviewed and updated alongside the New Ways of Working programme to ensure they remain fit for purpose.	31/03/23	Head of Strategy & Innovation

<p>Strength of Audit Systems: Improving clarity between the roles of the Audit Panel and General Purposes Committee.</p>	<p>To consider current arrangements for Audit reporting in the light of the Council's external auditor's recommendation that further clarity is needed between the role of Audit Panel and General Purposes Committee & the recommendation that a separate Audit Committee be established.</p>	31/03/23	<p>Head of Legal & Democratic in consultation with Statutory Officers</p>
<p>Business Continuity Planning: The Council has a well-established approach to Business Continuity Planning which is primarily based on alternative office accommodation for its employees to relocate to. Although the current Business Continuity Plan remains valid the lessons learned from the pandemic and the move to more remote working means the BCP would benefit from review.</p>	<p>The Corporate Business Continuity Plan is being revisited and revised as part of a Corporate project. This to consider the new ways of working introduced in response to the pandemic.</p>	31/03/23	Deputy Chief Executive
	<p>To review and confirm those systems classed as "critical" for BCP purposes and carry out appropriate testing of these systems.</p>	31/03/23	Deputy Chief Executive

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ITEM 11 Report on the Confidential Reporting Code for Employees

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Recommended:

That the report of the Monitoring Officer on the Council's Confidential Reporting Code for Employees be received.

SUMMARY:

- This report updates members as to the content and use of the Council's Confidential Reporting Code for Employees.

1 Introduction

1.1 In accordance with its terms of reference, the Council's Audit Committee is to:

"Monitor council policies on whistleblowing and the anti-fraud and anti-corruption strategy and the council's complaints process."

1.2 This report provides members with an update as to the use of the Council's Confidential Reporting Code for Employees to enable them to carry out that monitoring function.

2 Background

2.1 One of the Council's 'whistleblowing' mechanisms is its Confidential Reporting Code for Employees.

2.2 The Confidential Reporting Code is set out in and forms part of the Council's Constitution and a copy of the Code is annexed to this report.

2.3 The Confidential Reporting Code is available to all employees and contractors and is aimed at giving those who wish to raise concerns the assurance that they may do so confidentially within the Council. The Code sets out the procedure for making a report, the process that will be followed and the safeguards which will be put in place.

2.4 The Confidential Reporting Code is one of the means by which employees or contractors may voice concerns on a confidential and protected basis.

2.5 The Code operates in addition to and alongside the Council's complaints procedures, Human Resources policies, Anti-Fraud Policy and grievance procedures.

2.6 Any change to the Council’s Confidential Reporting Code for Employees must be approved by full Council unless it falls into a category of change which may be effected by the Monitoring Officer subject to reporting the change to full Council.

2.7 Members are asked to note that no reports have been made under the Confidential Reporting Code for Employees in the last twelve months.

3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

3.1 Having procedures in place to enable a safe space for reporting any suspected wrongdoing or poor practice supports the Council’s corporate objectives of growing the potential of the Borough’s town centres, communities, people and the local environment.

4 Risk Management

4.1 No risks arise as a result of this report.

5 Resource Implications

5.1 There are no resource implications of this report.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 There are no legal implications of this report.

7 Equality Issues

7.1 No equality issues arise out of this report. Equality considerations will be taken into account as required on a case by case basis as and when reports are considered under the Confidential Reporting Code.

8 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

8.1 Members are requested to receive this report and note its content.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
Audit Committee Terms of Reference			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	1	File Ref:	N/A
(Portfolio: Democracy and Governance) Councillor I Jeffrey			
Officer:	Karen Dunn	Ext:	8401
Report to:	Audit Committee	Date:	27 March 2023

Part 5

Confidential Reporting Code for Employees

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[Safeguards](#)

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Confidential Reporting Code for Employees ^{ANNEX}

1. Preamble

- 1.1 Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within an organisation. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the organisation. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.
- 1.2 The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.
- 1.3 This policy document makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. *This Confidential Reporting policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns **within** the Council rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside.*
- 1.4 This policy applies to all employees and those contractors working for the Council on Council premises, for example, agency staff, builders, drivers, and suppliers.
- 1.5 These procedures are in addition to the Council's Complaints Procedure, and other statutory reporting procedures applying to some departments. You are responsible for making service contractors aware of the existence of these procedures.
- 1.6 This policy has been discussed with the relevant trade unions and professional organisations and has their support.

2. Aims and scope of this Policy

- 2.1 This policy aims to:
 - (a) encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practices;
 - (b) provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
 - (c) ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied; and
 - (d) reassure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made any disclosure in good faith.
- 2.2 There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to your own employment e.g. the Grievance and Resolution Policy and the Dignity at Work Policy. This policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:

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- (a) conduct which is an offence or a breach of law;
- (b) disclosures related to miscarriages of justice;
- (c) health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees;
- (d) damage to the environment ;
- (e) the unauthorised use of public funds;
- (f) possible fraud and corruption;
- (g) sexual or physical abuse of clients; or
- (h) other unethical conduct.

2.3 Thus, any serious concerns that you have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of Officers or Members of the Council or others acting on behalf of the Council can be reported under this policy. This may be about something that:

- (a) makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards you believe the Council subscribes to;
- (b) is against the Council's Standing Orders and policies;
- (c) falls below established standards of practice; or
- (d) amounts to improper conduct.

2.4 This policy does **not** replace the corporate Complaints Procedure.

3. **Safeguards**

Harassment or Victimisation

- 3.1 The Council is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of employees.
- 3.2 The Council recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true, you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you are providing a service.
- 3.3 The Council will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.
- 3.4 Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that already affect you.

4. **Confidentiality**

- 4.1 All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

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5. **Anonymous allegations**

- 5.1 This policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation whenever possible.
- 5.2 Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the Council.
- 5.3 In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:
 - (a) the seriousness of the issues raised;
 - (b) the credibility of the concern; and
 - (c) the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

6. **Untrue allegations**

- 6.1 If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

7. **How to raise a concern**

- 7.1 As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your immediate manager or their superior. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that management is involved, you should approach the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer, or Internal Audit.
- 7.2 Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Staff who wish to make a written report are invited to use the following format:
 - (a) the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates); and
 - (b) the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.
- 7.3 The earlier you express the concern the easier it is to take action.
- 7.4 Although you are not expected to prove beyond doubt the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for your concern.
- 7.5 Advice/guidance on how to pursue matters of concern may be obtained from the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance and Revenues, Human Resources Manager, Internal Audit Partnership Manager or Senior Auditor.
- 7.6 You may wish to consider discussing your concern with a colleague first and you may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of you who have had the same experience or concerns.
- 7.7 You may invite your trade union, professional association representative or a work colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised.

8. How the Council will respond

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- 8.1 The Council will respond to your concerns. Do not forget that testing out your concerns is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them.
- 8.2 Where appropriate, the matters raised may:
- (a) be investigated by management, internal audit, or through the disciplinary process;
 - (b) be referred to the police;
 - (c) be referred to the external auditor; or
 - (d) form the subject of an independent inquiry.
- 8.3 In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. The overriding principle which the Council will have in mind is the public interest. Concerns or allegations which fall within the scope of specific procedures (for example grievance and dignity at work issues) will normally be referred for consideration under those procedures.
- 8.4 Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.
- 8.5 Within 10 working days of a concern being raised, the Monitoring Officer will write to you:
- (a) acknowledging that the concern has been received;
 - (b) indicating how we propose to deal with the matter;
 - (c) giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
 - (d) telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made;
 - (e) supplying you with information on staff support mechanisms; and
 - (f) telling you whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.
- 8.6 The amount of contact between the officers considering the issues and you will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, the Council will seek further information from you.
- 8.7 Where any meeting is arranged, off-site if you so wish, you can be accompanied by a trade union, professional association representative or a work colleague.
- 8.8 The Council will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the Council will arrange for you to receive advice about the procedure.

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8.9 The Council accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, we will inform you of the outcome of any investigation.

9. **The Responsible Officer**

9.1 The Monitoring Officer has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. That officer maintains a record of concerns raised and the outcomes (but in a form which does not endanger your confidentiality) and will report as necessary to the Council.

10. **How the Matter can be taken further**

10.1 This policy is intended to provide you with an avenue within the Council to raise concerns. The Council hopes you will be satisfied with any action taken. If you are not, and if you feel it is right to take the matter outside the Council, the following are possible contact points:

- (a) the external auditor;
- (b) your trade union;
- (c) your local Citizens' Advice Bureau;
- (d) relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations;
- (e) a relevant voluntary organisation; or
- (f) the police.

10.2 If you do take the matter outside the Council, you should ensure that you do not disclose confidential information. Check with the contact point about that.