



DARLINGTON

Borough Council

Audit Committee Agenda

2.00 pm, Monday, 8 April 2024

Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington. DL1 5QT

Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To Approve the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on 22 January 2024 (Pages 3 - 6)
4. Ethical Governance and Member Standards - Update Report – Report of the Assistant Director, Law and Governance, and the Monitoring Officer (Pages 7 - 20)
5. Information Governance Programme Progress Report – Report of the Group Director of Operations (Pages 21 - 28)
6. ICT Strategy - Implementation Progress Report – Report of the Head of ICT Services – Xentrall Shared Services (Pages 29 - 32)
7. Audit Services - Audit Charter – Report of the Audit and Risk Manager (Pages 33 - 40)
8. Audit Services - Activity Report – Report of the Audit and Risk Manager (Pages 41 - 50)
9. Annual Grants Certification Report 2021/22 – Report of the Group Director of Operations (Pages 51 - 52)
10. Audit of Accounts 2021/22 – Report of the Group Director of Operations (Pages 53 - 216)

11. Annual Governance Statement – Report of the Chief Executive (Pages 217 - 258)
12. Audit of Accounts 2022/23 – Verbal Update from representatives of Ernst and Young
13. Accounting Policies to be applied to the 2023/24 Financial Statements – Report of the Group Director of Operations (Pages 259 - 284)
14. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting.
15. Questions



Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Wednesday, 27 March 2024

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

Councillors Baker, Durham, Garner, Henderson, Keir and McGill.

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Shirley Wright, Democratic Manager, Operations Group, during normal office hours 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Fridays E-Mail : shirley.wright@darlington.gov.uk or telephone 01325 405998

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Monday, 22 January 2024

PRESENT – Councillors Henderson (Chair), Baker, Durham, Garner, Keir and McGill

APOLOGIES –

ABSENT –

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Porter, Caroline Mulley, Ernst and Young LLB, Gavin Baker and Campbell Dearden, Mazars.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Brett Nielsen (Assistant Director Resources), Judith Murray (Finance Manager), Lee Downey (Complaints and Information Governance Manager), Andrew Barber (Audit and Risk Manager, Stockton Borough Council), Shirley Wright (Democratic Manager) and Olivia Hugill (Democratic Officer)

A22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

A23 MINUTES

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the Audit Committee held on 27 September 2023

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 27 September be approved as a correct record.

A24 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021/22 AND 2022/23

The representative of Ernst and Young LLP (EY) gave Members an update on the current position in relation to the Annual Statement of Accounts 2021/22 and 2022/23.

As previously reported to this Committee, although the external auditors had not been in a position to deliver the audit by the statutory deadline due to national issue, it was hoped that the accounts would be completed by the end of January 2024 with the Value for Money (VFM) 2022/23 being completed and reported to this Committee as soon as possible

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

A25 FINAL ACCOUNTS TIMETABLE FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2024

The Group Director of Operations submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with the Final Accounts Closedown Timetable for 2023/24.

It was reported that under the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2022, it was the responsibility of the Group Director of Operations to sign and certify the unaudited

Statement of Accounts (SoA) 2023/24 by no later than 31 May 2024 and it was also the responsibility of the Audit Committee to approve the audited set of accounts on, or before, 30 September 2024.

The final accounts timetable served as a tool for the effective management and monitoring of the process of closing the Council's accounts.

The Group Director of Operations reported that the timetable was compiled annually by the Finance Team with input from service areas to ensure that deadlines were achievable and would lead to completion of an SoA for signing by the Section 151 Officer by the statutory deadline with less disruption to the normal work schedule of the Council. The achievement of the dates in the timetable throughout the period was closely monitored by the Finance manager to ensure the agreed timetable would be achieved and to identify any improvements which could be made to the process.

RESOLVED – That the key dates in the Final Accounts Timetable for 2023/24 be noted.

A26 HALF YEARLY RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT 2023 2024

The Chief Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) updating Members on the approach to and outcomes from the Council's Risk Management processes.

It was reported that Risk Management was an essential part of effective and efficient management and planning and it strengthened the ability of the Council to achieve its objectives and enhance the value of the services provided. It was also an important element in demonstrating continuous improvement as well as being part of the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance which reflected the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy/Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (CIPFA/SOLACE) Framework of Corporate Governance.

It was also reported that positive progress continued to be made within the Authority regarding the management of key strategic risks and with the work undertaken by officers to manage operational risks.

Members questioned the Officers in relation to a number of the risks highlighted in the Strategic Risk Register and discussion ensued on the continuous process during the year by both Corporate and Departmental Management Teams to review existing and include any emerging or potential risks on the Strategic Risk Register.

RESOLVED – That the Mid Year Risk Management report 2023/24 be noted.

A27 AUDIT SERVICES ACTIVITY REPORT

The Audit and Risk Manager submitted a report (previously circulated) providing Members with a progress report of activity and proposed activity for the next period.

The submitted report outlined progress to date on audit assignment work, consultancy/contingency activity.

It was reported that the report should be considered in the context of fulfilling the function to monitor the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control environment and the Internal Audit Service provided.

The submitted report was split into three sections, the first provided Members with feedback on the management of the risks on the corporate risk register, the second gave a breakdown of the audit results against set of key governance process and the third looked at service areas and provided feedback on the audit work undertaken in the previous quarter and a summary of the work planned to be undertaken.

Members asked the Audit and Risk Manager a number of questions in relation to the information provided within the submitted report.

RESOLVED – That the activity and results be noted.

A28 PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REPORT 2024-25

The Group Director of Operations submitted a report (previously circulated) for Members of this Audit Committee to review and scrutinise the Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2024/25 to 2026/27 relating to capital expenditure and Treasury Management activity; a policy statement relating to the Minimum Revenue Provision; the authorised limit; and the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25, which includes the Annual Investment Strategy for 2024/25, prior to approval and adoption by Cabinet and Council.

The submitted report outlined the Council's Prudential Indicators for 2024/25- 2026/27 and set out the expected treasury operations for this period and it was reported that the Council's capital expenditure plans, Treasury Management and Prudential Borrowing activities indicated that they were within the statutory framework and consistent with the relevant codes of practice; prudent, affordable and sustainable; and were an integral part of the Council's Revenue and Capital Medium Term Financial Plans.

The submitted report also included a mid-year Treasury Management progress report to update members on the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and whether the treasury function was meeting the strategy or whether any policies required revision.

It was reported that the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 will cover two main areas, Capital Issues and Treasury Management Issues and a summary of the key prudential indicators and limits were also contained within the submitted report; and these elements covered the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the CIPFA Prudential Code, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Guidance, the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and the MHCLG Investment Guidance.

It was also highlighted that the CIPFA Prudential code requires the responsible officer to ensure that Members with responsibility for treasury management receive adequate training in treasury management and training was undertaken by a number of Members during a session held in March 2023 with a further session being held in January 2024.

Discussion ensued on the role of Link Group Treasury Solutions, as the Council's external

Treasury Management Advisers and the current situation in relation to the property fund investments, particularly in relation to Lothbury.

It was reported that, in line with previously agreed delegations, the Treasury Management Strategy gave Officers flexibility to manage the day to day operations of the investments, including the property funds to maximise returns for the Council and that Officers would continue to use this delegation to manage its options regarding Lothbury and report back to Members as, and when required.

RESOLVED - That this Audit Committee is satisfied with the Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 to 2026/27, the Minimum Revenue Provision statement, the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 to 2026/27 and the Annual Investment Strategy 2024/25, as presented in the submitted report, and that the report be forwarded to Cabinet for its onward referral to Council for consideration.

**AUDIT COMMITTEE
8 APRIL 2024**

ETHICAL GOVERNANCE AND MEMBER STANDARDS – UPDATE REPORT

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To update members on issues relevant to member standards and ethical governance.

Summary

2. The report gives members an update of information about issues relevant to member standards since matters were reported to the Committee in September 2023.
3. Also set out in the report are a number of datasets of ethical indicators to assist in monitoring the ethical health of the Council. By reviewing these indicators it is hoped to be able to identify any unusual or significant trends or changes in the volume of data recorded for the relevant period that might provide an alert to any deterioration in the ethical health of the authority.
4. Commentary is included for some data sets to give analysis and explanation for some of the more notable variations. There are no particular issues of concern that have been identified from reviewing the data.

Recommendation

5. Members are asked to note the information presented and to comment as appropriate.

Reason

6. By having information of this nature:
 - (a) Members will be assisted to perform their role.
 - (b) Members will be able to get a better picture of the ethical health of the authority.

**Luke Swinhoe
Assistant Director, Law and Governance
Monitoring officer**

Background Papers

None – save as mentioned in the text

Luke Swinhoe: Extension 5490

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no specific issues which relate to crime and disorder
Health and Well Being	There is no direct health and wellbeing impact
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There is no carbon impact
Diversity	There is no specific diversity impact
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not affect the budget or policy framework
Key Decision	This is not an executive report
Urgent Decision	This is not an executive report
Council Plan	There is no specific relevance to the strategy beyond a reflection on the Council's ethical governance arrangements
Efficiency	There is no direct impact
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Update on matters relevant to Ethical Governance and Member Standards

Sensitive Interests

7. The Localism Act makes provision ([Localism Act 2011 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk) for a member to ask the Monitoring Officer to withhold details of a pecuniary interest, if disclosure could lead to the member or a connected person being subject to violence or intimidation. In such cases details are not included on the register of interests or require to be disclosed at a meeting, but the requirements about non-participation will still apply.
8. On the 18 March 2024, Mr Simon Hoare, the Local Government Minister wrote a letter to local authority Chief Executives encouraging monitoring officers to look sympathetically at accommodating requests for the withholding of home addresses the register of interests where there are legitimate concerns of violence or intimidation. Details have been circulated to all members of Council.
9. Reference to the letter: [Withholding details of councillors' sensitive interests and home addresses: letter to local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Local Government Association

10. It may be appropriate to reference the LGA's work on civility in public life. A range of documentation has been produced by the LGA to support members to stay safe and to address harassment, abuse and intimidation. [Handling abuse and intimidation | Local Government Association](#)

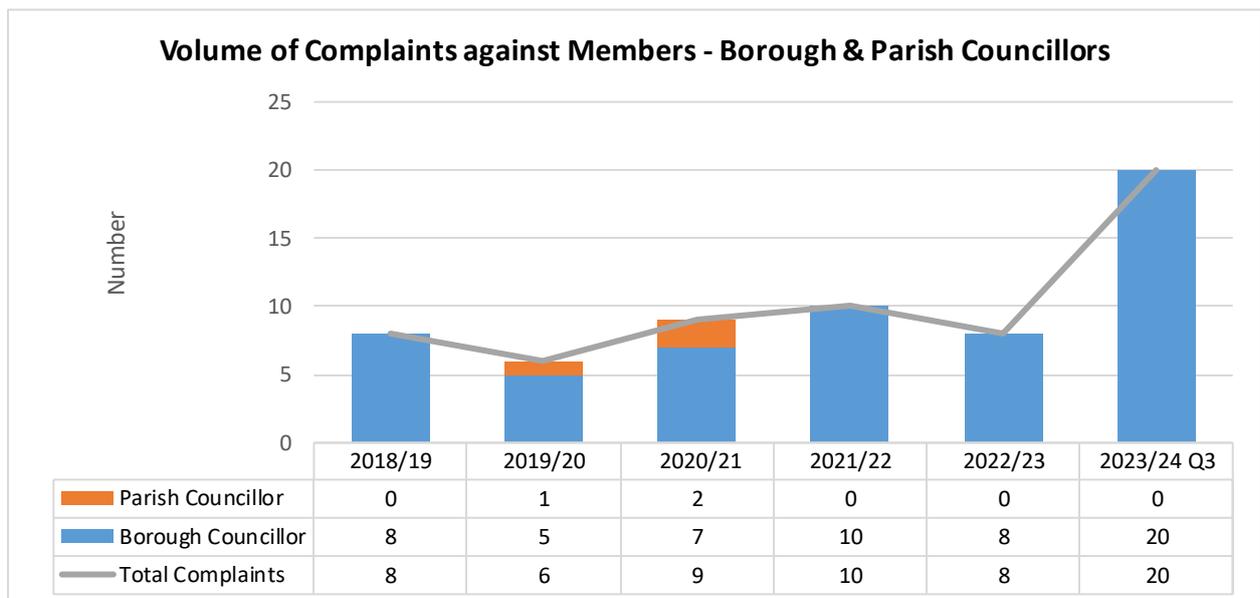
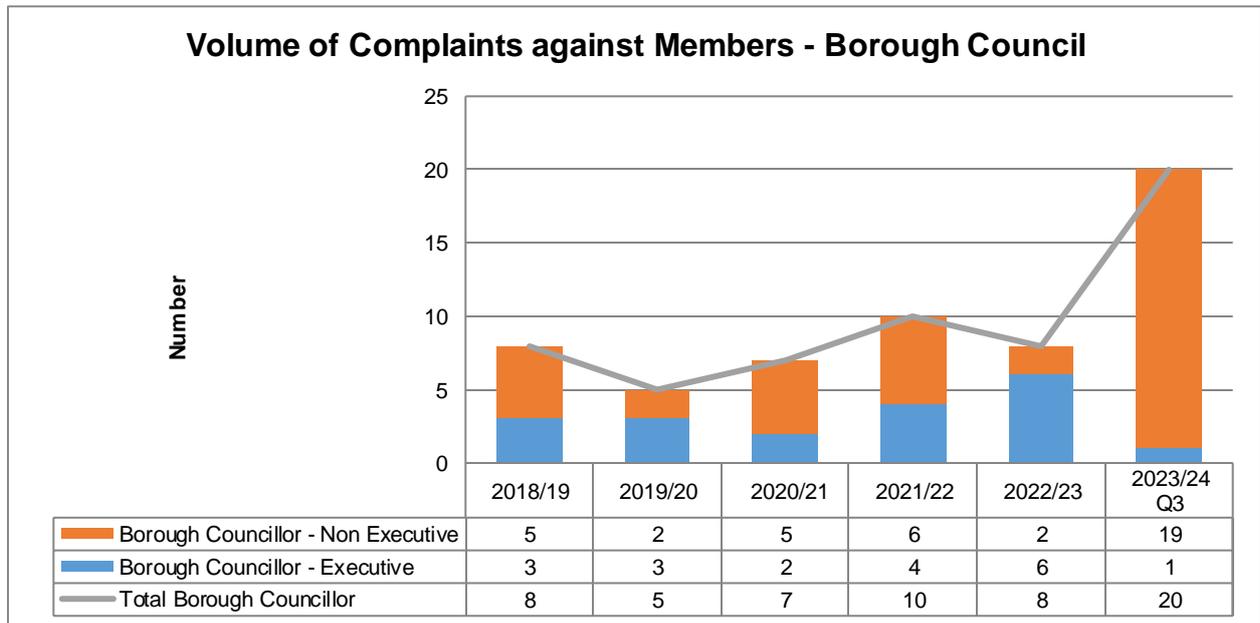
Committee on Standards in Public Life

11. The Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) advises the Prime Minister, national and local government about ethical standards in public life in England. It monitors, conducts broad inquiries and reports on issues relating to the standards of conduct of all public office holders.
12. The work of the CSPL is reviewed to see if there is anything that could be of relevance to this committee. There is nothing specific about local government at this time, but Members may be interested to see the wider recent work of the CSPL – which can be viewed from the following link [Committee on Standards in Public Life - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Ethical Indicators

13. Set out in **Appendix 1** are a range of data sets that it is hoped will assist in monitoring the ethical health of the Council. By reviewing the indicators, it will be possible to identify any unusual or significant changes in the volume of data recorded for the relevant period that might provide an alert to any deterioration in the ethical health of the authority.
14. Member's observations about this information are invited.

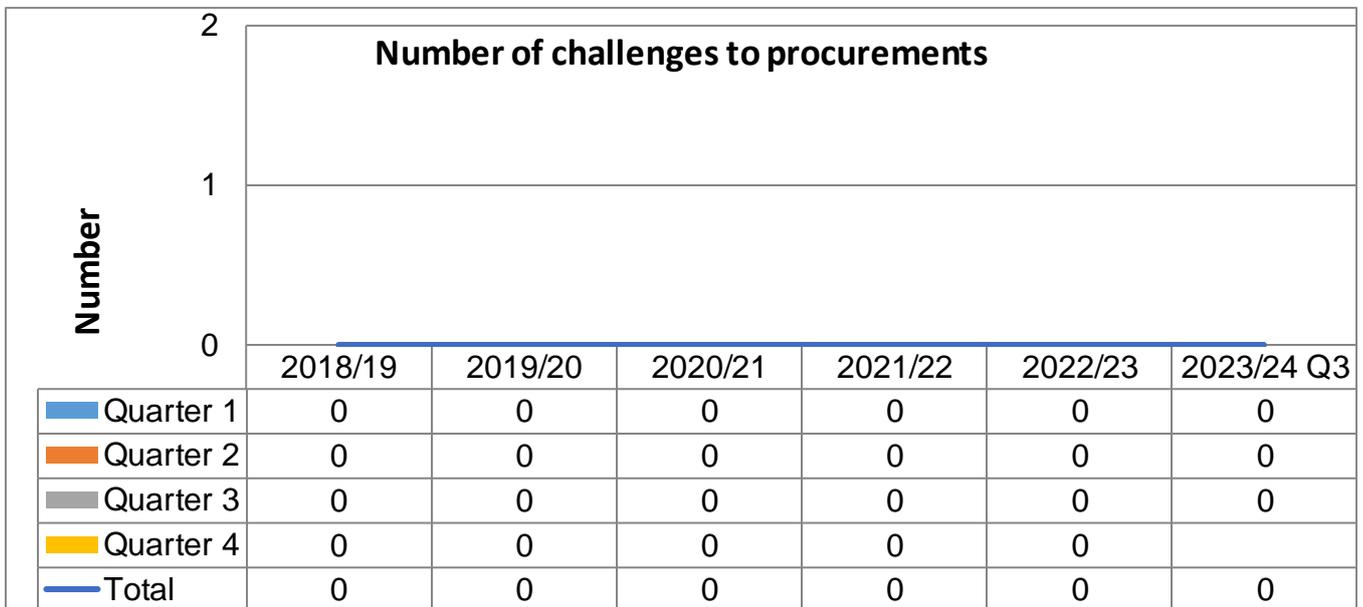
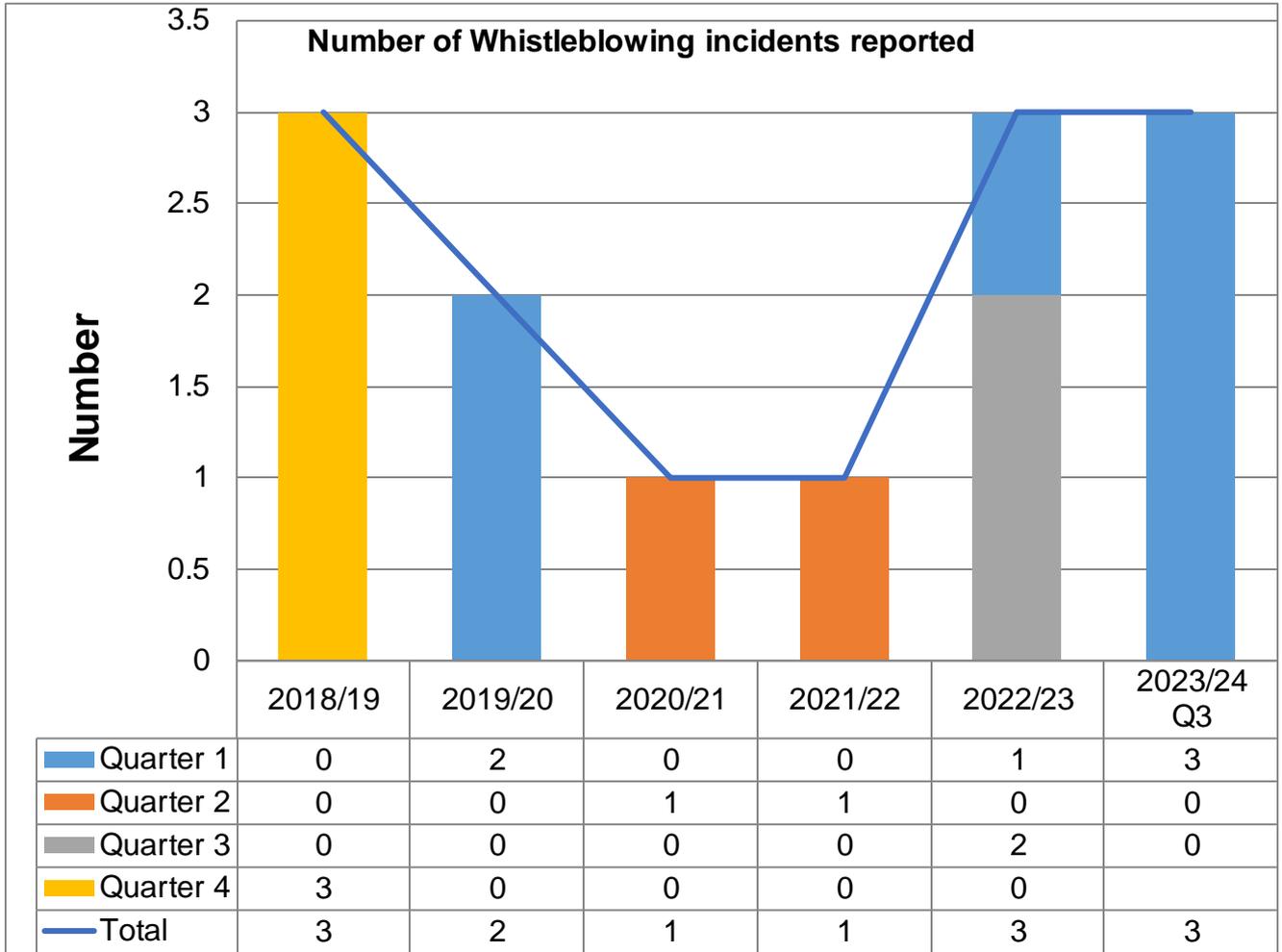
Member Complaints

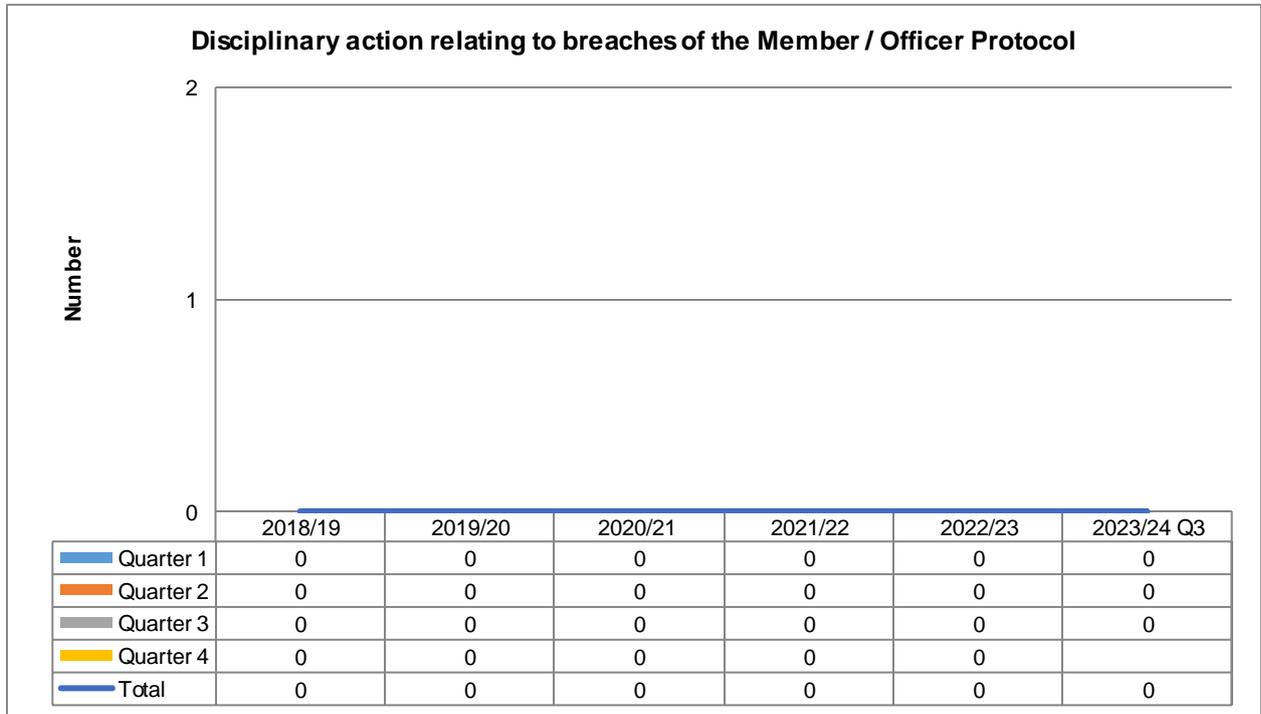
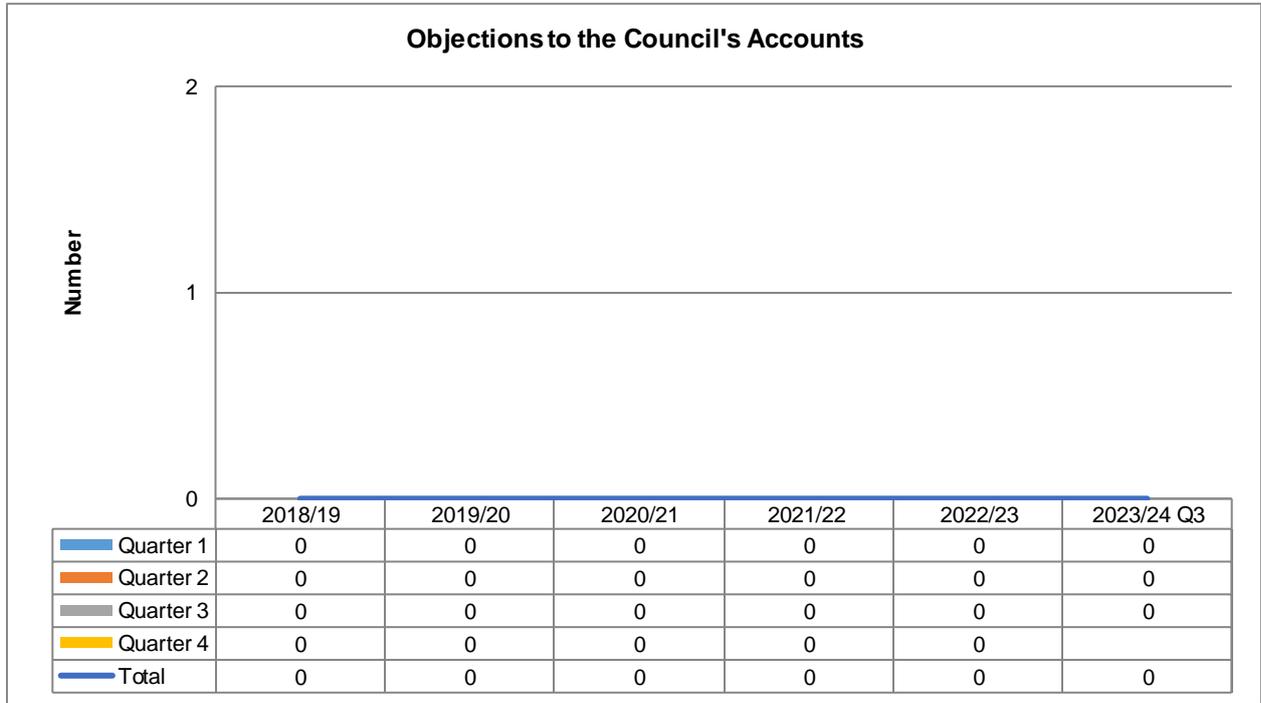


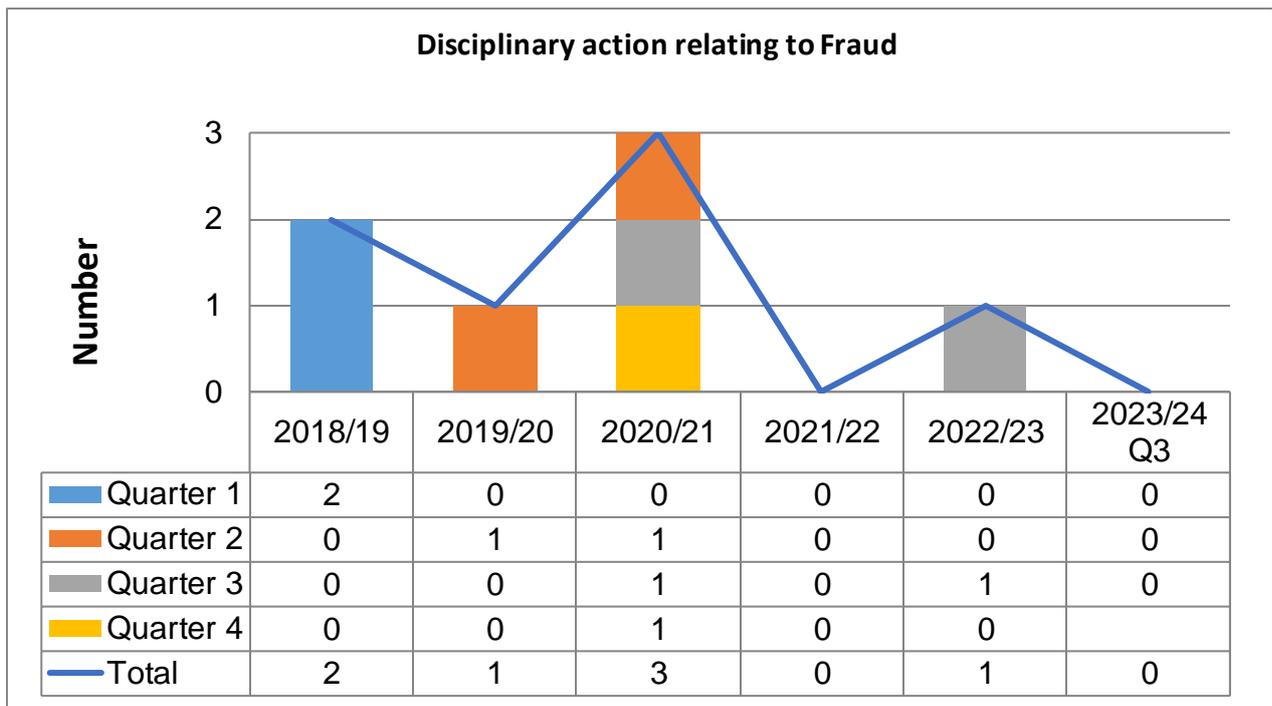
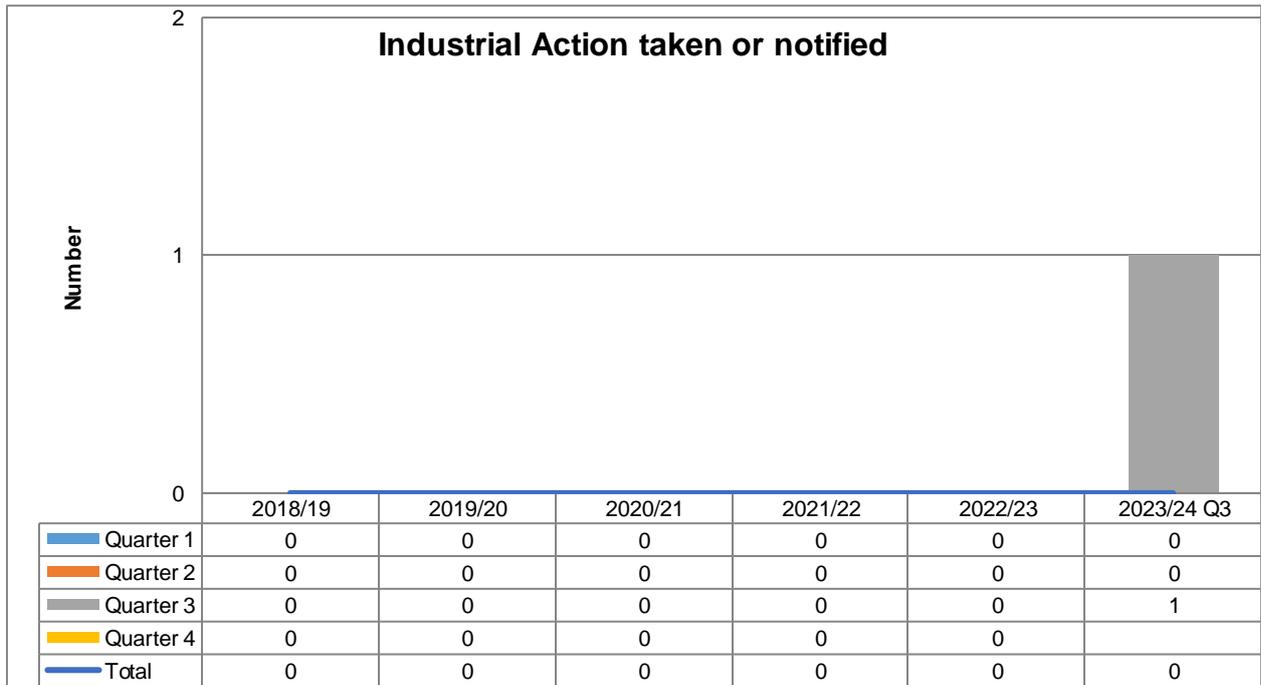
Comments

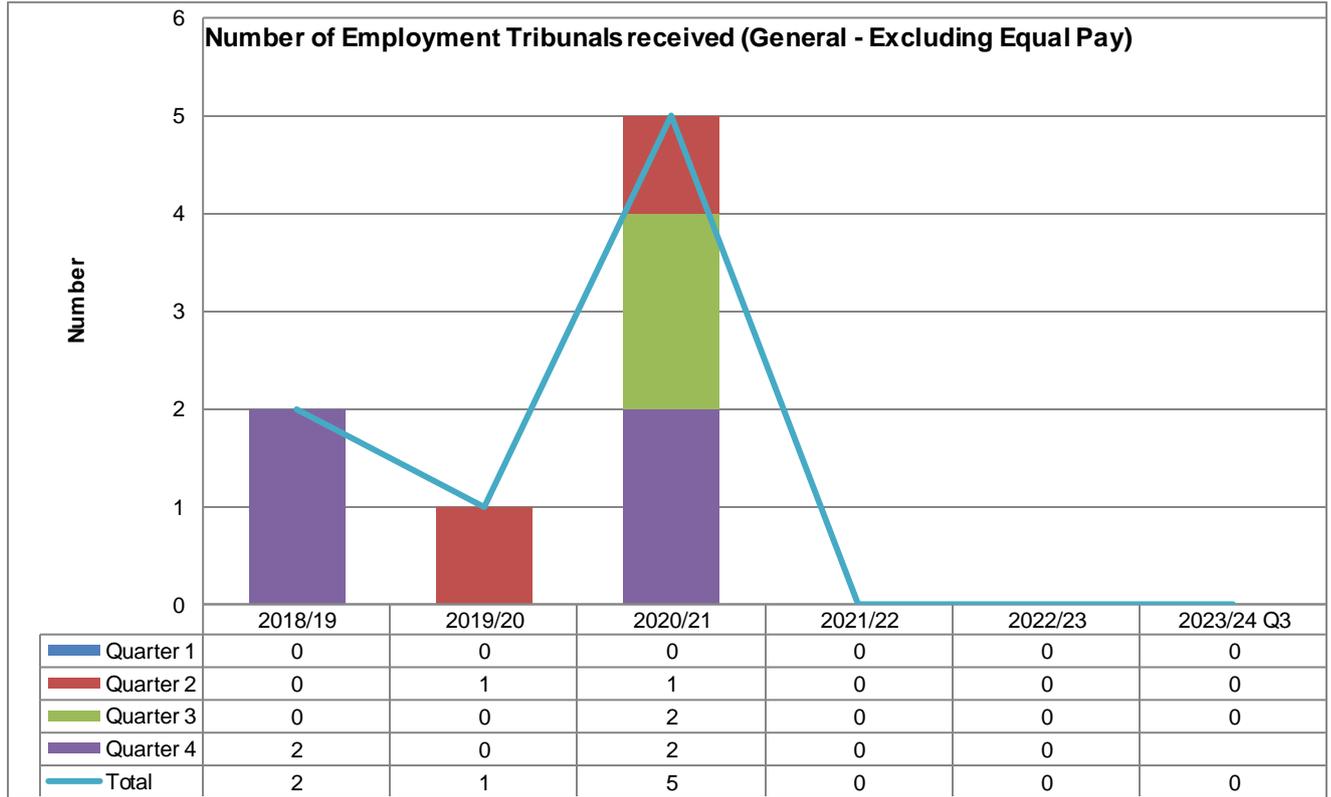
There has been a rise in the number of complaints (although the complaints made against executive/cabinet members has fallen) as seen in data for 2023/24 so far. The overall number of complaints is still low given numbers of members and the responsibilities they discharge. From considering the types of complaint and issues raised, it is difficult to give a definitive view for the increase. There can be spikes in complaints caused by a particular issue raised by a number of complainants or a complainant making the same complaint against a number of Members which can disproportionately affect the overall total.

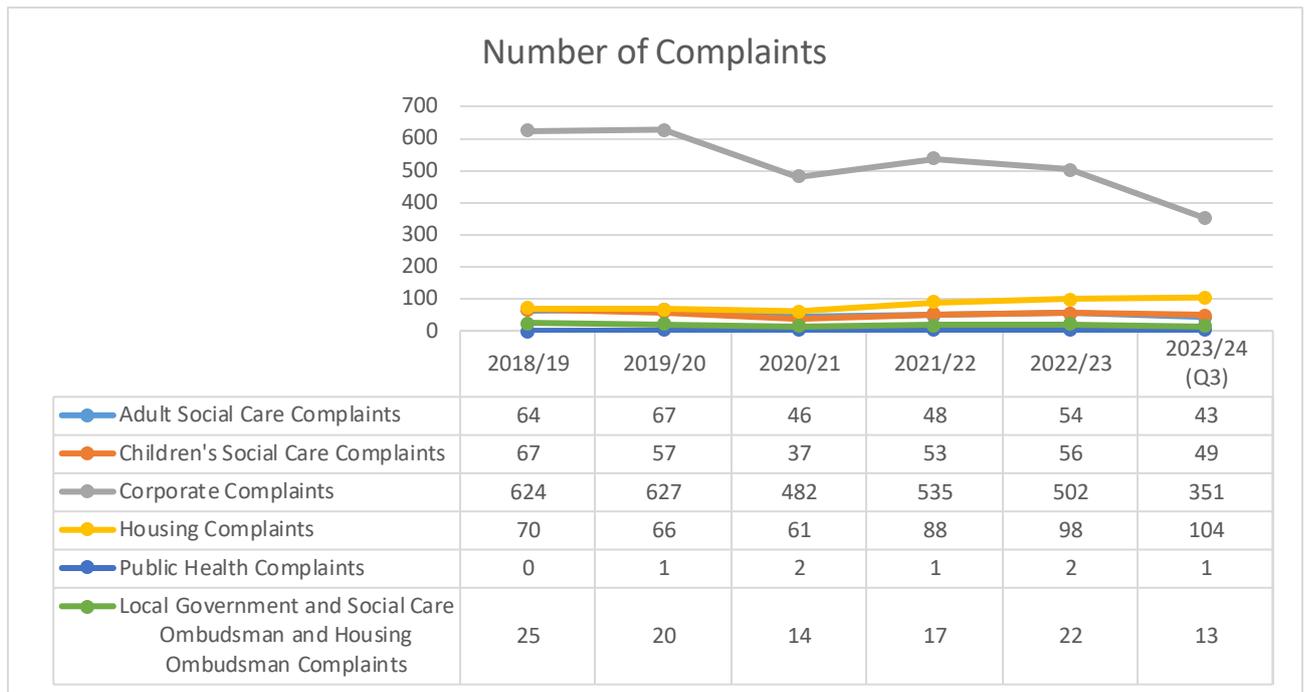
Further training on the Code of Conduct is planned this year.











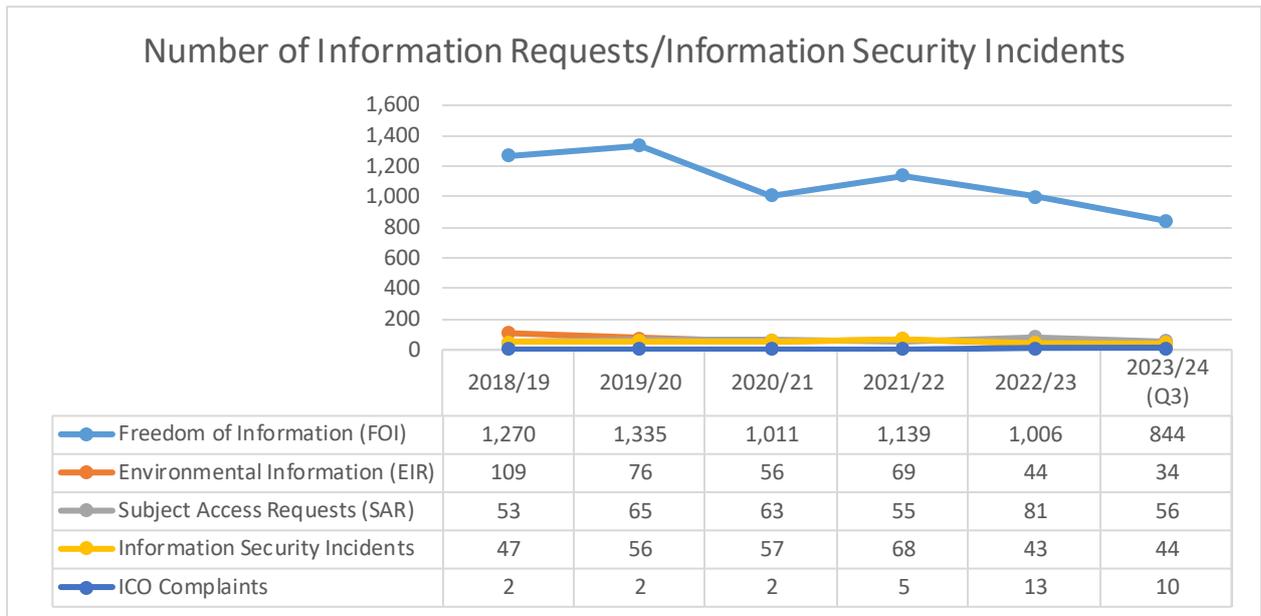
N.B. This graph has been updated in 2023/24. The 2022/23 comments have also been updated to give a better overall picture of the organisation's ethical health

Comments

2021/22 – The Council received 535 corporate complaints, an increase of 48 from the previous year. The Council also saw an increase in complaints across its other complaints procedures, following the reduction seen during the early stages of the pandemic.

2022/23 - While there was an increase in the number of adult social care complaints received, numbers remained significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels. There was an increase in the number of children’s social care Complaints, bringing them roughly in line with pre-pandemic levels. The Council received 502 corporate complaints, a decrease from 535 in 2021/22, meaning corporate complaint numbers remained significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels. There was an increase in housing complaints received, which remained significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels. There was a slight increase in the number of public health complaints received, with numbers remaining at a consistent level during and after the pandemic.

2023/24 – based on the figures at the end of quarter three, we are projecting a slight increase in the number of adult social care complaints received, approximately 57 compared to 54 in 2022/23. Children’s social care complaints are also projecting an increase, approximately 65 compared to 56 in 2022/23. There could potentially be a further decrease in the number of corporate complaints received, a projected 478 compared to 502 in 2022/23. There will likely be a further increase in housing complaints, a projected 138 compared to 98 in 2022/23. Public health complaints remain low, with one being received by the end of quarter three, compared to a total of two for 2022/23.



N.B. This graph has been updated in 2023/24 to give a better overall picture of the organisations ethical health.

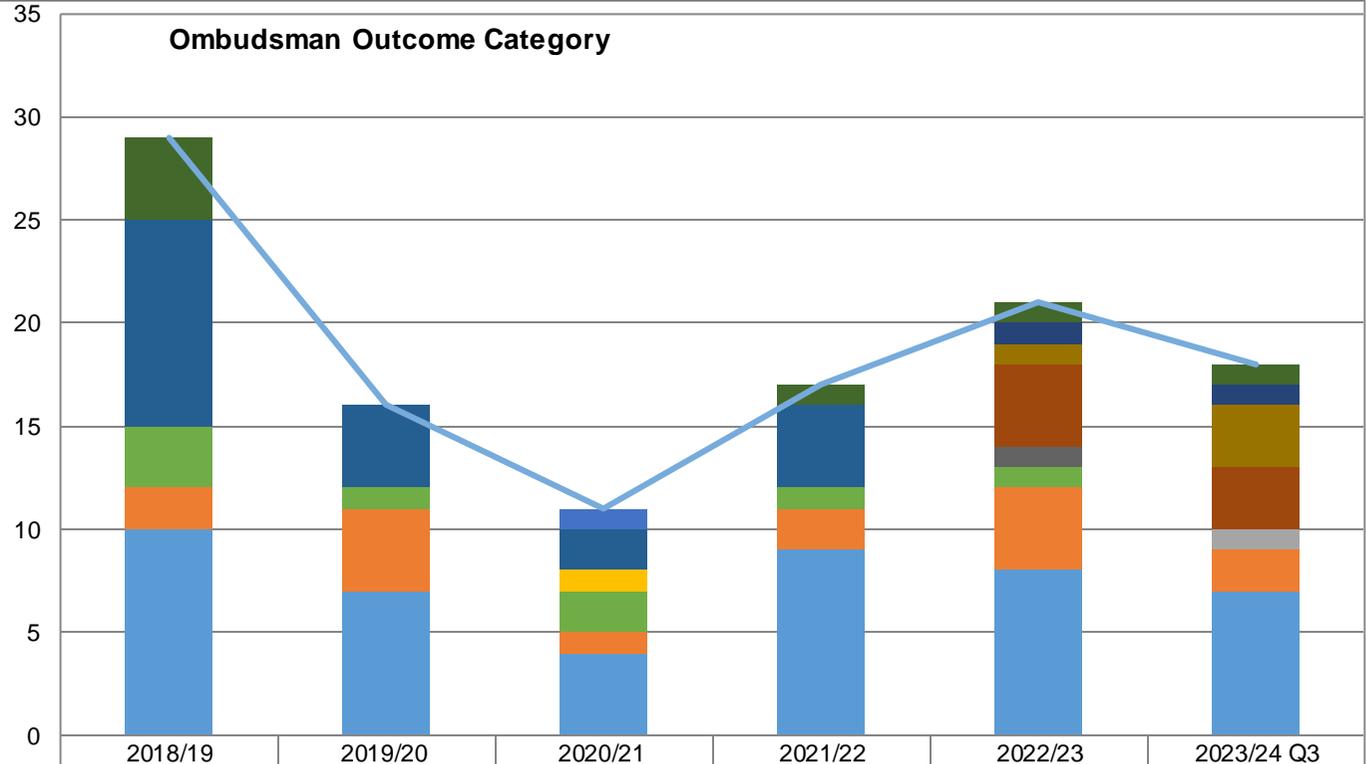
Comments

2023/24 – Should current trends continue, the Council will likely see an increase in the number of FOI requests received, from 1,006 in 2022/23 to a projected 1,125 in 2023/24. This will ensure an increased level of transparency and accountability. It is predicted the Council will receive a similar number of EIR requests, a projected 45 compared to 44 in 2022/23. Should the trend continue, the Council will see a reduction in SARs, with a projected 74 compared to 81 in 2022/23. At the present rate, the Council is predicted to see an increase in the number of information security incidents reported, a projected 59 compared to 43 in 2022/23. The Council will likely see a similar number of ICO complaints, a projected 13 the same number as in 2022/23.

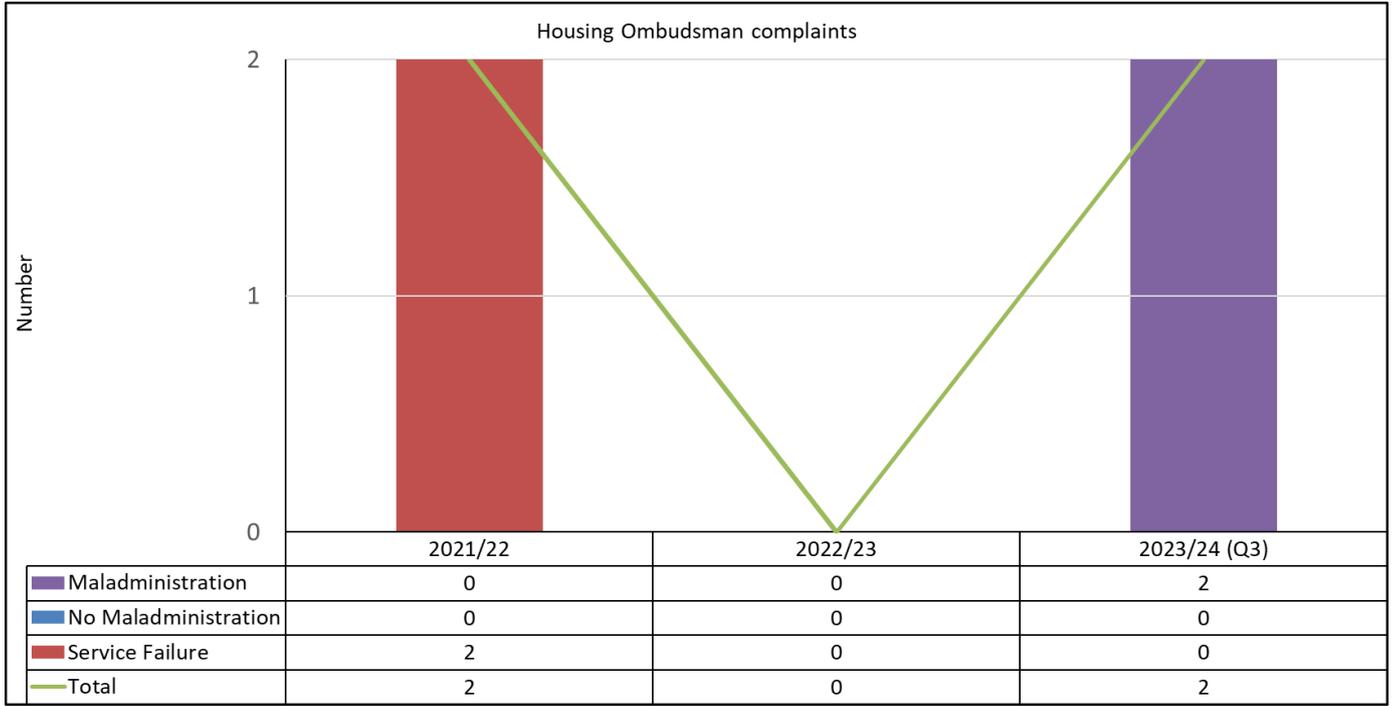
* *The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) has updated the decision outcomes they use in 2022. As a result, it is not possible to make a direct comparison with previous years. However, the new decisions in bold/italics in the table below are broadly comparable to those previous decisions in italics above.*

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24 (Q3)
Closed after initial enquiries: no further action	9	8	7
Closed after initial enquiries: out of jurisdiction	1	4	2
Not upheld: no further action	0	0	1
<i>Not upheld: No maladministration</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Not upheld: No fault</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Upheld: Maladministration and Injustice</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Upheld: Fault and Injustice</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>3</i>
Upheld: Maladministration No Injustice	0	0	0
Upheld: not investigated - injustice remedied during Body in Jurisdiction's complaint process	0	0	0
<i>Upheld: no further action, organisation already remedied</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Upheld: fault and injustice – no further action, organisation already remedied</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>
Premature	1	1	1
Total	17	21	18

Number



Premature	4	0	0	1	1	1
Upheld: fault and injustice - no further action, organisation already remedied					1	1
Upheld: no further action, organisation already remedied					1	3
Upheld: not investigated - injustice remedied during Body in Jurisdiction's complaint process	0	0	1	0	0	
Upheld: Fault and injustice					4	3
Upheld: Maladministration and Injustice	10	4	2	4	0	0
Upheld: Maladministration No Injustice	0	0	1	0	0	
Not upheld: No fault					1	0
Not upheld: No maladministration	3	1	2	1	1	0
Not upheld: no further action	0	0	0	0	0	1
Closed after initial enquiries: out of jurisdiction	2	4	1	2	4	2
Closed after initial enquiries: no further action	10	7	4	9	8	7
Total	29	16	11	17	21	18



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AUDIT COMMITTEE
8 April 2024

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The Systems and Information Governance Group (SIGG) is required to report six monthly to the Audit Committee on progress and planned developments of the information governance programme.

Summary

2. The ongoing delivery of our information governance programme continues to provide the assurance required to reduce our information risks to an acceptable level.
3. Ongoing work includes:
 - (a) The Microsoft Office 365 Programme.
 - (b) Cyber Security Phishing Simulation.
 - (c) ICT work plan.
 - (d) Web Team work plan.
 - (e) Systems and Process Team work plan.
 - (f) Information Governance Team Work Plan.
 - (g) Work to achieve our target for the completion of on-line mandatory information governance training courses.
4. The area of highest priority in the information governance programme is:
 - (a) The Microsoft Office 365 Programme.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that progress on the implementation of the Information Governance Programme be noted.

Reasons

6. To provide the Audit Committee with a status report on the delivery of the Council's Information Governance Programme.

Elizabeth Davison
Group Director of Operations

Lee Downey, Complaints & Information Governance Manager: Extension 5451

Background Papers

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Crime and Disorder.
Health and Well Being	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Health and Well Being.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Carbon Impact and Climate Change.
Diversity	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there are no issues in relation to Diversity.
Wards Affected	This report affects all wards equally.
Groups Affected	This report is for information to members and requires no decision. Therefore there is no impact on any particular group.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend any changes to the Budget or Policy Framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an Urgent Decision.
Council Plan	There is no specific relevance to the strategy beyond a reflection on the Council’s governance arrangements.
Efficiency	Implementation of effective information governance systems and procedures has a positive impact on efficiency.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	There is no specific impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

Background

7. Delivery of our information governance programme has provided the assurance required to reduce our information risks to an acceptable level. While that is the case it must be recognised that the data processing activities of the Council continually evolve and must be kept under review. The processes implemented by the Council include review mechanisms to ensure this takes place.

The Microsoft Office 365 Programme

8. The Microsoft Office 365 Programme Team is comprised of the Systems Strategy and Development Manager, the Complaints and Information Governance Manager, the ICT Solutions Architects and the ICT Security and Assurance Team Leader and the End User Engagement Team and reports to SIGG.
9. Following the successful migration of those teams who volunteered to migrate to Microsoft 365, we now have a significant number of teams who are fully operational through a Microsoft Teams interface. However, there remains a significant piece of work to do to. Over the coming 12 – 18 months we intend to ensure the majority of Council services are migrated to Microsoft 365.
10. In addition to the services now using MS Teams as their primary working area, there are a number of Functional and Project Teams being used to conduct business across the Local Authority, including with partners.
11. It is vital all Council services are migrated to Microsoft 365, to enable officers to collaborate remotely, work in innovative ways and utilise the plethora of applications within Microsoft 365 to improve productivity. The need to migrate services to Microsoft 365 is also becoming increasingly necessary from an information security perspective.

Cyber Security Phishing Simulation

12. Phishing is a cybercrime in which a target or targets are contacted by email, telephone or text message by someone posing as a legitimate institution to get individuals into providing sensitive data such as personally identifiable information, banking and credit card details, and passwords.
13. A phishing email simulation exercise was undertaken in July 2023 to assess the awareness of users about the dangers of phishing emails and to assess the results to see what, if any, additional actions may be required.
14. Following the initial simulation exercise the Council ran a month long awareness raising campaign, following which a further simulation exercise was undertaken in February 2024. The outcome showed a significant improvement.
15. Further simulations are planned to improve the Council's resilience to Phishing attacks.

ICT work plan

16. SIGG also oversees the Council's ICT work programme, a summary of which is contained in the ICT Strategy - Implementation Progress report to Audit Committee.

Web Team work plan

17. Work on the darlington.gov.uk migration has been paused whilst other projects have taken priority. Work is expected to resume in April 2024 and will be the primary focus for the team for approximately 6 months.
18. Development has now finished on the Darlington Xtra and Safeguarding Boards websites. These have now been live for several months.
19. Development on the Hopetown Darlington website is almost complete. Final bug fixing and optimisations are outstanding, however, the site is expected to go live in April 2024, when ticket sales for events are due to open.

Systems and Process Team work plan

20. The Systems and Process Team are the custodians of the large corporate applications that administer the Council's business across Social Care, Education, Customer Services, all online payments, Waste Management, Building Services, Street Cleansing, Planning, Anti-Social Behaviour, Building Control, Trading Standards and Licensing. The work plan covers all major upgrades to these systems (including the intensive testing regime needed to support this).
21. The team are working in Adult Services to align the Transformation Team Programme with the System Programme, a new program of works will be drawn up. This is ongoing after a successful Rapid Improvement Event. Other work includes looking at a system to digitalise care records within the reablement team and Holicote.
22. Children's Social Care work continues with the focus being on Fostering. The team are working closely with the transformation programme manager to implement more streamline services when working with carers, as well as implementing the new pay structure ready for the 1 April 2024.
23. The Education system is now part of a much wider programme that will see it wholly replaced in 2025. Stage one of the Education system is now live alongside two out of four portals – Admissions and Establishment. Later this year we are looking to bring in the 3rd portal which will enable parents to apply for an Education Health Care (EHC) Plan for their child. Stage two was due to commence in 2024, however, this has been rescheduled to 2025 due to System C re-designing their finance module which is an integral part of this stage. School admission applications opened in September 2023, and in early March the secondary school offer took place which was successful in delivering all of the offers needed electronically and parents were able to confirm their preference via the portal. The primary school offer is due to be released in April 2024.
24. The development of the Customer Strategy is supported by the Verint work programme (Verint is the Councils CRM System) where forms are developed to allow a seamless digital interaction for the customer and a safe and secure payment option. Additional services have recently come on board with an online form offering, which includes Highways and Street Scene and we continue to

work with those that want to offer an online form option. Verint will be undergoing a major upgrade in April which will see an improvement both from a performance perspective and aesthetically.

Information Governance Team Work Plan

25. The Council's Complaints and Information Governance Team/The Data Protection Officer continues to provide advice to officers on a range of data protection and information rights matters and ensure information rights requests are handled in accordance with UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR); The Data Protection Act 2018; The Freedom of Information Act 2000; and The Environmental Information Regulations 2014.
26. Since the last report to Audit Committee the team has advised on 13 contracts; 10 data protection impact assessments (DPIAs); 32 data sharing agreements; as well as a data transfer agreement; a Local Authority collaboration agreement; a Memorandum of Understanding; and a Third Party Supplier Access Agreement.

Training and awareness

27. The revised table in Appendix 1 shows the position on 22 March 2024 with regard to the completion of the mandatory on-line information governance courses for IT and where applicable, non-IT users. Completion rates of over 95% remains the Council's target and represents an acceptable level of take up which must be achieved.
28. The overall completion rate for the Employee's Guide to Information Security currently stands at 85%, an increase from the 84% reported to September's Audit Committee. This course is not applicable to non-IT users.
29. In relation to the Social Media Module, a new two year expiry period was set at the beginning of this year, which explains the drop in completion rates. Completion rates currently stand at 72% overall, 84% for Academy 10 users and 30% for non-IT users. This compares to the 89% overall, 95% for Academy 10 users and 68% for non-IT users, reported to September's Audit Committee.
30. In relation to the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018, overall completion rates are at 70%, 80% for Academy 10 users and 41% for non-IT users. This compares to the 84% overall completion rate, 87% for Academy 10 users and 73% for non-IT users, reported to September's Audit Committee.
31. While a significant number of officers have undertaken this training previously, following the introduction of two year expiry periods in relation to all three modules, they are now required to complete it again. As the training is embedded we should see an upturn in completion rates, the reminder e-mails sent from Academy 10 and the all staff communications sent via the weekly Briefing should help with this. With regards to completion rates for non-IT users, the simplified tool box talk style modules are still being used for Social Media and Data Protection. These modules have been designed for managers to be able to deliver the sessions faster, while still imparting all the key information with reinforced learning at the end of the sessions. It is hoped these interventions will help improve numbers by the time of the next report.

Conclusion

32. The Council's information governance programme continues to address emerging issues, support compliance with data protection legislation and manage the Council's information risks to an acceptable level.

Outcome of Consultation

33. No formal consultation was undertaken in production of this report.

22/03/2024	% Completion Rate		
	Employee Guide to Information Security not applicable to hard copy	Social Media Version 3 - New in 2020	Data Protection 2018
People Group Total	85	76	74
Adult Social Care AC10	92	84	82
Children's Services AC10	75	73	72
Commissioning, Performance & Transformation	90	90	85
Educational Services Total	95	55	55
Educational Services AC10	95	91	90
Educational Services Hard Copy	N/A	2	4
Public Health	89	100	84
Services Group Total	80	57	59
Community Services Total	71	53	58
Community Services AC10	71	75	66
Community Services Hard Copy	N/A	38	52
Highways & Capital Projects Total	88	57	53
Highways & Capital Projects AC10	88	84	75
Highways & Capital Projects Hard Copy	N/A	18	22
Community Safety	98	96	84
Operations Group Total	92	90	86
Housing & Revenues	89	90	86
Law & Governance	92	86	81
Resources	97	93	87
Strategy Performance & Communications	100	88	91
Chief Executives & Economic Growth Total	84	78	66
Darlington Partnership	100	100	100
Economic Growth	82	77	63
Council Total	85	72	70
Academy 10 Total	85	84	80
Hard Copy Total	N/A	30	41

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**AUDIT COMMITTEE
08 APRIL 2024**

ICT STRATEGY – IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The Chief Officer's Board (COB) is required to report six-monthly to the Audit Committee on progress in relation to the implementation of the ICT Strategy.

Summary

2. The revised ICT Strategy focusses on three strategic priorities:
 - (a) ICT Governance and Service Development
 - (b) ICT Strategic Architecture
 - (c) Council Service Development and Transformation
3. This report summarises progress on the main activities within each of these priorities.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that progress on the implementation of the ICT Strategy be noted.

Reasons

5. The recommendation is supported to provide the Audit Committee with evidence to reflect on progress in delivery of the Council's ICT Strategy.

**Andy Evans
Head of ICT Services – Xentrall Shared Services**

Background Papers

Darlington ICT Strategy 2022

AndyEvans - Extension 528472

S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no specific crime and disorder impact.
Health and Well Being	There is no specific health and well-being impact.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	Some of the initiatives contained within ICT Strategy will help contribute towards the carbon reduction commitments.
Diversity	There is no specific diversity impact.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally.
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally.
Budget and Policy Framework	Financial implications will be considered in the Medium-Term Financial Plan. This report does not affect the policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Council Plan	The ICT strategy supports the business of the Council in delivering the Council Plan
Efficiency	There will be efficiency savings generated as a result of implementing the ICT Strategy. The introduction of new technology is key to providing efficiency savings within Council services.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

6. Progress on the three strategic themes of the ICT Strategy is described below.

ICT Governance and ICT Service Development

7. The Systems and Information Governance Group (which is the Chief Officers Board of Assistant Directors but chaired by the Group Director of Operations) undertakes an ICT Strategy monitoring role as well as overseeing and approving the ICT Work Plan, which covers all service based and corporate ICT projects. As well as this forum, updates on major ICT projects are also given to the Group Director of Operations and to the meetings of the Xentrall Executive Board on which she sits.
8. During this six-month reporting period, ICT have worked towards the renewal of the annual PSN (Public Service Network) certification. Our submission is currently being assessed by the Cabinet Office compliance team and we expect to be successful in our recertification in the coming weeks. This will be formally noted in the next reporting period. Preparations are also underway for the successor to PSN, a new framework called CAF (Cyber Assessment Framework). In advance of a formal launch date ICT will continue to engage with the Cabinet Office to ensure the Council is able to meet the requirements of this new standard.
9. Working with the Councils Internal Audit team seventeen separate audit controls have been reviewed during this reporting period. All have been classified as "green" on a red/amber/green rating system. They include an assessment of ICT Project Management documentation, a security review of our Firewall posture and security patching for ICT systems.
10. In terms of ICT service development and related to the two ISO certifications and internal audits, all ICT service improvement activities are identified in the ICT Service Improvement Programme, and this continues to be managed and monitored by the ICT Management Team, supported by the ICT Security & Process Excellence Officer. This group reviews the progress and priorities of this extensive and continual programme which is resourced through a combination of business-as-usual activities and planned projects within ICT. Many of these activities relate to internal ICT procedures and standards which ultimately deliver improvements to the services ICT users receive.
11. One of the ways ICT are helping to reduce the risk of a cyber incident is by working with the Information Governance Team to deliver regular Phishing email simulation exercises and a strengthened approach to communications. The most recent exercise was completed in February 2024. The findings will be passed to the Information Governance Team which in turn will inform user education and communication.

ICT Strategic Architecture

12. ICT continues to ensure high levels of system availability, reliability, and security through the delivery of major project work. Notable deliverables include:
 - (a) The refresh of the Councils Wide Area Network (WAN) has commenced with the signing of a new agreement which will introduce new technology, faster connectivity, and a reduced contract price. In addition to underpinning the strategic aims of the Council such

as Blended Working, the new solution is expected to deliver financial savings contributing to the MTFP during the term of the new contract.

- (b) During this reporting period ICT have worked at pace to refresh and replace key technology platforms such as the Darlington Firewall and the virtual server infrastructure which deliver key line of business applications such as Social Care, Finance and Revenues and benefits. As well as improving security and performance this work underpins the aim of maintaining high levels of application availability and resilience.
- (c) To ensure that the Internet can meet the strategic demands of the Council such as Blended Working and the continued adoption of cloud applications, ICT has procured and installed new Internet Connections, ten times faster than current connections whilst supporting the MTFP with savings when compared to the operating costs of the existing contract. Work is in progress to finalise the configuration of the new links and they will be made available to our users at the end of May.

Council Service Development and Transformation

- 13. The service-based Information & Systems Strategies inform the ICT Work Plan, and this drives customer projects within the ICT service. As well as the management and monitoring of individual projects, the overall ICT Work Plan is monitored on a monthly cycle at the Systems and Information Governance Group (SIGG is described in paragraph 7 above). These ICT projects underpin many of the Council's business change activities. SIGG also reviews the Web Team Workplan and the Systems and Process Team Workplan and thereby has a whole view of ICT-related activities across the Council.
- 14. As well as some of the central ICT architecture projects listed above, six additional Darlington specific projects have been completed since the last progress report to this committee including the support of the public access ICT requirement at the refurbished Crown Street Library and the Housing Allocations platform. Some other Darlington projects currently underway include:
 - a) Supporting the procurement and implementation of a new ticketing and point of sale system for the Darlington Railway and Heritage Quarter.
 - b) Undertaking an internal development to migrate the Cemetery & Crematorium team to a modern web-based system that will improve processes with customers and funeral directors.
- 15. As part of the Microsoft Office 365 roll-out and the features this brings, ICT have continued to work with a task group and different services across the Council to migrate their shared data to Teams. Services already migrated are able to work more collaboratively when developing and sharing documents. Functional as well as structural teams are also deployed, and these are used for project and group work.
- 16. Xentrall ICT also continue to support the Council's Blended Working programme.

Outcome of Consultation

- 17. There has been no formal consultation in the preparation of this report.

**AUDIT COMMITTEE
8 APRIL 2024**

AUDIT SERVICES – AUDIT CHARTER

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To present Audit Services' Audit Charter for 2024-25.

Information and Analysis

2. The requirement for the Council to have an internal audit function is outlined in Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. More specific requirements are detailed in the Accounts and Audit (England & Wales) Regulations 2015 which requires the Council to:
 - a. "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 or guidance".
3. Relevant standards or guidance are set out in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards which were revised in March 2016.
4. A charter has been developed that outlines how the service will meet these requirements and is detailed at **Appendix A**. Specifically the charter outlines how the Audit Plan will be developed. It was felt no changes were needed for 2024/2025.
5. A requirement of the regulations is for a service to maintain compliance with the standards and to look to improve. To this end a Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP) is being devised to reflect the new ways of working.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that :-
 - a. That the Audit Committee approves the Internal Audit Charter (**Appendix A**) and the rights of access conferred within.

Reason

7. The recommendation is supported as it comprises part of the Council's corporate governance arrangements.

Andrew Barber
Audit and Risk Manager

Background Papers

- (i) Audit Risk Assessment Information
- (ii) Corporate and Group Risk Management Information

Andrew Barber : 01642 526176 Internal: 156176

S17 Crime and Disorder	Other than any special investigation work required there is no crime and disorder impact.
Health and Well Being	There is no specific health and well being impact.
Carbon Impact	There is no specific carbon impact.
Diversity	There is no specific diversity impact.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally.
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not affect the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Council Plan	There is no specific relevance to the strategy beyond the report comprising part of the Council's governance arrangements.
Efficiency	There is no specific efficiency impact.

MAIN REPORT

Public Sector Internal Audit Standards

8. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards were published on 18th December 2012 and updated in March 2016. These standards, which are based on the requirements of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA), are intended to promote further improvement in the professionalism, quality, consistency and effectiveness of internal audit across the public sector. They are mandatory and apply to all internal audit service providers, whether in-house, shared or outsourced. A revised set of standards have been released and are due to be implemented from January 2025.
9. There are three distinct areas covered by the standards:-
 - a. A definition of Internal Auditing;
 - b. A Code of Ethics designed to promote an ethical, professional culture; and
 - c. The International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.
10. CIPFA has provided guidance on the application of Public Sector Internal Audit Standard in the form of an Application Note. The Internal Audit Charter (attached) has been prepared in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and this guidance.

Internal Audit Charter

11. Under the standards, the Chief Audit Executive (Assurance Manager) is required to prepare an Internal Audit Charter. This is a high level statement of how the Internal Audit Service will be delivered to meet the requirements of the legislation and the standards.
12. The charter attached sets out the approach for the period 2024-2025 and gives details of:
 - a. Purpose of the Internal Audit Service
 - b. Scope of Internal Audit work
 - c. Access to Information
 - d. Resourcing of the Service
 - e. Future Development of the Service
13. The Internal Audit Charter is attached at **Appendix A**. The main change to the charter is the recognition that the service will no longer be delivering internal audit to the Tees Valley Combined Authority.

Development of the Audit Service

14. The service is continuously striving to improve the way it operates and the following actions have been identified to further enhance the service:
 - a. Review and update the Quality, Assurance and Improvement measures.
 - b. Review how to maximise the effectiveness of audits using technology and implement continuous auditing.
 - c. Establish how the service can place reliance on other sources of assurance.
 - d. Further develop reports.
 - e. Prepare for the introduction of the new International Internal Audit Standards due to come into force 1 January 2025.

Internal Audit Charter

Introduction

This document will outline how the internal audit service to Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and Darlington Borough Council will be delivered to ensure it is compliant with the relevant standards and statutory requirements currently in place.

Purpose of the Service

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance 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.

Its mission is to enhance and protect organisational value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight.

Authority to Undertake the Function

Each authority is required 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 or guidance.

This requirement is set out in the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015. The regulations also state that any officer or member of a relevant authority must, if required to do so for the purposes of the internal audit make available such documents/records and supply such information/explanations as are considered necessary by those conducting the internal audit.

Internal Audit's Responsibilities

The service will be delivered in accordance with the purpose outlined above and by ensuring it:

- Demonstrates integrity.
- Demonstrates competence and due professional care.
- Is objective and free from undue influence (independent)
- Aligns with the strategies, objectives, and risks of the organisation
- Is appropriately positioned and adequately resourced
- Demonstrates quality and continuous improvement
- Communicates effectively
- Provides risk-based assurance
- Is insightful, proactive, and future-focussed
- Promotes organisational improvement

The service will ensure it complies with the IIA International Standards for Internal Audit by adopting the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

For the purposes of applying these standards “the board” are represented by the Audit Committee through the scheme of delegation in place within each authority. “Senior Management” is the Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer & Monitoring Officer who undertake statutory functions. Each authority will have senior management teams, which will include each of these officers. The service will report the results of audit work individually to each relevant member of this senior management team.

The service will report the findings of its work to the board and to senior management a minimum of 3 times per year in line with the Audit Committee schedule. Where there is any attempt to apply undue influence on the findings of its work the service will seek to make either senior management or the board aware of any such attempts and reserves the right to report without prejudice to any member of the board or senior management.

Recommendations will be made where it is considered the control environment could be improved. This could either be addressing a particular weakness or identifying efficiencies/improvements within processes.

Functionally the service will be based within Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council in the Finance and Business Services Department. The “Chief Audit Executive (CAE)” role as specified by the standards is undertaken by the Assurance Manager. An annual report will be produced giving an overall audit opinion of the control environment to be used as part of the assurance gathering process for the annual governance statement in each authority.

Day-to-day line management for the service will be provided by the Procurement and Governance Manager within the Corporate Services Department of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.

The Assurance Manager has a responsibility to report any attempt to unduly influence/interfere with the scope or outcome of this audit work to relevant members of senior management/the board.

The service will conform to a code of ethics. Annually auditors will sign a declaration that they will conform to a code of ethics that addresses:

- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Competence
- Confidentiality
- Conflicts of Interest

Failure to abide by this code will result in action being taken against individuals through either the Council’s disciplinary process, professional disciplinary process or a combination of both.

An opinion will be provided on the entire control environment each year, one for each authority by 30 June. Frequency and scope of testing will be determined by an audit risk assessment, which will be kept up to date. A planning framework is in place to ensure sufficient coverage to enable this opinion to be given.

In addition to auditing the control environment, the service has a role in preventing, detecting and investigating possible fraudulent or corrupt activity. It is a requirement that the service will be made aware of any such activity either suspected or proven. In addition to this, audit testing will be conducted

on the basis that fraud and corruption is a risk within any system and auditors will be aware of the potential for this to be taking place.

Because of the breadth of skills and knowledge possessed by auditors, the service may be approached to provide advice and guidance to managers outside of the normal audit process. Any such consultancy engagement will be managed appropriately and will only be undertaken where the agreed scope of the engagement is consistent with the purpose of the service and where the requisite skills are available. Such assignments will be added to the audit plan.

The service will ensure it has sufficient resources to deliver a risk based audit plan with adequate coverage to enable an overall opinion to be given. A competency framework will be maintained to ensure auditors have the required skills to deliver the plan. Auditors will be assessed against this framework as part of the annual appraisal process. In addition, to ensure auditor's skills remain current they will be required to undertake Continual Professional Development (CPD). Where it is believed there will be insufficient resources (either in terms of capacity or in terms of competence) this will be brought to the attention of the board through the audit committee.

Delivery of the Service

An audit portfolio will be maintained which will encompass the entire control environment of the authority. The portfolio will be kept up to date with consultation taking place with senior management on a regular basis.

Each control in the portfolio will be risk assessed to determine frequency and priority of audit work. The risk assessment will be kept up to date and planning will be undertaken on a quarterly basis. The service will utilise continuous monitoring techniques as part of the risk assessment process, which, will incorporate feedback from a number of sources. This approach will include schools where the primary source of feedback will be the Schools Financial Value Standard Self-Assessment returns and where applicable the schools risk action groups.

Frequency of testing for each control will be determined by a risk assessment. The risk assessment determines the optimal frequency of testing to enhance and protect organisational value. Failure to meet this level of coverage will not automatically limit the scope of the annual opinion. An annual opinion can still be delivered provided the minimum levels of coverage have been maintained. The Assurance Manager will ensure there are sufficient resources to meet the frequencies determined by the risk assessment in order to achieve the mission of the service, however where the level of resource available is impacted in the short-term for any reason the minimum level of coverage will be maintained.

Controls will be tested on a rolling programme, the programme will be periodically presented for approval but will be subject to change to recognise any changes in the risk environment, these changes will not require retrospective approval.

A manual will be maintained which will document the audit process, the way in which results of audit work will be presented (this will be subject to consultation with senior management/the board) and the standard of working papers required to support the audit opinion.

The service will maintain an intranet page in each Council which will include basic contact details and any other relevant information.

Monitoring the Service

A Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP) is in place and reported to each committee meeting.

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**AUDIT COMMITTEE
8 APRIL 2024**

AUDIT SERVICES – ACTIVITY REPORT

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with a progress report of activity and proposed activity for the next period.

Summary

2. The report outlines progress to date on audit assignment work, consultancy/contingency activity.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that the activity and results be noted and that the planned work is agreed.

Reasons

4. The recommendation is supported to provide the Audit Committee with evidence to reflect on the Council's governance arrangements.

**Andrew Barber
Audit & Risk Manager**

Background Papers

- (i) Internal Audit Charter
- (ii) Departmental Audit Reports

Andrew Barber: Extension 156176

S17 Crime and Disorder	Other than any special investigation work there is no crime and disorder impact.
Health and Well Being	There is no specific health and well being impact.
Carbon Impact	There is no specific carbon impact.
Diversity	There is no specific diversity impact.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally.
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not affect the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Council Plan	Maintaining an appropriate oversight of risk & controls will help contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan Objectives
Efficiency	There is no specific efficiency impact.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. The report should be considered in the context of fulfilling the function to monitor the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control environment and the Internal Audit service provided.
6. Appendix 1 provides members with detailed feedback on the performance of the service and the position in relation to completion of audit work.
7. The first section of the report is to provide members with feedback on the management of the risks on the corporate risk register. This has been updated to reflect changes to the corporate risk register.

	Comments
Overall Position	<p>The majority of risks have assurance over 75%, previously reported:</p> <p>SR25 – The control around procurement of DoLs assessors is marked as amber due to impending changes in the process.</p>

	SR26 – Procedures have not been updated since 2021, a new officer is due to commence in Sept 2023 who will be responsible for updating the procedures.
Emerging Issues	No change from the previous report so no new emerging risk areas.

Assurance by Risk

Rsk Ref	Risk	Assurance
SR10	Planning Performance at risk of Standards Authority intervention	100.00
SR12	Fraud in general	100.00
SR13	Instability within financial markets adversely impacts on finance costs and investments	100.00
SR14	Financial pressures to the General Fund as a result of increased levels of unemployment and increased Council Tax Support claims	100.00
SR15	Inability to cope with significant increase in homelessness cases following the impact of COVID.	100.00
SR16	Inability to contain placement costs for children looked after due to lack of sufficient in house placements	100.00
SR17	Inability to recruit and retain sufficient qualified suitably experienced social workers in Children's Services impacts on cost and quality of service	100.00
SR18	Inability to recruit and retain sufficient qualified suitably experienced social workers and reablement staff in Adult Services impacts on cost and quality of service	100.00
SR19	Failure to identify vulnerable schools and broker appropriate support to address needs	100.00
SR20	Increased demand for Adult Services impacts negatively on plans for budget efficiencies	100.00
SR21	Increased demand for Children's Services impacts negatively on budget	100.00
SR22	Market (Domiciliary Care Residential Care providers) failure following the Care Act/Living Wage	100.00
SR23	Market (Domiciliary Care Residential Care providers) for Vulnerable Families with Children (including SEND) experiences provider failure	100.00
SR25	The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Threshold changes significantly increases the amount of people deprived of their liberty resulting in potential for increased legal challenge	62.50
SR26	Failure to respond appropriately to safeguard vulnerable adults, in line with national legislation and safeguarding adults procedures	70.00
SR27	Failure to respond appropriately to safeguard vulnerable children, in line with national legislation and safeguarding children, thresholds and procedures.	81.82
SR28	Working with other local commissioners to ensure their understanding of their responsibilities within the Childhood pathway.	100.00
SR29	Risk of unsuccessful mobilisation of new service - Support, Recovery and Treatment in Darlington through Empowerment (STRIDE).	100.00
SR3	Business Continuity Plans not in place or tested for key critical services	97.33
SR33	Impact of national cost of living crisis on customers and audiences for Leisure and Cultural facilities	100.00
SR34	Budget & resource implications arising from the ability to progress and complete schemes/projects in the event of further construction inflation, material supply and resource demands	100.00
SR35	Potential impact on public transport networks if commercial services do not recover or continue to receive support from Government and routes are withdrawn	100.00
SR36	Failure to meet the Council's commitment to becoming Carbon neutral by 2050	100.00
SR38	Reputational and regulatory risk if reinspection not successful	93.65
SR40	Managing the impact of severe weather events	100.00
SR42	Risk of enforcement action from the ICO	100.00
SR43	Risk of new dangerous variant or a significant wave of COVID-19 impact on the Council's ability to provide services as a result of a new dangerous variant or a significant wave of COVID-19 or the activation of UKHSA Contingency plan	100.00
SR44	April 2023 will see the implementation of the CQC inspection framework for Adult Social Care. Due to the significant demands on adult social care, the pressures following covid, and the workforce recruitment and retention crisis will impact on the ratings- resulting in an "requiring improvement" outcome.	87.13
SR7	Financial implications of Maintaining and conserving key capital assets within the borough	100.00
SR8	Investment in regeneration projects is not delivered	100.00

8. The next section breaks down audit results against a set of key governance processes.

	Comments
Overall Position	The majority of themes are showing a positive level of assurance overall, some of the areas shown as below 75% have been reported previously.
Emerging Issues	Mandatory Information Governance Training still remains below the target completion rate of 95%, it should be recognised that this is an expectation of the information commissioner and is a challenging target given staff turnover numbers.

Results by Theme

Theme	1 Red	2 Amber	3 Green	Total
1. Accuracy of Decision Making			6	60
10. Accuracy of Payments	1		22	23
11. Income - Charging		1	7	8
12. Income - Payments		1	12	13
13. Cash Handling			3	3
14. Procurement/Sourcing		1	17	18
15. Physical Assets/Locations		2	26	28
16. Fraud	1		10	11
17. Business Continuity		1	14	15
18. Procedures		1	10	11
19. Performance Management		2	33	35
2. Monitoring of Decisions			4	27
20. ICT Infrastructure			2	23
21. Handling of Requests/Incident Response			1	11
3. Information Governance	1	7	49	57
4. Finance			26	26
5. HR - Payments			4	4
6. HR - Health & Safety			5	5
7. HR - Management	1	3	8	12
8. Recruitment		1	2	3
9. HR - Training/Qualifications/Clearances	10	3	15	28
Total	14	36	372	422

Assurance by Theme

Theme	Assurance
1. Accuracy of Decision Making	94.58
10. Accuracy of Payments	96.97
11. Income - Charging	96.00
12. Income - Payments	95.45
13. Cash Handling	100.00
14. Procurement/Sourcing	97.01
15. Physical Assets/Locations	97.96
16. Fraud	91.67
17. Business Continuity	96.71
18. Procedures	96.05
19. Performance Management	98.46
2. Monitoring of Decisions	92.86
20. ICT Infrastructure	93.81
21. Handling of Requests/Incident Response	97.44
3. Information Governance	92.04
4. Finance	100.00
5. HR - Payments	100.00
6. HR - Health & Safety	100.00
7. HR - Management	67.05
8. Recruitment	85.00
9. HR - Training/Qualifications/Clearances	54.37
Total	91.72

Overall Results

Status	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Medium	4 High	5 Very High	Total
1 Red		2	12			14
2 Amber	1	19	9	5	2	36
3 Green	17	170	116	52	17	372
Total	18	191	137	57	19	422

Results in Period

Status	1 Very Low	2 Low	3 Medium	4 High	5 Very High	Total
1 Red				10		10
2 Amber		4	5	2	1	12
3 Green	3	11	13	18	7	52
Total	3	15	28	20	8	74

9. The next section looks at service area and provides feedback on the work undertaken in the previous quarter and a summary of the work planned to be undertaken.

	Comments
Overall Position	The majority of controls are rated Green. Public Health assurance levels have improved over the period.
Emerging Issues	No changes from previous report.

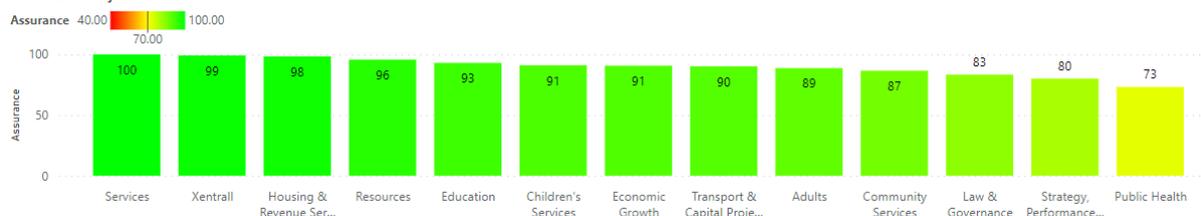
Results by Service

Service	1 Red	2 Amber	3 Green	Total
Adults	1	4	27	32
Children's Services	1	6	45	52
Community Services	2	10	48	60
Economic Growth	1	4	26	31
Education	1	1	25	27
Housing & Revenue Services		1	20	21
Law & Governance	3	5	27	35
Public Health	2		5	7
Resources	1	1	44	46
Services			3	3
Strategy, Performance & Communications	1	1	7	9
Transport & Capital Projects	1		12	13
Xentrall		2	75	77
Total	14	35	364	413

Recommendations

Service	Agreed	Draft	Implemented	Not Implemented	Risk Tolerated	Total
	2		1		1	4
Adults	2	1	3		1	7
Children's Services	3		5		3	11
Community Services	6	2	6		1	15
Economic Growth	1		6		2	10
Education	3				1	4
Housing & Revenue Services	1		4			5
Law & Governance			7		3	10
Public Health		1	2		1	4
Resources		2	1		1	4
Strategy, Performance & Communications			3			3
Transport & Capital Projects	1		1		1	3
Xentrall	1	1	3			5
Total	20	7	42		15	86

Assurance by Service



10. The penultimate section is progress against our balanced scorecard. The key measures in this section are adequate resources and portfolio coverage. In terms of adequate resources we aim to have 15 days capacity spare to deal with any issues that may arise. Portfolio coverage identifies the number of controls that must be tested in the period to maintain adequate coverage, we were on target for the previous period.

Stewardship (Coverage)			Stakeholders		
Measure	Target	Actual	Measure	Target	Actual
Adequate Resources	15	16	Reporting	Qtrly	*
Portfolio Coverage	63	74	Fraud Strategy	November	*
Annual Report	June	*	Satisfaction	TBC	*

Activity	Qtrly	*	Recommendation Implementation	TBC	*
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Process			People		
Measure	Target	Actual	Measure	Target	Actual
PSIAS Internal Review	March	*	Productivity	75%	77%
PSIAS External Review	March 2023	*	Training	20	25
Staff Meetings	6	10	Code of Conduct	100%	*
Audit Manual Update	March		Appraisals	100%	*

*- to be reported annually

11. The final section of the report (Appendix A) is a full list of controls to be examined in the next period in priority order.
12. I currently do not have any concerns over the resourcing levels of the service or any impairment of the independence of the service to report to members.

Outcome of Consultation

13. There was no formal consultation undertaken in production of this report.

ID	Control	Frequency
105	Update and report the strategic corporate risk register.	3
661	Youth Employment Initiative financial claims are submitted in an accurate and timely manner.	3
78	Focussed financial support to commercial ventures	6
88	An approved Council Plan is in place which sets out the priorities of the council.	6
174	Adult Social Care cases are allocated appropriately considering caseloads and qualification requirements.	6
182	Where the Authority has Deputyship/Appointeeship, appropriate authorisation/legal documentation is in place.	6
218	Posts requiring a DBS check are identified and requirements are in line with legislation.	6
283	Disposals of ICT equipment are undertaken in an appropriate manner in line with an adequate and appropriate official disposal policy.	6
476	Accurate and up to date MTFP projections for future years	6
535	Children have been matched with appropriate adopters	6
577	The correct charges are raised for Housing Rents.	6
832	Decisions are made in line with The Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005.	6
23	Assessment and appointment of suitable in-house foster carers.	12
24	Appropriate arrangements are in place to assess the suitability of adopters.	12
64	Clear acquisition, disposal and revaluation process for land and buildings.	12
68	Clear budget process and timetable is in place which could be followed by team members as and when required.	12
86	Undertake forward planning and projections of external factors in respect of income and expenditure and feed into MTFP.	12
97	Prepare statement of accounts	12
114	Vehicles used in the provision of Community (SBC) and Passenger (DBC) Transport services are suitable and meet requirements for servicing and road worthiness.	12
132	Free school meals are provided to eligible pupils.	12
175	Adult Social Care referrals and assessments are processed in an accurate and timely manner, with decision making and actions fully documented.	12
184	Accurate charges for contributions to care costs are made to service users.	12
228	Venues for events are appropriate.	12
249	Timely and accurate financial assessments are undertaken for service users wishing to take up a service.	12
295	Appropriate formal documented ICT project management standards/policies have been established.	12
303	An appropriate infrastructure is in place to facilitate the organisation's firewalls.	12
356	Address patterns of absence and promote regular attendance at school.	12
361	Training, support and development is in place for adoptive parents and families.	12
363	Procedures are in place for the referral, matching and placement of children for adoption.	12
397	Economic Growth Strategy and Economic Growth Plan is monitored and milestones achieved.	12
399	Support is provided to new and existing businesses.	12
405	Effective management of grants received to support jobs and growth.	12
416	Trading standards investigations are recorded accurately either as a result of a programmed inspection or in response to a complaint and the results circulated as necessary including general guidance as necessary.	12
464	Effective commissioning and procurement of public health services and programmes.	12
539	Monitoring is undertaken of care packages for continued suitability.	12
572	The decision to provide additional support to adoptive families is appropriate.	12
573	Where there is a shortfall in specialist housing facilities managed by the authority to meet demand, external provision is effectively sourced.	12

ID	Control	Frequency
662	Sufficient performance monitoring is in place to ensure the aims and objectives of the Youth Employment Initiative programme are being successfully achieved.	12
740	Staff within Transport and Capital projects have completed mandatory information governance training.	12
741	Staff within Public Health have completed mandatory information governance training.	12
742	Staff within Children's Services have completed mandatory information governance training.	12
743	Staff within Adults Service have completed mandatory information governance training.	12
744	Staff within Education services have completed mandatory information governance training.	12
745	Staff within Economic Growth have completed mandatory information governance training.	12
747	Staff within Strategy, performance and communications have completed mandatory information governance training.	12
748	Staff within Housing and Revenue services have completed mandatory information governance training.	12
749	Staff within Law & Governance have completed mandatory information governance training.	12
795	Staff within Community Services have completed mandatory information governance training.	12
812	Staff within Commissioning, performance and transformation have completed mandatory information governance training.	12
831	Placement numbers and service demand are monitored regularly.	12
833	Suitable arrangements are in place with regional VAAs.	12
834	Partnership model is approved and complied with.	12
837	Risk register is subject to periodic review and is up to date.	12
842	Regular monitoring of children and adopter progress to ensure timeliness of process in line with Government targets	12
844	Strategic priorities are identified and monitored	12
847	Adequate safeguarding policy and procedures are in place.	12
851	All significant events relating to the protection of children are notified to the appropriate authorities.	12
875	Performance oversight and reporting in line with the terms and conditions of the youth justice grant.	12
21	A robust training and support regime is in place for new teachers.	18
40	School places have been allocated in accordance with admissions policies.	18
77	Financial appraisal completed as part of business case/options appraisal	18
116	Council employed drivers and passenger assistants hold the necessary clearances, licences, qualifications and training.	18
130	Catering and cleaning staff have been subject to appropriate disclosure checks.	18
141	Sensitive personal information in relation to OneCall (SBC) and Lifeline (DBC) clients is managed in line with GDPR requirements.	18
183	Where legal charges have been placed on a service user's property, appropriate deferred payment/legal documentation is in place.	18
189	Professionals are appropriately trained and qualified to undertake BIA/DoLS assessments.	18
190	Professionals employed to undertake DoLS assessments are procured and employed via correct processes.	18
221	Information security and sharing protocols in relation to occupational health and employee therapy provision is in line with data protection legislation.	18
310	HMRC reporting requirements are being complied with.	18
362	Financial support provided to adoptive families is paid accurately and timely.	18
383	Strategic plans and framework are in place to tackle poverty.	18
413	Licence applications are subject to appropriate review and approval, evidence of background and eligibility.	18

ID	Control	Frequency
415	A programme of trading standards inspections and sample tests has been identified using a risk assessment process.	18
417	Compliance with licence conditions is monitored and appropriate sanctions taken when necessary.	18
449	Cemeteries and memorials are well maintained and health and safety risks managed.	18
450	Crematorium inspection and monitoring to reduce the impact of emissions.	18
467	A Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) is undertaken to identify pitch requirements.	18
474	Appropriate ICT solutions are in place to facilitate the sharing of sensitive information/files with external partners/individuals.	18
486	Information relating to adopters is accurately recorded and up to date.	18
487	Adopter suitability appeals are appropriately managed.	18
494	Leisure provision requirements are understood and effectively sourced.	18
510	Monitoring is undertaken to ensure compliance with planning decisions and appeals are handled appropriately.	18
511	Inspections of building work are undertaken to ensure compliance.	18
513	Building control decisions are accurately recorded.	18
537	Accurate and up to date information is recorded for adoption cases.	18
836	Data sharing arrangements are in place and information is safeguarded.	18
839	Marketing strategy is in place and monitored effectively.	18
840	Staff hold appropriate qualifications, DBS clearances, and receive regular training.	18
841	Adopters are subject to appropriate DBS and safeguarding checks.	18
843	Early Permanence arrangements are appropriately managed	18
845	Appropriate medical advisors have been appointed.	18
846	Cases are allocated appropriately and supervision arrangements are in place.	18
849	Progress against development plans is monitored	18
850	Compliance with Department for Education (DfE) funding terms and conditions for grant payments received.	18
852	Procedures are in place for the recruitment and maintenance of the central list of persons suitable for the adoption panel	18
129	Payments for cleaning supplies are accurate and in accordance with the contract.	24
166	Staff involved in adult referrals and assessments appropriately qualified and have appropriate DBS clearances.	24
203	Website and Intranet content is relevant and up to date.	24
210	Accurate and up to date records are maintained for all legal services provided.	24
238	Learning and Skills course fees are set appropriately and income taken is held securely and adequately accounted for.	24
241	Adult Learners and Apprentices details are accurate, up to date and safeguarded.	24
266	Appropriate controls and systems are in place to ensure all car parking income is accounted for in the authority's accounts.	24
312	The organisation's establishment is authorised by the managing body.	24
432	On-site concessions are managed and procured appropriately.	24
440	Effective procurement of waste and recycling contracts.	24
475	Records relating to housing and housing related developments are accurate, up to date and appropriately safeguarded.	24
482	Effective working relationships with staff forums and other employee groups such as unions.	24
483	Payments made to external providers of short breaks for young people with complex and additional needs are accurate and timely.	24

ID	Control	Frequency
495	Income/payments relating to on-site concessions are accurate.	24
501	Payments for catering supplies are accurate and in accordance with the contract.	24
515	Fees for building control applications have been set appropriately.	24
545	There is an effective appeals process for transport eligibility decisions.	24
687	National Fraud Initiative (NFI) matches in relation to Council Tax Single Person Discount are promptly reviewed and investigations undertaken as necessary.	24
828	Budget is effectively monitored and controlled.	24
829	Funding from LA's has been received in full.	24
830	Inter-agency fee budget is effectively monitored and controlled.	24
848	Payments to external agencies are accurate and timely.	24
854	All children placed for adoption have a life story book and later life letter prepared for them.	24
196	Payments made to external employee therapy providers are accurate.	48
208	Communication and marketing budgets are effectively monitored and controlled.	48
209	Staffing requirements and associated costs are understood and effectively managed in relation to communication and media related activities.	48
514	An appropriate fee has been received for building control applications.	48

AUDIT COMMITTEE
8 APRIL 2024

ANNUAL GRANTS CERTIFICATION REPORT 2021/22

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To present the Annual Grants Certification Report 2021/22 and the results of the external audit testing.

Information and Analysis

2. The Council engaged its external auditors Ernst & Young (EY) to act as reporting accountants (as per the regulations) in respect of the Housing Subsidy claim, Teachers Pensions and the Housing Pooling return.
3. The external audit work identified that the Housing Subsidy claim certified, did not require a qualification letter although there were minor errors in the sample that amounted to £11.17 and a number of classification errors with a net effect of nil which were corrected in the revised claim form.
4. With regard to the Housing Pooling return, EY identified 2 minor exceptions, both of which were discrepancies on the number of disposals and the stock balance as at the end of March 2022.
5. The Teachers Pension return was submitted on time and EY confirmed that 'No substantive issues were identified from the procedures completed'. Minor differences of £0.04 and -£0.20 were identified as rounding differences.
6. EY did not identify any significant issues that required being brought to the attention of Members from any of these claims.
7. The total charge to the Council for each of the grants is as follows:

	£
Housing Benefit subsidy	11,550
Teachers' Pension	5,800
Housing Pooling Return	<u>10,000</u>
Total	<u>27,350</u>

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that Audit Committee note the contents of the report.
-

Reason

9. The recommendation is supported as it comprises part of the Council’s corporate governance arrangements.

Elizabeth Davison
Group Director of Operations

Background Papers

Judith Murray: Extension 5204

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no specific issues which relate to crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	There is no specific health and well being impact.
Carbon Impact	There is no specific carbon impact.
Diversity	There is no specific diversity impact.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally.
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not affect the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Corporate Plan	There is no specific relevance to the strategy beyond the report comprising part of the Council’s governance arrangements.
Efficiency	There is no specific efficiency impact.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The report does not impact upon Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

AUDIT COMMITTEE
8 APRIL 2024

AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2021-22

SUMMARY REPORT**Purpose of Report**

1. To present a report by the Council's external auditors, Ernst and Young LLP (EY), on the audit for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Summary

2. In accordance with the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2022, all Local Authorities were required to produce the draft annual Statement of Accounts by 31 July 2022 and an audited set published by 30 November 2022. These regulations have temporarily relaxed the previous deadlines for producing the draft accounts and completion of final audited accounts.
3. As previously outlined to this Committee due to national issues which led to a delay in finalising the 2020-21 accounts and the subsequent delay in commencing the 2021-22 accounts until late August 2023, our external auditors EY (Ernst & Young) were not in a position to deliver the audit by the statutory deadline, however EY have now substantially completed the audit, subject to the completion of their final audit procedures.
4. The external auditors are required by the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) to report to Members issues arising from the accounts audit. The Audit Results Report details the significant findings from the audit by EY following their audit approach outlined in their audit plan presented to this committee in September 2022 (previously distributed).
5. Due to the delay in commencing the 2021-22 audit, the audit has been ongoing for almost 24 months after the 2021-22 financial year end and there have been staffing changes in both the Council's finance team and the external audit team during that period.
6. The draft 2021-22 Statement of Accounts were prepared and published in July 2022. The delay in the audit process and changes in the finance and external audit teams have subsequently led to some issues in relation to sourcing data which was used in the preparation of the draft financial statements. This would not have been the case had there been no delay with the audit process.
7. As highlighted by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), the backlog in local government audits has increased drastically. In July 2023 the Minister for Local Government published a statement to Parliament setting out proposals to tackle this backlog. To clear this backlog and 'reset' the system DLUHC proposes putting a date in law (the backstop date) of 30th September 2024, by which point local bodies would publish

audited accounts for all outstanding years up to and including 2022-23. The Council has taken this backstop date into consideration when responding to 2021-22 audit findings and to conclude the audit.

8. Members are required to consider items that are classified as unadjusted audit differences, which officers propose not to adjust in the accounts.
9. EY are also required to report to management and the Audit Committee any significant deficiencies in internal control identified during their audit.
10. EY are expected to:
 - Give an unqualified opinion on the Council's 2021-22 accounts.
 - Conclude that the Council have put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in its use of resources.
 - Confirm that the Council's Annual Governance Statement is not misleading or inconsistent with other information known to them.
11. EY's report is attached at **Annex 1** and will be presented by a representative from EY.

Recommendation

12. It is recommended that:-

- a) The Auditor's Audit Results Report on the Council's 2021-22 financial statements be noted.
- b) Members note the Letter of Representation in Appendix D of the Audit Results Report
- c) The Audit Committee agrees not to amend the unadjusted audit differences as they are not material.
- d) The Audit Committee is requested to note the attached IFRS compliant Statement of Accounts at **Annex 2** for the 2021-22 financial year and:

following the completion of the audit, that the Chair or Vice Chair of this Committee and the Council's Section 151 Officer (The Group Director of Operations) be given delegated power to sign off the Statement of Accounts for 2021-22 on behalf of the Committee and report back thereon to the next ordinary meeting.

Reasons

13. The recommendation is supported as it comprises part of the Council's corporate governance arrangements.

14. To expediate the process, to give the best possible chance of completing the 2022-23 audit by the backstop date.

Elizabeth Davison
Group Director of Operations

Background Papers

- (i) Council's accounts 2021-22
- (ii) EY Audit Results Report 2021-22

Judith Murray: Extension 5204

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no specific issues which relate to crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	There is no specific health and well being impact.
Carbon Impact	There is no specific carbon impact
Diversity	There is no specific diversity impact.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally.
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not affect the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Council Plan	There is no specific relevance to the Council Plan beyond the report comprising part of the Council's governance arrangements.
Efficiency	There is no specific efficiency impact.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The report does not impact upon Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

15. The external auditors are required by the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) to report to Members issues arising from the accounts audit. The Audit Results Report details the significant findings from the audit by EY following their audit approach outlined in their audit plan presented to this committee in September 2022 (previously distributed).
16. Due to the delay in commencing the 2021-22 audit, the audit has been ongoing for almost 24 months after the 2021-22 financial year end and there have been staffing changes in both the Council's finance team and the external audit team during that period.
17. The draft 2021-22 Statement of Accounts were prepared and published in July 2022. The delay in the audit process and changes in the finance and external audit teams have subsequently led to some issues in relation to sourcing data which was used in the preparation of the draft financial statements. This would not have been the case had there been no delay with the audit process.

18. As highlighted by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), the backlog in local government audits has increased drastically. In July 2023 the Minister for Local Government published a statement to Parliament setting out proposals to tackle this backlog. To clear this backlog and 'reset' the system DLUHC proposes putting a date in law (the backstop date) of 30th September 2024, by which point local bodies would publish audited accounts for all outstanding years up to and including 2022-23. The Council has taken this backstop date into consideration when responding to 2021-22 audit findings and to conclude the audit.
 19. The Council retains documents relating to banking transactions for 12 months, after which they are put into storage. This is a common and reasonable timescale to retain the numerous documents that relate to banking transactions. Due to the elongated period over which the audit has been conducted it has not been possible to provide sufficient and appropriate evidence easily or timely for submission to the external audit team on some occasions.
 20. Members are specifically required to consider items that are classified as unadjusted audit differences, which officers propose not to adjust in the accounts. Due to the backstop proposals deadline and to draw a line on the 2021-22 accounts, the Council has made the decision not to adjust certain audit differences which were deemed by management not to be material to the accounts and where the unadjusted items would not mislead or impair the user of the accounts. There are 10 such unadjusted audit differences, and they are explained below:
 - (a) Private Finance Initiative (PFI) historic difference. This was reported last year in the Audit Results report and will continue to be included until the end of the PFI scheme in 2030. The 'difference' was at its maximum in 2019-20 and will now continue to reduce until the end of the PFI scheme, so as its not material management have previously chosen not to adjust.
 - (b) Learning and Skills Management costs are spread across expenditure and funded from ESFA grant funding. Revenue grants unapplied should be debited with the amount of expenditure funded from the grant, however a debtor was recognised. This has resulted in the overstatement of the L&S Management Team Debtor and revenue grants unapplied account by £0.36m. As this is not material and given management's decision to draw a line on the 2021-22 accounts this will be corrected in the 2023-24 accounts.
 - (c) Share of Joint Venture 2018-19 profits amounting to £0.34m were incorrectly recognised as a debtor in the single entity accounts. This has not been adjusted as it was adjusted in the 2022-23 accounts.
 - (d) Overstatement of housing benefit debtor XX26 as there was a difference of £0.28m between the sub-ledger and the debtor. As this is not material and the decision to draw a line under the 2021-22 accounts this will be corrected in the 2023-24 accounts.
-

- (e) Discrepancy noted for the valuation of Rise Carr college between management's specialist valuation report and the value recognised in the fixed asset register. This has resulted in an understatement of £0.30m in PPE. This will be corrected at the next valuation.
 - (f) Evidence to support the Dolphin Centre Income amounting to £0.29m was inaccessible due to these documents being placed into storage. This was due to the lengthy delay in the audit and is not material therefore management have chosen not to adjust.
 - (g) Overstatement of payments made in advance of £0.25m and understatement of expenditure of £0.25m due to incorrect treatment. Management again have chosen not to adjust this as it is not material, and to draw a line under the 2021-22 accounts.
 - (h) Judgemental misstatement resulting in the understatement of the valuation of Honeypot Lane amounting to £1.66m due to inappropriate valuation technique and outdated valuation information (2009 when further developments had been made by 2021). Management have considered the impact of this misstatement and the changes which would be required to adjust the statements and given the proposed backstop arrangements have decided that as it is not material, not to adjust.
 - (i) From a sample of creditors as part of our creditors testing, we have identified Short Term Creditors pertaining to the 2022/23 financial year that have been incorrectly assumed as income in advance in 2021/22. The contra entry was a debit to debtors. This has resulted in a projected overstatement of income in advance and debtors by £1.66m. This is a projected misstatement it cannot be adjusted in the accounts.
 - (j) From a sample of debtors as part of our debtors testing, we have identified cash refunds to debtors were credited to creditors instead of reducing the debtors. This has resulted in a projected overstatement of debtors and creditors by £1.71m. Again, as this is a projected misstatement it cannot be adjusted in the accounts.
21. EY are also required to report to management and the Audit Committee any significant deficiencies in internal control identified during their audit. In this regard EY have identified the following deficiencies in internal control. It should also be noted however, that the root cause for these deficiencies are mainly due to the elongated period lapse between the 31 March 2022 year end and the finalisation of the financial statements two years later.
- (a) Record keeping procedures over grant income. We recommend that management also regularly updates its grant register with information that is complete and documents the basis of accounting relating to all types of grants (revenue and capital), terms and conditions of grants, clawback clauses, expenditure funded by the grant and the permissibility to roll forward grants. Management notes this recommendation and will look at ways on how we can enhance the grant register to include the information suggested.
-

- (b) Review and approval of manual journals and adjustments. We recommend that management ensures that all manual journals and adjustments are reviewed and approved when posted onto the system. This will enhance the prevention and detection of potential errors and postings. Management have already implemented this control for 2023-24.
- (c) Records management. We recognise the challenge faced by management in the retrieval of sufficient appropriate evidence for timely submission to the audit team, however we recommend that management enhances its controls around the safe keeping of supporting evidence to allow for easy retrieval of relevant appropriate information as required. Management note this recommendation and are always looking to improve how we provide sufficiently timely evidence for the audit team, however, had the audit not been so prolonged the retrieval of appropriate evidence for timely submission would not have been an issue (para 19).

22. EY are expected to:

- Give an unqualified opinion on the Council's 2021-22 accounts.
- Conclude that the Council have put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in its use of resources.
- Confirm that the Council's Annual Governance Statement is not misleading or inconsistent with other information known to them.

23. EY's report is attached at **Annex 1** and will be presented by a representative from EY.

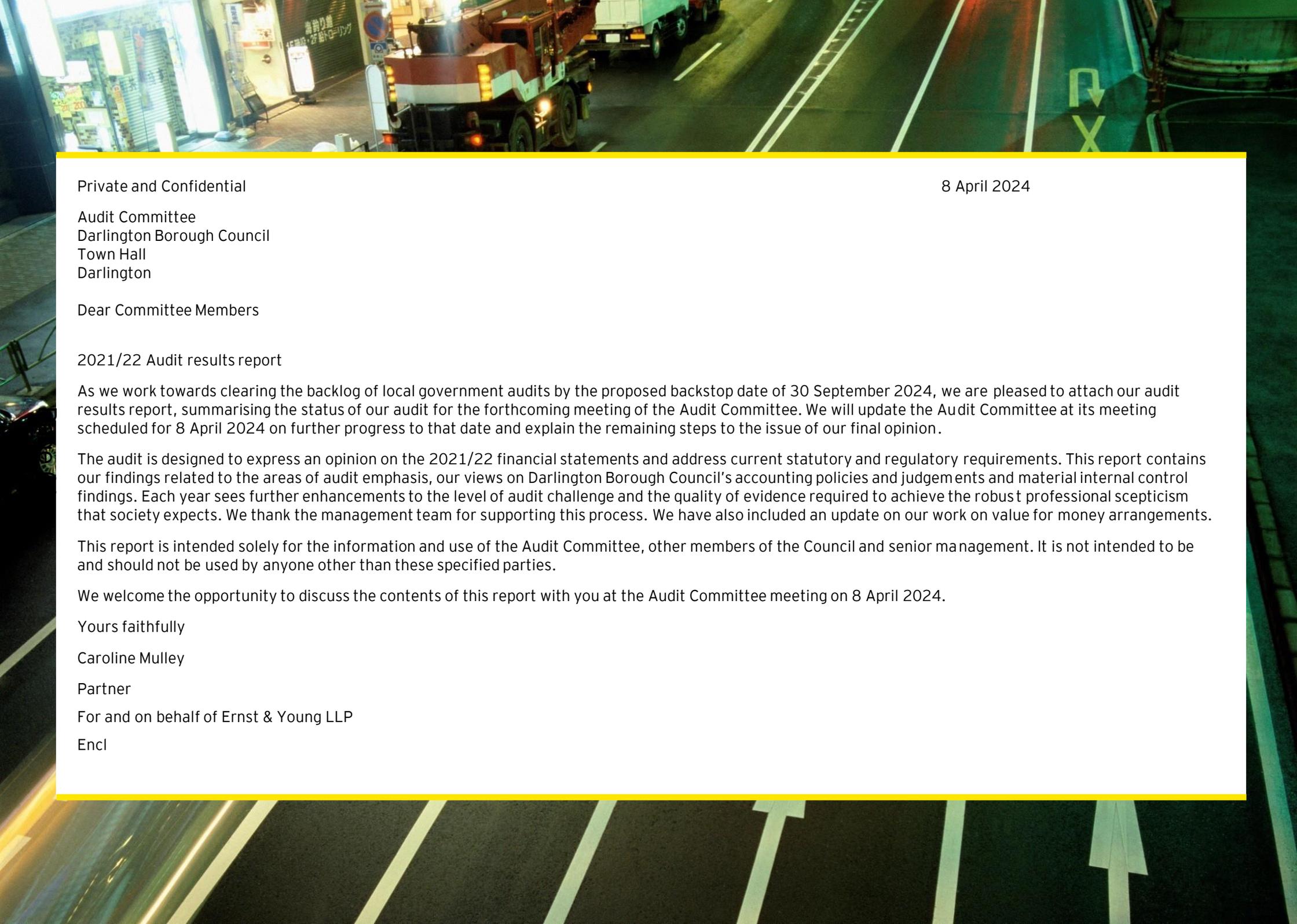
Outcome of Consultation

24. The content of this report was not subject to consultation.

**Darlington Borough
Council**
Audit results report
Year ended 31 March 2022

8 April 2024

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Private and Confidential

8 April 2024

Audit Committee
Darlington Borough Council
Town Hall
Darlington

Dear Committee Members

2021/22 Audit results report

As we work towards clearing the backlog of local government audits by the proposed backstop date of 30 September 2024, 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 8 April 2024 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 2021/22 financial statements and address current statutory and regulatory requirements. This report contains our findings related to the areas of audit emphasis, our views on Darlington Borough 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. We have also included an update on our work on value for money arrangements.

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 8 April 2024.

Yours faithfully

Caroline Mulley

Partner

For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

Encl

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01 Executive Summary

02 Areas of Audit Focus

03 Audit Report

04 Audit Differences



05 Value for Money

06 Other Reporting Issues

07 Assessment of Control Environment

08 Independence

09 Appendices

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 July 2021)" 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 Committee and management of Darlington Borough Council in accordance with the statement of responsibilities. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Audit Committee, and management of Darlington 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 Committee and management of Darlington 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.



01 Executive Summary

Scope update

In our audit planning report circulated in September 2022 Audit Committee meeting, we provided you with an overview of our audit scope and approach for the audit of the financial statements. We carried out our audit in accordance with this plan with the following exception:

Materiality

In the 2021/22 audit planning report, we've included separate materiality figures for the Group and the Single Entity (the Council itself). We have revisited the materiality figures and determined that the group materiality figures would be appropriate for our testing for the following reasons:

- Gross expenditure (basis of planning materiality) is the same amount in the group and single entity financial statements.
- All amounts on the MIRS, CIES, Balance Sheet and Cash Flow Statement are the same on the single entity and group accounts, apart from the following which are also specific to the JVs and have been considered in our audit procedures on Group accounting:
 - ▶ Group MIRS: Authority's share of the reserves of joint ventures amounting to £1.09m.
 - ▶ Other comprehensive income: JV accounted for on an equity basis amounting to £0.76m.
 - ▶ Balance sheet: Investment in JVs (assets) and Usuable Reserves - Group Accounts both amounting to £1.09m.
- Substantially all of the account balances and classes of transactions are attributable to the single entity and audited centrally, therefore, using group materiality figures is appropriate.

As part of our concluding processes, we consider the impact of the revised financial statements on our materiality figures. Based on the revised gross expenditure value, now £255.2m, our updated overall materiality figure decreased to £5.1m (audit planning report - £5.3m). This resulted in updated performance materiality, at 75% of overall materiality, of £3.8 million, and an updated threshold for reporting misstatements of £255k.

Pensions Liability

The 2022 triennial actuarial valuation of pension liabilities has since become available following the circulation of the 2021/22 audit planning report (previous valuation being 2019). As the 2021/22 audit was still open, we were required to consider this work as part of our audit of 2021/22 financial statements, as the IAS19 disclosures in the financial statements utilise membership data from the previous triennial valuation (2019) and a material movement in membership data could give rise to a material change required to the IAS19 figures presented. The IAS19 figures have been recalculated for 2021/22 and did show a material change in membership and the IAS19 figures were therefore re-calculated and included in the revised financial statements. We performed additional audit procedures to confirm the updated valuation of the pension liability.

Infrastructure Assets

In our audit planning report, we brought to the attention of the Audit Committee, the national issue pertaining to local authorities not writing out the gross cost and accumulated depreciation on infrastructure assets when a major part/component has been replaced or decommissioned (replaced assets would still remain on the asset register) which could result in a material misstatement in the financial statements. As we were awaiting further sector guidance around this issue, we indicated that there may be a risk attached to the valuation of Infrastructure Assets. We have since received this guidance and have attached an inherent risk to the existence of infrastructure assets. We believe that the existence assertion was relevant as the issue pertained to failing to recognise disposals, which would mean that the gross carrying amount of infrastructure assets may include assets that have been replaced (no longer exists). Management has revised the presentation in line with the new CIPFA guidance. We have conducted audit procedures in line with the published guidance.

A full update is provided further in this report.

A summary of our approach to the audit of the balance sheet, including any changes to that approach from the prior year audit, is included in Appendix A.



Executive Summary

Status of the audit

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

- ▶ Receipt and review of the amended financial statements
- ▶ Receipt and review of the signed management representation letter
- ▶ Completion of mandatory independence and subsequent events review up to the date of the audit report
- ▶ Receipt and review of the signed financial statements

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, a current draft of which is included in Section 3.

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate until we have completed the work necessary to issue our assurance statement in respect of the Authority's Whole of Government Accounts consolidation pack. We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on the financial statements or on our value for money conclusion.



Executive Summary

Auditor responsibilities under the new Code of Audit Practice 2020

Under the Code of Audit Practice 2020 we are still 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 circulated to the Audit Committee, we reported that our value for money (VFM) risk assessment was ongoing, therefore had not identified any risk of significant weakness against the three reporting criteria we are required to consider under the NAO's 2020 Code.

We have now substantially completed our planned VFM procedures and have no matters to report by exception in the auditor's report (see Section 03). We plan to issue the VFM commentary by the end of April 2024 as part of issuing the Auditor's Annual Report.

Executive Summary

Audit differences

Since the circulation of our 2021/22 audit planning report in September 2022, there have been a few issues which have delayed the completion of the audit to 24 months after the 31 March 2022 year end. These include the delay in completion of the 2020/21 audit which was mainly due to two national issues, namely accounting for infrastructure assets and the impact of the 2021-22 triennial valuation of pension funds for earlier audits which were still open. The 2020/21 audit was completed on 25 July 2023. This delay meant that the audit of the 2021/22 accounts started late in August 2023. Other reasons, although not an exhaustive list, include:

- Changes to the Council's finance team - The draft financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022 were prepared and published by the previous team in July 2022. As the audit has been ongoing, almost 24 months after the financial year end, there have been changes to the council's finance team for reasons such as retirement, job progression and new appointments. Due to the delay in starting the audit, this has resulted in difficulties in the new finance team trying to source the data that was used to prepare the draft financial statements.
- Delays in retrieval of supporting evidence - As highlighted above, due to the delay in starting the 2021/22 audit, the audit has been ongoing for an elongated period. Due to changes in the finance team and the Council's storage policy, where documents are filed at a storage facility, in some instances, there were difficulties in retrieving certain sufficient appropriate supporting evidence easily and timely for submission to the audit team, as retrieving stored information involves costs as well as capacity of council staff. Due to the backstop proposals deadline, to draw a line on the 2021/22 accounts, the Council has made a decision not to retrieve all requested information deemed not material to the accounts.
- Backstop date - As highlighted by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), the backlog in local government audits has increased drastically. In July 2023, the Minister for Local Government published a Cross-System Statement to Parliament setting out proposals to tackle this backlog. To clear the backlog of historical accounts and 'reset' the system, DLUHC proposes putting a date in law (the "backstop date") - 30 September 2024 - by which point local bodies would publish audited accounts for all outstanding years up to and including 2022/23. The council has taken this backstop date into consideration when responding to audit findings.

For the reasons above, we have noted a larger number of misstatements in the 2021/22 financial year. We have categorised these misstatements into 4 categories contained in section 4 of this report. These categories include adjusted differences (these have an impact on the financial statements and may result in changes in the surplus and/or position on the balance sheet), adjusted classification differences (these may have an impact on the Statement of Comprehensive Income (CIES) and Expenditure and Balance Sheet but no impact on the surplus for the year), unadjusted differences and material disclosure amendments (these are amendments made on the disclosure notes that we deem should be highlighted but do not have an impact on the financial statements).

The impact of these differences on the CIES are as follows:

- Adjusted differences (including adjusted classification): Increase in the Group and Council's Surplus for the year by £3.96m and increase in the Group and Council's Other Comprehensive Income for the year by £4.86m*.
- Unadjusted audit differences: Overstatement of the Group and Council's Surplus for the year by £0.42m and £0.68m respectively. Understatement of the Group and Council's Other Comprehensive Income for the year by £1.96m.
- Material disclosure amendments: No impact on the CIES.

*Based on a further adjustment relating to the valuation of Council Dwellings which management have agreed to process, the impact of adjusted differences on the Group and Council's Total Comprehensive Income for the year is expected to increase by £3.88m.

Details of these misstatements are included in Section 4 of this report.

Executive Summary

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 performed.

We have not yet performed the procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts submission.

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 Darlington 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 within the "Areas of Audit Focus" section of this report.

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Area of audit focus / Inherent risk	Findings & Conclusion
<p>Risk of fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition - inappropriate recognition of grants with terms and conditions attached, inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure and omission of expenditure from the financial statements</p>	<p>From our testing of grants, we have identified the following material (exceeding overall materiality and/or material in nature) misstatements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overstatement of Capital Grants Received in Advance and understatement of Grant Income by £5.6m, • The accounting treatment of the clawback of a grant for the Feethams property as a reduction in grant income instead of being reflected as grant expenditure of £1.71m, • £7.72m of agent grants being recognised as grant income, and • Misclassification of Improved Better Care Fund & Social Care Grants amounting to £7.95m as Grants Credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Income instead of Grants Credited to Services. <p>We conclude that these misstatements were due to the misinterpretation of the accounting treatment for the specific grants rather than an indication of fraud and/or management override.</p> <p>We have not identified any evidence of manipulation of expenditure through incorrect capitalisation of revenue expenditure.</p> <p>Our sample testing of additions to Property, Plant and Equipment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found costs had been correctly classified as capital and included at the correct value. • Did not identify any revenue items that were incorrectly classified as capital. <p>Our testing of the completeness of liabilities did not identify any omitted items from expenditure.</p>

Executive Summary

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 Darlington 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 within the "Areas of Audit Focus" section of this report.

Area of audit focus / Inherent risk	Findings & Conclusion
Misstatements due to fraud or error	We have not identified any evidence that management has overridden controls in order to prepare fraudulent financial statement balances or postings within the financial statements.
Valuation of investment Property	We tested a sample of the Council's Investment Property and did not identify any misstatements in the valuation of Investment Properties.
Valuation of land and building held at depreciated replacement cost and existing use value	<p>We tested a sample of the Council's assets and identified the following misstatements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a £10.3 million understatement of the valuation of Council Dwellings which has been corrected in the updated financial statements. • Understatement of Rise Carr College by £0.3 million due to a difference between the valuer's report and the value included on the fixed asset register. This misstatement has not been corrected in the updated financial statements. • Understatement of the Honeypot Lane Property by £1.66 million due to inappropriate valuation technique and outdated valuation information. This misstatement has not been corrected in the updated financial statements <p>Although there are uncorrected misstatements, we are satisfied that the Property, Plant and Equipment and related balances within the financial statements are not materially misstated.</p>
Existence of infrastructure assets	<p>This was a national issue arising from the widespread practice of not derecognising infrastructure assets appropriately. After a period of consultation, DLUHC and CIPFA identified a solution which took effect from 25 December 2022 with guidance issued in January 2023. The Council has decided to use the simpler option of disclosing the net book value of infrastructure assets, and we have reviewed these disclosures in the light of the recent guidance and the work done by the Finance team.</p> <p>We draw to the Council's attention that this approach is only allowed on a temporary basis, up to the financial year 2024-25. After this, bodies will be expected to account for infrastructure valuation in the standard way: but this allows time for them to be able to do this. We are satisfied that infrastructure assets has been accounted for appropriately.</p>



Executive Summary

Areas of audit focus continued

Area of audit focus / Inherent risk	Findings & Conclusion
Pension liability valuation	<p>We tested the Council's pension liability valuation and assessed the work of the Council's actuary, AON. We have undertaken additional audit procedures in responses to the updated ISA540 regarding accounting estimates.</p> <p>We have also considered the impact of the 2022 triennial actuarial valuation which has resulted in a material adjustment that has been processed in the updated financial statements.</p> <p>We are satisfied that the pension liability and associated balances within the financial statements are not materially misstated.</p>
Group accounts	<p>The Group accounts consolidate the Council's 6 joint ventures with Esh Homes Limited, we did not identify any material misstatements in our testing of the consolidation.</p> <p>We have noted an error in the single entity's financial statements, where the Share of Joint Ventures' profits amounting to £1.2m was incorrectly recognised as a debtor. Management have corrected this misstatement.</p> <p>We conclude that the Group financial statements and accounting for groups in the single entity's financial statement is not materially misstated.</p>



Executive Summary

Areas of audit focus continued

We request that you review these and other matters set out in this report to ensure:

- ▶ There are no residual further considerations or matters that could impact these issues
- ▶ You concur with the resolution of the issue
- ▶ There are no further significant issues you are aware of to be considered before the financial report is finalised

There are no matters, other than those reported by management or disclosed in this report, which we believe should be brought to the attention of the Audit Committee or Management.

Control observations

During the audit, we identified the following significant deficiencies in internal control:

- ▶ Record keeping procedures over grant income. We recommend that management also regularly updates the grant register with additional information, including documenting the basis of accounting relating to all types of grants (revenue and capital), terms and conditions of grants, clawback clauses, expenditure funded by the grant and the permissibility to roll forward grants.
- ▶ Review and approval of manual journals and adjustments. We recommend that management ensures that all manual journals and adjustments are reviewed and approved when posted onto the system. This will enhance the prevention and detection of potential errors in postings.
- ▶ Records management. Due to the delay in starting the audit, we recognise the challenges faced by management in the retrieval of sufficient appropriate evidence for timely submission to the audit team as noted on page 8 of this report, however, we recommend that management enhances its controls around the safe keeping of supporting evidence to allow for easy retrieval of relevant appropriate information as required.

Independence

Please refer to Section 08 for our update on Independence.



02

Areas of Audit Focus



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Risk of fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition - inappropriate recognition of grants with terms and conditions attached, inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure and omission of expenditure from the financial statements

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.

We believe the risk of manipulation is most likely to manifest in the incorrect capitalisation of revenue expenditure through either inappropriate recognition of grants with terms and conditions, inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure and omission of expenditure from the financial statements.

What judgements are we focused on?

We focused on the Council's judgements in recognising grants with terms and conditions by selecting a sample of grants and confirming the compliance with the applicable terms and conditions. We also focused on the accounting treatment for grants designated as principal or agent.

We focused on the Council's judgements to classify expenditure as either revenue or capital in nature. We tested a sample of items to confirm that the Council's judgement was supported by sufficient evidence and was genuinely capital in nature.

What did we do?

In response to this risk, we:

- Tested a sample of grant income to supporting evidence and understood the related terms and conditions to confirm that recognition in 2021/22 financial statements was appropriate. We have confirmed that the relevant terms and conditions were met by testing the funded expenditure in against the eligibility criteria as noted in the grant agreements/letters. We have also tested whether these had been appropriately reflected as principal or agent transactions, depending on the terms attached. We have also engaged with our internal technical team to assist with the interpretation of terms and conditions of S106 grants and the treatment of clawbacks.
- Tested a sample of Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) additions to ensure that the expenditure incurred and capitalised is clearly capital in nature. We also agreed the transaction was supported by sufficient evidence to verify its value and the period it related to. We note that no testing was carried out on investment property additions as the value was immaterial.
- Tested a sample of Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute (REFCUS), to ensure that it is appropriate for the revenue expenditure incurred to be financed from ring fenced capital resources. As with PPE additions, we also considered whether these items were supported by sufficient evidence to verify the value and period it related to.
- Tested samples of expenditure transactions post year end to consider whether appropriate liabilities had been recorded for expenditure settled post year end relating to 2021/22.



Areas of Audit Focus continued

What are our conclusions?

From our testing of grants, we have identified the following material misstatements:

- The overstatement of Capital Grants Received in Advance and understatement of Grant Income by £5.6m,
- The accounting treatment of the clawback of a grant for the Feethams property as a reduction in grant income instead of being reflected as grant expenditure of £1.71m,
- Grant income including transactions amounting to £1.02 million which did not related to Grant Income.
- £7.72m of agent grants being recognised as grant income, and
- Misclassification of the Local Tax Income Guarantee of £3.4m as Grants Credited to Services instead of Grants Credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Income.
- Misclassification of Improved Better Care Fund & Social Care Grants of £7.95m as Grants Credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Income instead of Grants Credited to Services.
- Misclassification of Improved Better Care Fund & Social Care Grants of £7.31m as Grants Credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Income instead of Grants Credited to Services in the prior year.
- Misclassification of the reversal relating to the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) Grant of £1.47m as Grants Credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Income instead of Grants Credited to Services in the prior year.

We've also noted the following disclosure misstatements in grants notes 10 and 31:

- ▶ Note 10 - Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income: the 2021/22 values have been updated for the adjusted audit differences and disclosure amendments noted above. The comparatives were also updated by a net total of £5.84 million which has resulted in a prior year adjustment on the CIES.
- ▶ Note 31 - Grant Income: the 2021/22 and the comparative values have been updated to reflect the value of grant income recognised in the CIES, disclose revenue grants received in advance as a separate line item and to reconcile to Note 10. There was no impact on the CIES other than the prior year adjustment on the CIES amounting to £5.84 million as noted above. A narrative describing the prior year adjustment has also been included in Note 31 .
Please refer to Section 04 of this report for a detailed list of the disclosure amendments made to the 2021/22 financial statements.

We conclude that these misstatements were due to the misinterpretation of the accounting treatment for the specific grants rather than an indication of fraud and/or management override. Management have corrected these misstatements in the updated financial statements.

We have not identified any evidence of manipulation of expenditure through incorrect capitalisation of revenue expenditure.

Our sample testing of additions to Property, Plant and Equipment:

- Found costs had been correctly classified as capital and included at the correct value.
- Did not identify any revenue items that were incorrectly classified as capital.

Our testing of the completeness of liabilities did not identify any omitted items from expenditure.



Areas of Audit Focus continued

Significant risk

Misstatements due to fraud or error

What is the risk?

As identified in ISA 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 would otherwise appear to be operating effectively.

What judgements are we focused on?

We focused on aspects of the financial statements which are open to estimation and judgment, which would facilitate management overriding controls:

- ▶ Journal entries subject to specific narrative descriptors, posted at certain times of the financial year or by certain individuals, and journals which exceed certain values;
- ▶ Journals noted as unusual or outliers by our data analytics tool data, based on specifically developed risk criteria
- ▶ Material accounting estimates, such as the valuation of property, plant and equipment and investment property IAS 19 pensions and the ECL; and
- ▶ Unusual transactions anywhere in the financial statements.

What did we do?

In response to this risk, we:

- ▶ Identified fraud risks during the planning stages of our audit;
- ▶ Inquired of management about risks of fraud and the controls put in place to address those risks;
- ▶ Understood the oversight given by those charged with governance of management's processes over fraud;
- ▶ Considered the effectiveness of management's controls designed to address the risk of fraud;
- ▶ Determined an appropriate strategy to address those identified risks of fraud; and
- ▶ Performed mandatory procedures regardless of specifically identified fraud risks, including:
 - Testing journals at year-end and those identified by our data analytics tool to ensure there are no unexpected or unusual postings. This included searching for inappropriate journals posted by senior officers; journals with certain narrative descriptions which may allude to override; journals that do not balance to nil; and material journals posted at year end. We were satisfied that those journals tested did not contain evidence of management override.
 - Undertaking a detailed review of accounting estimates for evidence of bias (such as the valuation of land, buildings and investment property valuation, IAS 19 pension balances and the calculation for the Expected Credit Loss model of the bad debt impairment (ECL)) and substantively testing unusual or unexpected transactions. No evidence of override was identified, and no unusual transaction have been identified from work completed to date.



Areas of Audit Focus continued

What are our conclusions?

We used our data analytics tools to select a sample of journal entries for testing to underlying evidence, based on specifically developed risk criteria. From our journal testing, we have noted that there is no evidence of review and approval of journals and manual adjustments. We recommend that management ensures that all manual journals and adjustments are reviewed and approved when posted onto the system. This will enhance the prevention and detection of potential errors in postings.

Although we have noted the control deficiency above, based on the supporting evidence provided, we did not identify any issues or indications of fraud and/or management override from our journals testing.

We reviewed accounting estimates included in the financial statements which were most likely to be subject to management bias. We have not identified any matters for reporting to the Audit Committee.

We did not identify any misstatements.



Areas of Audit Focus continued

Our response to areas of audit focus



Further details on procedures/work performed

Valuation of Investment Property £14m

In our audit planning report, we highlighted the valuation of investment properties as an inherent risk. The fair value of Investment Properties (IP) represent significant balances in the Council's accounts and are subject to valuation changes. Management is required to make material judgemental inputs and apply estimation techniques to calculate the year-end balances recorded in the balance sheet.

We completed the following procedures to address the risk:

- ▶ 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 annually for investment property.
- ▶ Considered whether there were any specific changes to assets that have occurred and that these have been communicated to the valuer;
- ▶ Considered any 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.

We have also assessed the use of Investment Property to confirm the appropriateness of classifying property as Investment Property.

We also considered the usage of assets and whether there were any indicators of impairment.

We did not identify any material misstatements in the values for Investment Properties and classification thereof.



Areas of Audit Focus continued

Our response to areas of audit focus



Further details on procedures/work performed

Valuation of land and building held at depreciated replacement cost (DRC) and existing use value (EUV) £293.62m

We have attached an inherent risk to the valuation of land and building held at DRC and EUV as these properties represents a significant balance in the Council's financial statements and is subject to valuation changes, impairment reviews and depreciation charges. Management is required to make material judgements in respect of key assumptions and apply estimation techniques to calculate the year-end balances recorded in the balance sheet. We recognise that there are fewer assumptions used in the valuation of assets held at depreciated replacement cost, rather than open market value. We will also be focusing on assets which have had a change in use, e.g. from owner-occupied to letting.

We completed the following procedures to address the risk:

- ▶ Considered the work performed by the Council's valuer, 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 land and buildings assets have been valued as part of a five-year rolling programme as required by the CIPFA Code of Practice;
- ▶ 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
- ▶ Considered assets which have had change in use and the accounting treatment thereof; and
- ▶ Tested accounting entries have been correctly processed in the financial statements.

As indicated in the previous slides, we have noted the following misstatements in the valuation of PPE:

- a £10.3 million understatement of the valuation of Council Dwellings which has been corrected in the updated financial statements.
- Understatement of Rise Carr College by £0.3 million due to a difference between the valuer's report and the value included on the fixed asset register. This misstatement has not been corrected in the updated financial statements
- Understatement of the Honeypot Lane Property by £1.66 million due to an inappropriate valuation technique and outdated valuation information. This misstatement has not been corrected in the updated financial statements

We have also assessed the use of Property to confirm the appropriateness of classifying property as Property, Plant and Equipment. We had no matters to report in this regard.



Areas of Audit Focus continued

Our response to areas of audit focus



Further details on procedures/work performed

Existence of infrastructure assets £98.2m

The accounting for infrastructure assets was a national issue arising from the widespread practice of not derecognising infrastructure assets appropriately. After a period of consultation, DLUHC and CIPFA identified a solution which took effect from 25 December 2022 with guidance issued in January 2023.

Since we have received this guidance and, we have attached an inherent risk to the existence of infrastructure assets rather than the valuation assertion as reflected in the audit planning report. We believe that the existence assertion was relevant as the issue pertained to failing to recognise disposals, which would mean that the gross carrying amount of infrastructure assets may include assets that have been replaced (no longer exists).

The Council has decided, in line with the guidance, to use the simpler option of disclosing the net book value of infrastructure assets, and we have reviewed these disclosures in the light of the recent guidance and the work done by the Finance team.

We draw to the Council's attention that this approach is only allowed on a temporary basis, up to the financial year 2024-25. After this, bodies will be expected to account for infrastructure valuation in the standard way: but this allows time for them to be able to do this.

Group accounts

The CIPFA Code requires an assessment of arrangements on a qualitative basis first, and then on a quantitative basis. Management is required to revisit the Group assessment annually, based on the most up-to-date information, to determine if the Group financial statements require additional entities to be incorporated within the consolidation.

As in prior years, the Council produced Group accounts for 2021/22, in order to include the joint venture arrangements with Esh Homes Limited. The Council owns 50% of the share capital of the 6 (previously 4) joint ventures in place.

During our audit work, we have:

- ▶ Reviewed the Council's Group boundary assessment to ensure that it is complete and all Group entities have been identified;
- ▶ Reviewed the Council's assessment of qualitative factors such as whether the Council is exposed to any commercial risk through its involvement with the potential Group entities, in order to ensure the assessment is appropriate; and
- ▶ Tested the Council's quantitative assessment by agreeing all values included in the assessment to audited financial statements for each of the potential Group entities.

We have not identified any material matters to report in respect of the Group accounts and inclusion of the Joint Ventures with Esh Homes Limited.

We have noted an error in the single entity's financial statements, where the Share of Joint Ventures' profits amounting to £1.2m was incorrectly recognised as a debtor. Management have corrected this misstatement. We conclude that the Group financial statements and accounting for groups in the single entity's financial statement is not materially misstated.



Areas of Audit Focus continued

Our response to areas of audit focus



Further details on procedures/work performed

Pension liability valuation £181.54m

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 Durham County Council. The Council's pension fund deficit is a material estimated balance and the Code requires that this liability be disclosed on the Council's balance sheet.

The information disclosed is based on the IAS 19 report issued to the Council by the actuary. Accounting for this scheme involves significant estimation and judgement and therefore management engages an actuary to undertake the calculations on their behalf. ISAs (UK) 500 and 540 require us to undertake procedures on the use of management specialists and the assumptions underlying fair value estimates.

We reviewed the Council's IAS 19 reports which were used to prepare the financial statements. We have assessed the work of the actuary (AON), including the assumptions they have used, by relying on the work of PwC - consulting actuaries commissioned by the National Audit Office for all local government sector auditors, and considering any relevant reviews by the EY actuarial team.

We have liaised with the auditors of the Durham County Council Pension Fund to obtain assurances over the information supplied to the actuary in relation to Darlington Borough Council's participation in the scheme.

We have reviewed and tested the accounting entries and disclosures made within the Council's financial statements in relation to IAS19.

During the subsequent events period the actuarial triennial valuation for 2022 was published for the scheme. We were required to consider this work as part of our audit of the 2020/21 & 2021/22 financial statements, as the IAS19 disclosures in the financial statements utilise membership data from the previous triennial valuation (2019) and a material movement in membership data could give rise to a material change required to the IAS19 figures presented. The IAS19 figures have been recalculated for 2021/22 and did show a material change in membership which has resulted in a material amendment to the 2021/22 pension liability value in the updated financial statements. Additionally, we liaised with the auditors of the Durham County Council Pension Fund to obtain assurances over the updated membership data supplied to the actuary in relation to Darlington Borough Council's participation in the scheme.

There are no other matters to bring to your attention relating to the valuation of the pension liability.



Areas of Audit Focus continued



Going concern

We have performed the following procedures to address the appropriateness of preparing the financial statements on the going concern basis:

- ▶ We challenged management's identification of events or conditions impacting going concern;
- ▶ We tested management's resulting assessment of going concern by evaluating supporting evidence (including consideration of the risk of management bias);
- ▶ We reviewed the Council's assessment that it is appropriate for the financial statements to be prepared on a going concern basis;
- ▶ We reviewed the Council's cashflow forecast covering a period of at least 12 months from the final approval date, to ensure that it has sufficient liquidity to continue to operate as a going concern;
- ▶ We undertook a 'stand back' review to consider all of the evidence obtained, whether corroborative or contradictory, when we draw our conclusions on going concern; and
- ▶ We challenged the disclosure made in the accounts and annual report in respect of going concern and any material uncertainty.

Our audit work in this area is still ongoing, however, at the time of writing this report we have not identified any events or conditions that suggest management's assumption of going concern is inappropriate.

*Please note that we will revisit these going concern procedures up until the approval date of the financial statements to confirm that there is sufficient appropriate evidence that supports the council's going concern ability for at least 12 months from this approval date.



03 Audit Report



Audit Report

Draft Audit report

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our opinion on the financial statements

DRAFT - INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Opinion

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

- Council and Group Movement in Reserves Statement,
- Council and Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement,
- Council and Group Balance Sheet,
- Council and Group Cash Flow Statement,
- the related notes 1 to 42 to the Council financial statements and the Group Accounts Introduction, Joint Venture and Group Accounting Policies,
- Housing Revenue Account Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement on the Housing Revenue Account Statement, and the related notes 1 to 8, and
- Collection Fund and the related notes 1 to 3.

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 Darlington Borough Council and the Group 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 Group 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 Group Director of Operations' 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 Group and the Council's ability to continue as a going concern for a period to 30 April 2025.



Audit Report

Our opinion on the financial statements

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Group Director of Operations 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 Group's ability to continue as a going concern.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Group Director of Operations is responsible for the other information contained within the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022.

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.

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 Group and 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 Group and 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 Group Director of Operations

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Group Director of Operations' Responsibilities set out on pages 16, the Group Director of Operations is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the Group 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 Group Director of Operations 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 Group Director of Operations is responsible for assessing the Group and 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 Group and the Council either intends to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.



Audit Report

Our opinion on the financial statements

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.

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 Group and determined that the most significant are:

- Local Government Act 1972,

- School Standards and Framework Act 1998,
- Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (England and Wales),
- Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 1992),
- Education Act 2002 and school Standards and Framework Act 1998 (England),
- Local Government Act 2003,
- The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended in 2018, 2020, and 2022,
- The Local Government Finance Act 2012,
- The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (as amended), and
- The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

In addition, the Group and 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 Darlington 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 and 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 Group and the Council's committee minutes, through enquiry of employees to confirm Group and the Council policies, and through the inspection of employee handbooks and 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.



Audit Report

Our opinion on the financial statements

We assessed the susceptibility of the Group and 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 manipulation of reported financial performance (through improper recognition of revenue and expenditure), inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure and management override of controls to be our fraud risks.

To address our fraud risk around the manipulation of reported financial performance through improper recognition of revenue, we tested grant income to terms and conditions to ensure the recognition criteria were properly met.

To address our fraud risk of inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure we tested the Group and the Council's capitalised expenditure to ensure the capitalisation criteria were properly met and the expenditure was genuine.

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.

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 the Darlington 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 the Darlington 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, the Darlington 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.



Audit Report

Our opinion on the financial statements

Delay in certification of completion of the audit

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate until the NAO as group auditor has confirmed that no further assurances will be required from us as component auditors of Darlington Borough Council. We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on the financial statements or our work on value for money arrangements.

In addition, 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 Darlington 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 Group and the Group's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Caroline Mulley (Key Audit Partner)
Ernst & Young LLP (Local Auditor)
Newcastle upon Tyne
8 April 2024



04 Audit Differences





Audit Differences

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 unadjusted differences

In addition we highlight the following misstatements (continued on the next page) to the financial statements and/or disclosures which were not corrected by management. We have highlighted misstatements greater than the single entity reportable threshold of £0.254m. We request that these uncorrected misstatements be corrected or a rationale as to why they are not corrected be considered and approved by the Audit Committee and provided within the Letter of Representation. A table of the differences is attached on the next page and provide further detail below.

Audit differences

Unadjusted Differences:

Factual:

PFI historic difference: The PFI Accounting Model used by the Council is not consistent with usual custom and practice that has been adopted across the sector. This matter has been reported in prior years (as factual) and reflects the current year unwind.

L&S Management Costs are spread across expenditure and funded from ESFA Grant Funding. Revenue grants unapplied should be debited with the amount of expenditure funded from the grant, however, a debtor was recognised. This has resulted in the overstatement of L&S Management Team Debtor and revenue grants unapplied account by £0.36 million.

- ▶ Share of Joint Ventures' 2018/19 profits amounting to £0.34 million incorrectly recognised as a debtor in the single entity.
- ▶ Overstatement of housing benefits debtor XX26 as there was difference of £0.28 million between the sub-ledger and the debtor.
- ▶ Discrepancy noted for the valuation of Rise Carr College between management's specialist' valuation report and the value recognised in the fixed assets register. This has resulted in an understatement of £0.30 million in PPE.
- ▶ Evidence to support the Dolphin Centre Income amounting to £0.29 million was inaccessible due to these documents being placed **into offsite storage**.
- ▶ Overstatement of payments made in advance of £0.25 million and understatement of expenditure by £0.25 million due to the incorrect treatment.

Judgemental:

- ▶ Judgemental misstatement resulting in the understatement of the valuation of Honeypot Lane amounting to £1.66 million due to inappropriate valuation technique and outdated valuation information (2009 when further developments had been made by 2021).

Projected misstatements:

- ▶ From a sample of creditors as part of our creditors testing, we have identified Short-Term Creditors pertaining to the 2022/23 financial year that have been incorrectly assumed as income in advance in 2021/22. The contra entry was a debit to debtors. This has resulted in a projected overstatement of income in advance and debtors by £1.33 million.
- ▶ From a sample of debtors as part of our debtors testing, we have identified cash refunds to debtors were credited to creditors instead of reducing the debtors. This has resulted in a projected overstatement of debtors and creditors by £1.71 million.



Audit Differences continued

Uncorrected misstatements 31 March 2022 (£'000)	Effect on the current period:		Net assets (Decrease)/Increase				Reserves Debit/ (Credit)
	OCI Debit/ (Credit)	Comprehensiv e Income and Expenditure Statement Debit/(Credit)	Assets current Debit/ (Credit)	Assets non current Debit/ (Credit)	Liabilities current Debit/ (Credit)	Liabilities non-current Debit/ (Credit)	
Audit differences (Council)							
Known differences:							
▶ PFI Liability (This matter has been reported in prior years and the above reflects the current year unwind.)		(141)				(1,115)	1,256
▶ Overstatement of L&S Management Team Debtor			(359)				359
▶ Share of Joint Ventures' 2018/19 profits incorrectly recognised as a debtor in the single entity			(338)				338
▶ Overstatement of housing benefits debtor XX26 - difference between the sub-ledger and the amounts included in the financial statements		280	(280)				
▶ Discrepancy noted for the valuation of Rise Carr College between management's experts' valuation report and the value recognised in the fixed assets register	(300)			300			
▶ Evidence to support the Dolphin Centre Income was inaccessible due to these documents being placed into storage		285	(285)				
▶ Overstatement of Prepayments*		254	(254)				
Judgemental differences:							
▶ Understatement of the valuation of Honeypot Lane due to inappropriate valuation technique and outdated valuation information (2009 when further developments had been made by 2021)	(1,657)			1,657			
Projected differences:							
▶ Short-Term Creditors pertaining to the 2022/23 financial year that have been incorrectly assumed as income in advance in 2021/22. The contra entry was a debit to debtors.			(1,330)		1,330		
▶ Cash refunds to debtors were credited to creditors instead of reducing the debtors..			(1,712)		1,712		
Income effect of uncorrected misstatements (before tax)	-	-					
Total of current year uncorrected misstatements*	(1,957)	678	(4,558)	1,957	3,042	(1,115)	1,953

*This audit difference is below the Group's reportable threshold of £0.255m, which has resulted in a difference between the total impact of uncorrected misstatements on current assets and the CIES for the Group and Council. The impact of the total uncorrected misstatements on the Group current assets and CIES is -£4.304m and £0.424m.



Audit Differences

Uncorrected misstatements in the statement of cash flows

We note that management has used a balancing figure of £1.2 million on the face of the cash flow statement under "Other receipts" - this figure is to ensure that the cash flow statement balances at year-end and ties in with the Cash & Cash Equivalents movement. We have recommended that management ensure the cashflow is fully reconciled for all line items in future years.

Summary of adjusted differences

Audit differences

Adjusted Differences:

- ▶ The closing balance of Council Dwellings (Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)) has been adjusted by +£6.5 million (and management have agreed to process a further adjustment of £3.8 million) to reflect its true position as at 31 March 2022.
- ▶ PPE amounting to £2 million had been incorrectly reflected as Inventory. Management has corrected this misstatement by adjusting PPE by +£2 million and decreasing Inventory by the same amount.
- ▶ Additions to PPE, amounting to £3.6 million, was incorrectly impaired immediately which has led to an understatement of PPE and overstatement of impairment expense. This entry has been reversed to correct the misstatement.
- ▶ Share of Joint Ventures' profits amounting to £1.2 million was incorrectly recognised as a debtor in the single entity. Management have corrected this misstatement by decreasing debtors and income by the same amount.
- ▶ Internal Debtors and Internal Creditors were overstated by £5.8 million which was corrected by decreasing debtors and creditors by the same amount.
- ▶ Payment in advance amounting to £1.5 million has been recognised as a debit to creditors. This has been corrected by recognising payment in advance and reversing the reduction in creditors.
- ▶ There was a misclassification of a long term creditor amounting to £0.57 million as a short term creditor. Management have corrected since corrected this error by debiting short term creditors and crediting long term creditors by the same amount.
- ▶ The pensions liability value per the draft 2021/22 financial statements were based on the 2019 triennial valuation. During the audit, the 2022 triennial valuation has since become available, which has resulted in a material change in the closing liability value. This has resulted in an adjustment of £5.05 million (reduction) to the pensions liability value.
- ▶ From our sample of Capital Grants Received in Advance (CGRIA), we have noted that the terms and conditions of the sampled grants were met, therefore, should be recognised as income. This has resulted in the overstatement of CGRIA and an understatement of Income. Management have revisited the population and it was determined that this misstatement applied to the entire population. This misstatement has been corrected by debiting CGRIA and crediting income by £5.6 million.
- ▶ Grant income including transactions amounting to £1.02 million which did not related to Grant Income which has been subsequently corrected by management.
- ▶ Agent Grants amounting to £7.72 million was inappropriately recognised as Grants Credited to Services. Management have corrected this misstatement by derecognising the income and expenditure for the same amount.
- ▶ Agent Grants income and expenditure amounting to £1.30 million inappropriately included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. This has been corrected by reversing the entry.
- ▶ Management have recorded the clawback for the grant pertaining to the Feethams building as a reduction to income by £1.71 million rather than as expenditure. This has been corrected in the updated financial statements.



Audit Differences continued

Audit differences

Adjusted Differences (continued):

- ▶ During 2021/22, management had derecognised the Central Government creditor for an amount of £2.64 million and recognised Business Rates Income for the same amount. However, it was noted that the amount of £2.64 million was in fact still owing to Central Government, resulting in the overstatement of Business Rates Income and understatement of Short-Term Creditors for the same amount. Management have since corrected the misstatement.
- ▶ SSR Capital expenditure of £0.65 million deducted from gross expenditure (net cost of services) although not originally included. Management have corrected this adjustment by reversing the entry.
- ▶ DLO Income/Expenditure had been double counted due to incorrect posting of recharges. This has been corrected through debiting income and crediting expenditure by £1.69 million
- ▶ Overstatement of income and expenditure amounting to £0.51 million due to internal top up payments recorded as income and expenditure for the Council. This has been corrected through debiting income and crediting expenditure by £0.51 million.
- ▶ Prior year adjustment - In 2020/21, an adjustment was made to Council Dwellings. However, the adjustment of £7.21 million was taken through the General Fund Reserves instead of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Reserve and therefore not reflected in the HRA statements. This has been corrected as a prior year adjustment and described in HRA Note 8.
- ▶ An adjustment was made in the 2020/21 financial statements to correct an audit difference identified in Council Dwellings which was processed after the publication of the draft 2021/22 financial statements. As the 2021/22 financial statements were drafted before the 2020/21 audit difference was raised, this prior year adjustment was not considered in the draft 2021/22 financial statements. Therefore, the initial entries posted for the valuation of Council Dwellings will need to be reversed, as these entries pertained to and was processed in the 2020/21 financial statements: DR Surplus on the revaluation of PPE - OCI £0.84m, DR Gross income - operations (revaluation of PPE) £7.21m, CR PPE £8.05m.

Adjusted Classification Differences:

- ▶ Misclassification of Improved Better Care Fund & Social Care Grant amounting to £7.95 million as Grants Credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Income. This has been corrected by debiting Grants Credited to Taxation and Non-Specific and crediting Grants Credited to Services by the same amount.
- ▶ Misclassification of the Local Tax Income Guarantee of £3.4m as Grants Credited to Services instead of Grants Credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Income.
- ▶ Misclassification of Improved Better Care Fund & Social Care Grants of £7.31m as Grants Credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Income instead of Grants Credited to Services in the prior year.
- ▶ Misclassification of the reversal relating to the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) Grant of £1.47m as Grants Credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Income instead of Grants Credited to Services in the prior year.

Material disclosure amendments:

- ▶ Note 3 - £6.89m of earnings from the property funds reflected as fees, charges and other service income has been updated to reflect as investment income.
- ▶ Note 3 - Misclassification between Employee Expenses and Other Expenses amounting to £2.47 million
- ▶ Note 13 - Audit fees note updated to reflect the 2020/21 SFV
- ▶ Note 16 - The PPE note has been updated to disclose infrastructure assets in accordance with the amended code.
- ▶ Note 22 - Misclassification between General Debtors (BA07) and Payments in Advance (BA08) amounting to £0.55 million
- ▶ Note 24 - Incorrect classification of LGPS Payment as Government Creditor rather than Other Entities Creditor amounting to £1.09 million.
- ▶ Note 24 - Misclassification between Government Department Creditors (BL01) and General Capital Creditors (CL26) amounting to £0.57 million



Audit Differences continued

Audit differences

Material disclosure amendments (continued):

- ▶ Note 24 - Misclassification between Government Department Creditors (BL01) and Other entities and individuals (Income in Advance) (BL04) amounting to £0.56 million
- ▶ Note 10 & 31 (Current year) - Reclassification from Business Rates Income to Non-ringfenced Government Grants amounting to £2.14 million
- ▶ Note 10 & 31 (Current year) - Top-up Grant and Top-up Adjustment Grant totalling £7,678k disclosed stand-a-lone in Note 10 and 31 rather than within Business Rates Income.
- ▶ Note 31 (Current year) - Housing Benefits Expenditure (reflected in Note 31 - Grant income: Rent Allowances and Rent Rebates) has been updated as it was understated in the draft financial statements by £3.01 million.
- ▶ Note 10 & 31 (Prior year) - Top-up Grant and Top-up Adjustment Grant totalling £7,590k disclosed stand-a-lone within Note 10 and Note 31 rather than within Business Rates Income and Non-ringfenced Government Grant income.
- ▶ Note 10 & 31 (Prior year) - Allocated Local Tax Income Guarantee of £3.4m between Business Rates and Council Tax Income.
- ▶ Note 10 & 31 (Prior year) - Section 31 Grants amounting to £10.1m in aggregate (net of income and creditor) reclassified from Business Rates Income to Non-ringfenced Government Grants.
- ▶ Note 31 (Prior year) - Reclassified £6.38m of Grant from Taxation and Non-Specific to Credited to Services to reconcile with CIES in prior year.
- ▶ Note 31 (Prior year) - Reclassified £0.28m of Grant from Taxation and Non-Specific to Revenue Grants Received in Advance to reconcile with CIES in prior year.
- ▶ Note 31 (Prior year) - Council Tax Hardship Fund - Removed disclosure of £1.3m from Taxation and Non-specific grant income, removed £1.2m as was already included within Council Tax Income, and reclassified £0.1m to grants credited to services to reconcile with CIES.
- ▶ Note 31 (Prior year) - Disclosed £4.27m recognised in the prior year Note 10. This was not disclosed in Note 31 in the prior year.
- ▶ Note 10 - Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income: the 2021/22 values have been updated for the adjusted audit differences and disclosure amendments noted above. The comparatives were also updated by a net total of £5.84 million which has resulted in a prior year adjustment on the CIES.
- ▶ Note 31 - Grant Income: the 2021/22 and the comparative values have been updated to reflect the value of grant income recognised in the CIES, disclose revenue grants received in advance as a separate line item and to reconcile to Note 10. There was no impact on the CIES other than the prior year adjustment on the CIES amounting to £5.84 million as noted above. A narrative describing the prior year adjustment has also been included in Note 31.
- ▶ The Cash Flow Statement has been updated to reflect the movement of £1m in short term investments within Investing activities
- ▶ The Cash Flow Statement has been updated to disclose the gross proceeds of £3m and repayments of £14.9m to/from short and long term borrowing which was previously disclosed on the net basis.
- ▶ Note 41 - Following an organisational restructure in 2021/22, Darlington Borough Council have reclassified income/expenditure in the CIES across the new service areas. The amended financial statements now include a disclosure note explaining the reason for the reclassification, and/or the amounts reclassified, as required by the CIPFA guidance notes.
- ▶ HRA Statements Note 2 has been updated to include the total Vacant Possession Value per the Align Report as at 1 April 2021 in line with CIPFA guidance as oppose to the value as per the Orchard Report as at 31 March 2022 in the draft financial statements.
- ▶ HRA Statements Note 8 - This note has been included to describe the prior year adjustment to the HRA reserve.
- ▶ Within the Group MIRS, the entity has brought forward the "Authority's" share of the reserves of joint ventures" column from 2019/20 rather than 2020/21. The "Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure" has then been declared as a loss rather than a profit, and the overall balance at 31st March 2022 declared as a loss rather than a gain. This has been corrected in the amended financial statements.
- ▶ Group CIES: Updated share of JV is to reflect as a profit.



05

Value for Money



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.

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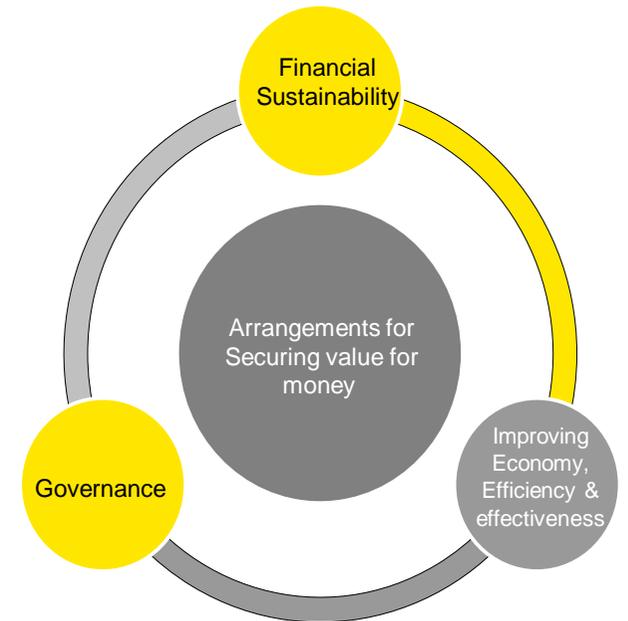
Risk assessment

In the Audit Plan circulated to the Audit Committee, we reported that our value for money (VFM) risk assessment was ongoing, therefore had not identified any risk of significant weakness against the three reporting criteria we are required to consider under the NAO's 2020 Code.

We have now completed the risk assessment and have not identified any significant weaknesses or risks.

Status of our VFM work

We have substantially completed our planned VFM procedures and have no matters to report by exception in the auditor's report (see Section 03). We plan to issue the VFM commentary by the end of April 2024 as part of issuing the Auditor's Annual Report.





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

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.

Financial information in the Statement of Accounts 2021/22 and published with the financial statements was consistent with the audited financial statements.

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 have not yet received the procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts submission. We do not yet have a timeline for when we can expect to receive this guidance and therefore our audit certificate will remain open until our reporting is concluded in this respect.

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 Authority 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.

Other reporting 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 Council's financial reporting process. They include the following:

- Significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures;
- Any significant difficulties encountered during the audit;
- Any significant matters arising from the audit that were discussed with management;
- Written representations we have requested;
- Expected modifications to the audit report;
- Any other matters significant to overseeing the financial reporting process;
- Findings and issues around the opening balance on initial audits (if applicable);
- Related parties;
- External confirmations;
- Going concern;
- Consideration of laws and regulations; and
- Group audits

We have no matters to report.



07

Assessment of Control Environment



Assessment of Control Environment

Financial controls

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.

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.

The matters reported are limited to those that we identified during the audit and that we concluded are of sufficient importance to merit being reported to you.

We note that the root cause for these control deficiencies are mainly due to the elongated period lapse of 24 months between the 31 March 2022 year end and the finalisation of the financial statements together with the changes to the members in the finance team which resulted in difficulties of the new finance team trying to source data that was used to prepare the 2021/22 draft financial statements and difficulties in retrieval of documentation that had been filed in accordance with the Council's storage policy (please refer to page 8 of this report).

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2021/22 control recommendations

Observation

During the audit, it was noted that there was a grant register in place, however, it was not regularly updated for related expenditure, excluded an assessment of terms and conditions of each grant, excluded an assessment of the agent vs principle aspect as well as possible clawback conditions. We recommend that grant register is updated regularly with this additional information.

Impact

As the grant register lacked key information as noted above, management had to perform these assessments of grants at a time long after the year end. Further, a range of grant related misstatements were noted during the audit process which could have possibly been avoided if the required analysis was performed during the grant register maintenance process. It also meant that audit procedures for grants have to be carried over an extended period of time.

Management Comment

2021/22 control recommendations

Page 100

Observation

It was noted that there is a breakdown in controls over the review and approval of manual journals. We recommend that management ensures that all manual journals are reviewed and approved when posted onto the system. This will enhance the prevention and detection of potential errors in postings.

Observation

We have noted that, in some instances, relevant, appropriate supporting evidence could not always be submitted timely as to the engagement team due to documents being filed offsite in accordance with the Council's storage policy. However, we recommend that management enhances its controls around the safe keeping of supporting evidence to allow for easy retrieval of relevant appropriate information as required.

Impact

As reflected in this report, there were numerous misstatements arising from incorrect or duplicate posting of journals into the system such as double counting of income and expenditure, recognising a creditor instead of reducing debtors, etc. which could have possibly been detected during the review/approval process.

Impact

This has resulted in various queries being raised and frequent 'back and forth' between management and the engagement team over an elongated period to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence.

Management comment

Management comment



08

Independence

Relationships, services and related threats and safeguards

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.

Services provided by Ernst & Young

The next page includes a summary of the fees due for the year ended 31 March 2022 in line with the disclosures set out in FRC Ethical Standard and in statute. Full details of the services that we have provided are shown below.

As at the date of this report, there are no future services which have been contracted and no written proposal to provide non-audit services has been submitted.

We confirm that we have not undertaken non-audit work other than the certification of the Council's Housing Benefit Claim, Teachers Pension and Pooling return. We have adopted the necessary safeguards in our completion of this work and complied with Auditor Guidance Note 1 issued by the NAO in May 2020.

Relationships, services and related threats and safeguards

Fees for Services provided by Ernst & Young

Description	Final Fee 2021/22 £	Planned Fee 2021/22 £	Final Fee 2020/21 £
Statutory Audit Fee	71,813	71,813	71,813
Scale Fee Variation	TBC	TBC	39,132
Total audit fee	TBC	TBC	110,945
Non-audit work - Housing Benefits Certification	25,300	25,300	10,500
Non-audit work - Teachers' Pensions AUP	5,850	5,850	5,500
Non-audit work - Pooling of Capital Receipts	10,000	10,000	5,500
Total non-audit services	41,150	41,150	21,500
Total fee	TBC	TBC	132,445

Other communications

EY Transparency Report 2023

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 2023:

[EY UK 2023 Transparency Report | EY UK](#)



09

Appendices

Audit approach update

We summarise below our approach to the audit of the balance sheet and any changes to this approach from the prior year audit.

Our audit procedures are designed to be responsive to our assessed risk of material misstatement at the relevant assertion level. Assertions relevant to the balance sheet include:

- ▶ Existence: An asset, liability and equity interest exists at a given date
- ▶ Rights and Obligations: An asset, liability and equity interest pertains to the entity at a given date
- ▶ Completeness: There are no unrecorded assets, liabilities, and equity interests, transactions or events, or undisclosed items
- ▶ Valuation: An asset, liability and equity interest is recorded at an appropriate amount and any resulting valuation or allocation adjustments are appropriately recorded
- ▶ Presentation and Disclosure: Assets, liabilities and equity interests are appropriately aggregated or disaggregated, and classified, described and disclosed in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. Disclosures are relevant and understandable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework

Other updates to our audit approach since the circulation of the 2021/22 Audit Planning Report:

Materiality

In the 2021/22 audit planning report, we've included separate materiality figures for the Group and the Single Entity (the Council itself). We have revisited the materiality figures and determined that the group materiality figures would be appropriate for our testing for the following reasons:

- Gross expenditure (basis of planning materiality) is the same amount in the group and single entity financial statements.
- All amounts on the MIRS, CIES, Balance Sheet and Cash Flow Statement are the same on the single entity and group accounts, apart from the following which are also specific to the JVs and have been considered in our audit procedures on Group accounting:

- ▶ Group MIRS: Authority's share of the reserves of joint ventures amounting to £1.09m.
- ▶ Other comprehensive income: JV accounted for on an equity basis amounting to £0.76m.
- ▶ Balance sheet: Investment in JVs (assets) and Usuable Reserves - Group Accounts both amounting to £1.09m.
- Substantially all of the account balances and classes of transactions are attributable to the single entity and audited centrally, therefore, using group materiality figures is appropriate.

As part of our concluding processes, we consider the impact of the revised financial statements on our materiality figures. Based on the revised gross expenditure value, now £255.2m, our updated overall materiality figure decreased to £5.1m (audit planning report - £5.3m). This resulted in updated performance materiality, at 75% of overall materiality, of £3.8 million, and an updated threshold for reporting misstatements of £255k.

Pensions Liability

The 2022 triennial actuarial valuation of pension liabilities has since become available following the circulation of the 2021/22 audit planning report (previous valuation being 2019). As the 2021/22 audit was still open, we were required to consider this work as part of our audit of 2021/22 financial statements, as the IAS19 disclosures in the financial statements utilise membership data from the previous triennial valuation (2019) and a material movement in membership data could give rise to a material change required to the IAS19 figures presented. The IAS19 figures have been recalculated for 2021/22 and did show a material change in membership. Management has provided evidence to support the fact that the main element of increase in members occurred in the 2021/22 financial year. We performed additional audit procedures to confirm the updated valuation of the pension liability.

Appendix A

Audit approach update continued

Infrastructure Assets

In our audit planning report, we have brought to the attention of the Audit Committee, the national issue pertaining to local authorities not writing out the gross cost and accumulated depreciation on infrastructure assets when a major part/component has been replaced or decommissioned (replaced assets would still remain on the asset register) which could result in a material misstatement in the financial statements.

As we were awaiting further sector guidance around this issue, we indicated that there may be a risk attached to the valuation of Infrastructure Assets.

We have since received this guidance and have attached an inherent risk to the existence of infrastructure assets. We believe that the existence assertion was relevant as the issue pertained to failing to recognise disposals, which would mean that the gross carrying amount of infrastructure assets may include assets that have been replaced (no longer exists).

We have conducted audit procedures in line with the published guidance.

The material balance sheet accounts we have audited are:

- Long and Short term Borrowings
- Capital Grants Received in Advance
- Long and Short term Creditors
- Other Long term liabilities (Pensions Liability)
- Long and short term Debtors
- Property, Plant and Equipment
- Investment Property
- Long term Investments
- Cash and Cash Equivalents
- Usable and Unusable Reserves

Appendix B

Summary of communications

Date	Nature	Summary
September 2022	Audit planning report	Audit planning report was circulated documenting the key risks and areas of audit focus
Throughout the audit	Meeting	The key members of the audit team met with the Finance manager and various members of management's team at least weekly to discuss a log of queries and issues. This included detailed discussion of testing items, progress and issues being identified.
Throughout the audit	Meeting	The engagement partner has attended audit committee meetings throughout the duration of the audit as necessary.
Quarterly	Meeting	The engagement partner and manager has quarterly meetings with the Chief Executive and Group Director of Operations.
Ad hoc through completion of audit	Meeting	We met with key members of the finance team, including the Assistant Director of Operations and the Finance Manager, while final audit procedures were being completed.
April 2024	Audit Results Report	Audit Results Report to be circulated/presented in April 2024.
April 2024	Auditor's Annual Report	Auditor's Annual Report to be circulated/presented in April 2024.

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In addition to the above specific meetings and letters the audit team met with the management team multiple times throughout the audit to discuss audit findings.

Appendix C

Required communications with the Audit Committee

There are certain communications that we must provide to the those charged with governance of UK entities. We have detailed these here together with a reference of when and where they were covered:

			 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.		Audit planning report (circulated in September 2022)
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 (circulated in September 2022)
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 (to be circulated/ presented in April 2024)

Appendix C

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Subject to compliance with regulations, any actual or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations identified relevant to the audit committee ▶ Subject to compliance with regulations, any suspicions that irregularities, including fraud with regard to the financial statements, may occur or have occurred, and the implications thereof ▶ The valuation methods used and any changes to these including first year audits ▶ The scope of consolidation and exclusion criteria if any and whether in accordance with the reporting framework ▶ The identification of any non-EY component teams used in the group audit ▶ The completeness of documentation and explanations received ▶ Any significant difficulties encountered in the course of the audit ▶ Any significant matters discussed with management ▶ Any other matters considered significant 	
Going concern	<p>Events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty related to going concern ▶ Whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements ▶ The appropriateness of related disclosures in the financial statements 	Audit results report (to be circulated/ presented in April 2024)
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 (to be circulated/ presented in April 2024)
Subsequent events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enquiry of the audit committee where appropriate regarding whether any subsequent events have occurred that might affect the financial statements. 	Audit results report (to be circulated/ presented in April 2024)

Appendix C

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
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: <ul 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 (to be circulated/ presented in April 2024)
Related parties	<p>Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity's related parties including, when applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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 (to be circulated/ presented in April 2024)
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>Audit planning report (circulated in September 2022)</p> <p>Audit results report (to be circulated/ presented in April 2024)</p>

Appendix C

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
	<p>Communications whenever significant judgements are made about threats to objectivity and independence and the appropriateness of safeguards put in place.</p> <p>For public interest entities and listed companies, communication of minimum requirements as detailed in the FRC Revised Ethical Standard 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Relationships between EY, the company and senior management, its affiliates and its connected parties ▶ Services provided by EY that may reasonably bear on the auditors' objectivity and independence ▶ Related safeguards ▶ Fees charged by EY analysed into appropriate categories such as statutory audit fees, tax advisory fees, other non-audit service fees ▶ A statement of compliance with the Ethical Standard, including any non-EY firms or external experts used in the audit ▶ Details of any inconsistencies between the Ethical Standard and Group's policy for the provision of non-audit services, and any apparent breach of that policy ▶ Where EY has determined it is appropriate to apply more restrictive rules than permitted under the Ethical Standard ▶ The audit committee should also be provided an opportunity to discuss matters affecting auditor independence 	
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 (to be circulated/ presented in April 2024)
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 (to be circulated/ presented in April 2024)

Appendix C

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit. 	Audit results report (to be circulated/presented in April 2024)
Group Audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ An overview of the type of work to be performed on the financial information of the components ▶ An overview of the nature of the group audit team's planned involvement in the work to be performed by the component auditors on the financial information of significant components ▶ Instances where the group audit team's evaluation of the work of a component auditor gave rise to a concern about the quality of that auditor's work ▶ Any limitations on the group audit, for example, where the group engagement team's access to information may have been restricted ▶ Fraud or suspected fraud involving group management, component management, employees who have significant roles in group-wide controls or others where the fraud resulted in a material misstatement of the group financial statements. 	Audit results report (to be circulated/presented in April 2024)
Written representations we are requesting from management and/or those charged with governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Written representations we are requesting from management and/or those charged with governance 	Audit results report (to be circulated/presented in April 2024)
Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise 	Audit results report (to be circulated/presented in April 2024)
Auditors report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Key audit matters that we will include in our auditor's report ▶ Any circumstances identified that affect the form and content of our auditor's report 	Audit results report (to be circulated/presented in April 2024)

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

[To be prepared on the entity's letterhead]

[Date]

Caroline Mulley
Ernst and Young LLP
Citygate
St James' Boulevard
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4JD

Dear Caroline

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the consolidated and Council financial statements of Darlington Borough Council ("the Group and 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 consolidated and Council financial statements give a true and fair view of the Group and Council financial position of Darlington Borough Council as of 31 March 2022 and of its financial performance (or operations) and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with, for the Group and the Council, 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)).

We understand that the purpose of your audit of our consolidated and Council financial statements is to express an opinion thereon and that your audit was conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing, 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, for the Group and the Council, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and 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)).
2. We acknowledge, as members of management of the Group and Council, our responsibility for the fair presentation of the consolidated and Council financial statements. We believe the consolidated and Council 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 Group and the Council 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)) and are free of material misstatements, including omissions. We have approved the consolidated and Council financial statements.
3. The significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the Group and Council financial statements are appropriately described in the Group and Council financial statements.
4. As members of management of the Group and Council, we believe that the Group and Council have 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 (as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (November 2022)) for the Group and the Council 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 and the effects of the conflicts and related sanctions in Ukraine, Russia and/or Belarus on our system of internal controls.

Management representation letter continued

Management Rep Letter

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 consolidated and Council financial statements taken as a whole. We have not corrected these differences identified and brought to our attention by the auditor because **[specify reasons for not correcting misstatement]**.
6. We confirm the Group and 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 for determining that the Group and Council's activities are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations and that we are responsible for identifying and addressing 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 consolidated and Council financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
4. We have no knowledge of any identified or suspected non-compliance with laws or regulations, including fraud that may have affected the Group or Council (regardless of the source or form and including without limitation, any allegations by "whistleblowers"), including non-compliance matters:
 - involving financial statements;
 - related to laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the consolidated or 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 Group or 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 consolidated and Council financial statements, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic and including those related to the conflict can related sanction in Ukraine, Russia and/or Belarus.
3. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of the Group and Council, Council Committee 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: **[list date]**.
4. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Group and Council's related parties and all related party relationships and

Management representation letter continued

Management Rep Letter

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 year 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 consolidated and Council 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 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)).
6. We have disclosed to you, and the Group and Council has complied with, all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the consolidated and Council financial statements in the event of non-compliance, including all covenants, conditions or other requirements of all outstanding debt.
7. From 19 July 2023 through the date of this letter we have disclosed to you any unauthorized 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 unauthorized access to our information technology systems is reasonably likely to have a material impact on the Group and Council 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 consolidated and Council 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 consolidated and Council financial statements all guarantees that we have given to third parties.

E. Going Concern

1. Note 42 to the consolidated and Council financial statements discloses all the matters of which we are aware that are relevant to the Group and 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. There have been no events, including events related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict and related sanctions in Ukraine, Russia and/or Belarus, subsequent to year end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the consolidated and Council financial statements or notes thereto.

G. Group audits

1. There are no significant restrictions on our ability to distribute the retained profits of the Group because of statutory, contractual, exchange control or other restrictions other than those indicated in the Group financial statements.
2. Necessary adjustments have been made to eliminate all material intra-group unrealised profits on transactions amongst the Council and associated undertakings.

H. Other information

1. We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the other information. The other information comprises the narrative report.
2. We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

Management representation letter continued

Management Rep Letter

I. 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, including the impact resulting from the commitments made by the Group and Council, and reflected in the consolidated and Council financial statements.
2. The key assumptions used in preparing the consolidated and Council 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 (as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (November 2022)), aligned with the statements we have made in the other information or other public communications made by us.

J. Comparative information - comparative financial statements

In connection with your audit of the comparative consolidated and Council financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 we represent, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the following:

1. During the year ended 31 March 2022 audit, it was noted that Note 31 - Grant Income was not prepared in accordance with all disclosure requirements as prescribed in the CIPFA guidance notes. This has been rectified in the current year by revising the note for current year and comparative values. During the council's exercise of revising the note, it was noted that there were grants amounting to £5.8m in aggregate that were classified as Taxation from Non-Specific Grant Income instead of as Grants Credited to Cost of Services in the prior year's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES). This has been rectified in 2021/22 by restating the comparatives in the CIES for Cost of Services ('People') and Taxation and Non-Specific grant income by the £5.8m. Notes 3 - Expenditure and Funding Analysis, 10 - Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income and 31 - Grant Income have been updated to be consistent with the change in the CIES. The error pertains only to the classification of grant income. There is no overall impact on the 2020/21 surplus.

In the 2020/21 financial statements, the council processed an adjustment to record Council Dwellings at its appropriate value as at 31 March 2021. However, the impact of this adjustment of £7.2m was not fully reflected in the 2020/21 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Movement in Reserves Statement (MIRS) as the revaluation gain was taken to the General Fund Reserve instead of the HRA. This error has been rectified in the 2021/22 financial statements by restating the comparative values relating to the HRA and the MIRS. The 2021/22 comparatives in the HRA Income and Expenditure Statement and HRA Movement on the HRA Statement have been restated to recognise the revaluation gain of £7.2m. In addition, the comparative for Adjustments to Revenue Resources in Note 5 - Adjustments Between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Regulations has been restated to recognise the gain in the correct reserve. There is no overall impact on the total 2020/21 Reserves balance.

The comparative amounts have been correctly restated to reflect the above matters and appropriate note disclosure of these restatements have also been included in the current year's consolidated and Council financial statements.

There have been no significant errors or misstatements, or changes in accounting policies, other than the matters described above, that would require a restatement of the comparative amounts in the current year's consolidated and Council financial statements. Other differences in the amounts shown as comparative amounts from the amounts in the consolidated and Council financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 are solely the result of reclassifications for comparative purposes.

K. Ownership of Assets

1. The Group and Council has satisfactory title to all assets appearing in the balance sheets, and there are no liens or encumbrances on the Group and Council's assets, nor has any asset been pledged as collateral. All assets to which the Group and Council has satisfactory title appear in the balance sheets.

Management representation letter continued

Management Rep Letter

2. All agreements and options to buy back assets previously sold have been properly recorded and adequately disclosed in the consolidated and Council financial statements.
3. We have no plans to abandon lines of product or other plans or intentions that will result in any excess or obsolete inventory, and no inventory is stated at an amount in excess of net realisable value.
4. There are no formal or informal compensating balance arrangements with any of our cash and investment accounts.

L. Reserves

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

M. Contingent Liabilities

1. We are unaware of any violations or possible violations of laws or regulations the effects of which should be considered for disclosure in the consolidated and Council financial statements or as the basis of recording a contingent loss (other than those disclosed or accrued in the consolidated and Council financial statements).
2. We are unaware of any known or probable instances of non-compliance with the requirements of regulatory or governmental authorities, including their financial reporting requirements, and there have been no communications from regulatory agencies or government representatives concerning investigations or allegations of non-compliance, except as follows:
 - (1) Matters of routine, normal, recurring nature (e.g., examinations by bank and insurance examiners, examinations by taxing authorities, none of which involves any allegations of noncompliance with laws or regulations that should be considered for disclosure in the consolidated and Council financial statements or as a basis for recording a loss contingency.

N. Use of the Work of a Specialist

1. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we engaged to evaluate the valuation of property and valuation of the pension liability and have adequately considered the qualifications of the specialists in determining the amounts and disclosures included in the consolidated and Council 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.

O. Estimates

Valuation of Land, Buildings and Investment Properties Estimate

1. We confirm that the significant judgments made in making the valuation of land, buildings and investment properties have taken into account all relevant information and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic 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 valuation of land, buildings and investment properties estimate.
3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the valuation of land, buildings and investment properties estimate appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out an accurate valuation on behalf of the entity.
4. We confirm that the disclosures made in the consolidated and Council 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 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)).
5. We confirm that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in making the valuation of land, buildings and investment properties.

Management representation letter continued

Management Rep Letter

IAS 19 Pensions Liability Estimate

1. We confirm that the significant judgments made in making the IAS 19 pensions liability estimate have taken into account all relevant information and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic 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 IAS 19 pensions liability estimate.
3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the IAS 19 pensions liability estimate appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out accurate valuation of the IAS 19 pensions liability on behalf of the entity.
4. We confirm that the disclosures made in the consolidated and Council financial statements with respect to the accounting estimate, including those describing estimation uncertainty and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, are complete and are reasonable in the context of 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)).
5. We confirm that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in making the IAS 19 pensions liability estimate.

Creditor Accruals Estimate

1. We confirm that the significant judgments made in making the creditor accruals estimate have taken into account all relevant information and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic 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 creditor accruals estimate.

3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making creditor accruals estimate appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out appropriate valuation of creditor accruals on behalf of the entity.
4. We confirm that the disclosures made in the consolidated and Council financial statements with respect to the accounting estimate, including those describing estimation uncertainty and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, are complete and are reasonable in the context of 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)).

P. 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,

Group Director of Operations

Chair of the Audit Committee

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ED None

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DARLINGTON

Borough Council

Statement of Accounts

2021/22

Statement of Accounts 2021/22 of Darlington Borough Council

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Narrative Report of Darlington Borough Council

Chief Finance Officer Report

Whilst 2020/21 was undoubtedly the year of Covid, 2021/22 will be remembered as the year we started to live and adapt to the difficulties and opportunities it created. The pandemic fundamentally impacted on the priorities of, and the way in which the Council conducted its business. The financial pressure on the public sector as a whole and the Council more specifically have been significant over the last couple of years, and this was on the background of a decade of significant financial challenge following the economic downturn and the reductions in public sector spending

Despite this the Council has been successful in responding to these challenges, both in the last couple of years supporting residents, businesses and NHS colleagues in their response to the pandemic, but more generally by continuing to provide vital core services and investing the resource available in growing our economy to deliver success for the benefit of all Darlington residents.

As we enter 2022/23 the Council will no doubt face financial challenges following the after effect of the pandemic, the impact of the Ukraine conflict and inflation rises, but there will also be opportunities to be grasped with the levelling up agenda and the Darlington Economic Campus with hundreds of new government jobs coming to the area.

We therefore press ahead with our top priority of growing Darlington's economy and continue to be creative and find innovative ways of working.

As the financial statements demonstrate, the financial standing of the Council continues to be robust. We have well established financial management processes and procedures that stand up well in the ever changing and challenging environment of continuous change.



Elizabeth Davison

Group Director of Operations
Section 151 Officer
Darlington Borough Council

Narrative Report of Darlington Borough Council

1 An Introduction to Darlington

The 2021/22 financial year was the second year like no other experienced in living memory. Along with the rest of the world, Darlington Borough Council had to manage the unprecedented challenges that COVID-19 posed. From the start of the first national lockdown on 24 March 2020, the Council very quickly established services to protect residents and businesses as well as continuing to deliver business as usual services, adapting provision to the ever changing circumstances.

Darlington Borough Council is a unitary local authority located in the western end of the Tees Valley, a sub-regional grouping that also includes the unitary authorities of Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees. Since becoming a unitary authority in 1997, Darlington Borough Council has consistently worked in partnership with the other Tees Valley authorities, through the agency of Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU), on strategic investment and regeneration planning. Furthermore, Darlington is also a member of the Tees Valley Combined Authority. Created in April 2016, it is a partnership of the five Tees Valley authorities, and aims to drive economic growth and job creation in the area by working closely with the local business community and other partners to make local decisions to support economic growth. Under the devolution deal with the Government, the Combined Authority, chaired by the Tees Valley Mayor, has taken on responsibilities previously held by Westminster and Whitehall; for transport, infrastructure, skills, business investment, housing, culture and tourism.

Darlington is regarded as the 'gateway' to the Tees Valley and to the wider North-East region. Darlington station on the East coast mainline railway connects the Borough and Tees Valley with the rest of the UK, whilst Durham Tees Valley Airport, located within the Borough, provides links to Europe and the world through Amsterdam. Darlington sits at the crossing of the north-south A1 motorway and the east-west A66 trunk road. Location and excellent communications with a high quality of life in a sub-regional context are key assets in Darlington's attractiveness as a place to live and work.

Looking beyond the Tees Valley, Darlington is a place that has helped shape the modern world. The railway age started in Darlington and transformed global horizons. 'Made in Darlington' is stamped on bridges and installations across 6 continents and the Borough is now at the cutting edge of world-leading developments in sub-sea engineering, bio-medicine and digital business technologies. These are all essential connections for Darlington as a sustainable community - acting locally to build social, economic and environmental well-being with global mindfulness.

2 Darlington - About the Borough

Population - As of 2021, Darlington's population is estimated to be 107,402, a slight increase from 2019.

The 2021 Census suggests there are 22,100 people aged 65+ in Darlington. By 2035 Darlington's State Pension Age population is predicted to be 29,400 as opposed to the 22,300 estimated in 2020.

Demographics - Most of the population are long-term residents:

- 65.3% are owner-occupiers
- 15.5% live in social housing

However, 8.3% of the population moves to or leaves Darlington every year.

Darlington has a higher than average proportion of children and older people, compared to the North East of England.

Income - Darlington residents, on average, are estimated to earn above average for the North East. 2021 NOMIS data shows the gross weekly pay for full time workers in Darlington is £584.10 compared to the £546.80 in the North

Gross disposable Income (GDHI) per head, which takes into account all forms of incomes not just earnings, in Darlington is estimated to be £17,319 per year, which is above the regional average.

In terms of employment concentrations against national and regional averages Darlington has comparative advantage in a number of sectors, such as logistics, information & communication and financial & insurance services.

Diversity - In comparison to other areas in the UK, Darlington's population is not ethnically diverse with just 6.2% of residents defining themselves as being non-white UK in the 2011 Census, compared to 20.3% for England as a whole.

Narrative Report of Darlington Borough Council

Nationally there is a shortage of data on the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, but it is understood that these communities comprise the largest ethnic minority grouping in Darlington, although this was not reflected in the 2011 Census.

Your Council - Darlington Borough Council has a gross budget of over £221m and employs around 2,000 staff in full time and part time contracts (excluding schools). Below is the make up of the workforce of the Council:

Headcount (excluding schools)

	Female	Male	Total
Full Time	621	527	1,148
Part Time	642	194	836
Total	1,263	721	1,984

This equates to 1,470.54 FTEs (excluding schools).

Political Structure - As of 31 March 2022, the Council is made up of 50 Councillors for 20 wards, with the political make up as follows:

- Conservative 23
- Labour 17
- Independent Group 3
- Liberal Democrats 3
- Green Party 2
- Independent 2

The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget and this underwent scrutiny by the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in January 2022. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy were all approved by Council in February 2022.

3 Council's Performance

Darlington Council's Plan, 'Delivering Success for Darlington' outlines the council's vision for the borough 'Darlington is a place where people want to live and businesses want to locate, where the economy continues to grow, where people are happy and proud of the borough and where everyone has the opportunity to maximise their potential'. Delivery of the vision will be achieved by focussing on a number of key priorities with partners, as outlined below.

The Council Plan is the overall vision for Darlington's future agreed by Council and it has 4 key priorities which are set out below:

Growing Darlington's Economy by delivering

- More sustainable well-paid jobs
- More businesses
- More homes

And we will support economic growth by keeping the borough:

- Clean
- Safe
- Healthy
- Sustainable
- Well-planned
- On the move

Whilst valuing our heritage and culture

Maximising the Potential of Our Young People

By:

- Working with partners to maximise educational achievement
- Working to remove barriers to young people reaching their potential
- Working at a Tees Valley level to match jobs with skills and training

Narrative Report of Darlington Borough Council

Supporting the Most Vulnerable in the Borough

By:

- Providing care and support when needed
- Working with people to build on their strengths to maximise their potential
- Working with partners

Working with Communities to Maximise their Potential

By:

- Maximising the benefits of a growing economy for all communities
- Targeting services where they are most needed
- Working with partners
- Working with communities

Delivery of the Council Plan is managed via a Performance Management Framework (PMF) of strategic performance measures and narrative updates against key actions, which are refreshed annually. Year end performance across the Council and the priorities is reported by portfolio, with much positive news to build on but also some emerging priorities to take into account.

In terms of the **Stronger Communities portfolio**, good progress has been made over the past year, including:

- Darlington Cares activity continues to recover after the impact of Covid on volunteering levels and is celebrating its 10th year of operation. Four new members have joined in the last quarter including Amazon.
- The Bread and Butter Thing (TBBT) has gone from strength to strength over the past year with eight hubs now operating across Darlington supported by a strong volunteer base.
- The Civic Enforcement Team continues to focus on three key areas of work: anti-social behaviour, environmental crime and parking enforcement, with a particular focus on back lanes and environmental crime.
- Over 1,000 of the current workforce has received equality and diversity training, and 76% of councillors have participated in at least one of the bespoke sessions.

With regards to our **Resources portfolio**, key actions undertaken over the last year include:

- The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2022-26 was approved by Council in February 2022 and provides a balanced budget for the life of the plan.
- The West Park housing joint venture, which is part of a larger scheme and will be completed over a seven year period, is progressing well with sales buoyant and only six of the properties available in 2022 left to sell. The Neasham Road joint venture has commenced with infrastructure works in progress on site, and all properties available for sale in 2022 sold. The Council's out-of-borough joint venture with Esh Group is still in its infancy, however, all properties available for sale in 2022 are sold.
- The percentage of business rates collected in-year in 2021-22 was slightly above the Council's target of 98.0% and exceeds the amount collected in the previous year.
- The spend with Darlington based suppliers has increased from Quarter 2 by 3% and remained stable through Quarter 3 and 4, which equates to £33.2m for the 12 month period.
- Average daily visits to the corporate website is up by 1,000 a day compared to pre-pandemic levels.
- The number of online transactional services available on the corporate website is 176.

Narrative Report of Darlington Borough Council

Regarding the **Children and Young People portfolio**, key areas of work undertaken in 2021/22 include:

- Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) have continued to receive excellent services throughout 2021/22.
- The Strengthening Families, Protecting Children programme has continued to be embedded across Darlington Borough Council's Children's Services, utilising relational practice to ensure timely interventions which support families to stay together and reduce the need for children to come into care.
- 99 children and young people ceased to be in care in 2021/22.
- The proportion of children placed for adoption or with in-house foster carers has been positively increasing.
- There are currently 55 approved foster care families and we have recruited a further 9 foster care families during the year.
- The proportion of Darlington care leavers Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) has remained low with 23.1% at the end of 2021/22.
- Referrals to the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) have continued to grow, month on month during 2021/22 with young people continuing to move into education, employment and training.
- The In2 cohort participated in a social music making project over a 10 week period, learning how to play colourful plastic instruments, leading to a performance alongside a band, for peers, teachers and parents.
- The Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme funded by Department for Education is now firmly established at multiple settings across Darlington and is thriving, with 630 children directly engaged in programmes over the Easter school holidays.

Key actions delivered under the **Economy portfolio** over the past 12 months has included:

- The Towns Fund continues to deliver in its objectives and work has been completed in the various yards along Skinnergate.
- Work on the Northern Echo building continues with architects appointed to work with client departments (Darlington College and DBC Learning and Skills) to develop an Adult Skills Hub on the ground floor.
- We are receiving a great deal of enquiries into the availability of land and buildings for business expansion and relocating.
- At Central Park, construction of the new Innovation Central development continues on programme with completion set for August 2022.
- The Government Property Agency (GPA) continues to invest in Feethams House to accommodate Her Majesty's Treasury, with the first cohort of officials to be relocating into the building in early June.
- The Local Plan was successfully adopted in February 2022.
- A housing and climate change strategy is being developed and we are working with the Tees Valley Combined Authority on both an electric vehicle charging strategy and a bus service improvement.
- Work is continuing to improve the efficiency of our corporate buildings, with increased capacity for solar panels on the Town Hall roof and improved controls for the heating system.
- Our tree planting commitment is well on the way to being achieved, with more than 15,000 trees planted.

Narrative Report of Darlington Borough Council

Regarding the **Local Services portfolio**, notable achievements in 2021/22 include:

- The footfall in Darlington town centre has increased in comparison to 2020/21 figures and continues to follow this trend for 2022/23 period.
- Darlington has welcomed a number of new independent retailers to the town centre and the continued programme with the Towns Fund is improving shop fronts within the Skinnergate and Yards areas.
- Work has continued through the period with partners to develop the 2025 celebrations programme. Work has continued this year, developing and finalising the proposals for the Darlington Rail Heritage Quarter project putting in place all the approvals including planning and Cabinet for a start in early May 2022.
- Major refurbishment works are underway at Darlington Library.
- Cockerton Library is thriving following its modest refurbishment in November.

In addition to the significant work undertaken to manage the pandemic locally over the past year, including continuing to support residents and tenants, the council's **Health and Housing portfolio** also delivered:

- Despite COVID, the Public Health team has continued to progress with a number of other priorities including suicide prevention and mental health. Make Every Contact Count training was delivered to frontline services and partners across the borough, and the Healthy Lifestyle Survey involved 8,400 local pupils across 32 Darlington schools.
- The Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant (SSMTR) was secured to expand the number of treatment places for substance misuse for both adults and young people.
- The toothbrushing scheme in reception and primary schools was re-established, and a joint oral health needs assessment was commissioned in conjunction with neighbouring Tees Valley local Visitor numbers to the Dolphin Centre have continued to grow throughout the year and has seen a large increase in the events programme, re-engagement of on-site partners, and the introduction of new partners. The gym and Dolphin Centre memberships have also continued to rise during this quarter.
- All of Darlington Borough Council's social housing stock continued to meet the Decent Homes Standard in 2021-22
- Housing officers continue to promote help and guidance to tenants needing support, with 1,750 tenants in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) - its highest level since UC was introduced. Average rent arrears for tenants receiving UC is lower than the regional average.
- The number of people presenting to the Council's Homelessness services has increased by 33% compared to the previous year, as a consequence of the pandemic. We have increased the number of temporary accommodation from 11 to 15, and purchased 4 empty properties to provide 8 new units of accommodation.
- Feedback amongst Lifeline service users remains positive. There were over 9,380 emergency response call-outs to elderly and vulnerable customers in 2021-22.

Finally, the **Adults portfolio** has contributed to the council plan's vision over the previous year by:

- Darlington has a very low number of people (46) with mental health needs requiring paid support. The Mental Health team within Adult Social Care work closely with the local Trusts and the Primary care Network/GPs to prevent escalation or reduce the need for intervention.
- Since April 2021, 234 out of 290 Assistive Technology Toolkit Referrals assigned to Lifeline resulted in equipment being provided, which is above the equivalent figures for the past two years.
- As of the end of March 2022, 96.5% of 752 clients using social care were receiving self-directed support. Darlington typically exceeds both the national and regional averages for this measure, reflecting the strong ethos of the Council's Adult Social Care team of taking a strengths-based approach to support residents in need.
- As of the end of March 2022, 100% of 94 carers using social care received self-directed support.
- Darlington exceeds both the national and regional average for this metric, and reflects how all carers, who are in receipt of a commissioned service, now have a personal budget.

Narrative Report of Darlington Borough Council

4 Financial Performance

Economic climate

Since 2010 Darlington Borough Council has faced significant financial challenges due to reductions in funding from central government along with cost pressures and increasing demand within services. The process of balancing the Council's finances is ongoing and will last until at least 2024/25 whilst government policy is being developed.

In common with the rest of local government, the Council has seen a steady reduction in its core funding in recent years. The Government's aim is to phase out non-specific grant funding altogether, instead allowing local authorities to retain a higher proportion of business rates collected locally.

As mentioned earlier in this report Covid-19 will have a significant impact on the Council's finances and Members will be updated on a regular basis to ensure proper governance is in place to manage the impact of the pandemic.

Outturn (revenue and capital)

The financial standing of the Council is robust, with sound financial management practices.

Comparison of Actual with Budget - Revenue

Net Expenditure 2021/22	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000
<i>Departmental Resources</i>			
People Group	62,599	59,779	(2,820)
Services Group	19,150	17,219	(1,931)
Operations Group	15,759	14,483	(1,276)
Chief Executive & Economic Growth Group	1,467	993	(474)
Council Wide	(499)	(536)	(37)
<i>Total Departmental Resources</i>	98,476	91,938	(6,538)
<i>Corporate Resources</i>			
Financing Costs	823	457	(366)
Joint Venture - Investment Return	(1,546)	(1,540)	6
Contingencies Budget	725	439	(286)
Mid-year Savings	993	0	(993)
<i>Total Corporate Resources</i>	995	(644)	(1,639)
<i>Net Expenditure</i>	99,471	91,294	(8,177)
<i>Reserves</i>			
Planned Use of General Reserve	2,459	2,420	(39)
Departmental Balances brought forward	(4,105)	(4,105)	0
Departmental Balances carried forward	0	5,760	5,760
Covid Earmarked reserve	0	(932)	(932)
Government Grant - SFC	0	470	470
Balance to Reserves	0	2,918	2,918
<i>Total Reserves</i>	(1,646)	6,531	8,177
Total Resources	97,825	97,825	0

Of the £6.538m departmental underspend, £0.462m relates to Covid-19 costs that are funded from additional grant, £5.760m is being carried forward and £1.279m is being returned to general reserves. All of the £1.639m corporate underspend is being returned to general reserves. In 2022/23, there is a planned net contribution to reserves of £0.468m as set out in the 2022-26 Medium Term Financial Plan.

Narrative Report of Darlington Borough Council

Where The Money Comes From and How It Was Spent

The following table explains in more detail the Council's sources of income and what it was actually spent on:

2020/21 £'000	Gross Income	2021/22 £'000	%
(20,727)	Gross Council Rents	(20,845)	7.2
(3,614)	Revenue Support Grant	(3,634)	1.2
(30,898)	General Government Grants	(13,278)	4.6
(15,884)	Business Rates Income	(22,630)	7.8
(23,938)	Dedicated Schools Grant	(25,942)	8.9
(52,429)	Demand on Collection Fund	(55,843)	19.2
(91,231)	Specific Government Grants	(61,430)	21.1
(14,397)	Capital Grants	(26,908)	9.2
(7,658)	Capital Receipts	(2,206)	0.8
(2,481)	Interest and Investment Income	(9,887)	3.4
(13,046)	Income from Fees & Charges	(48,457)	16.6
(276,303)		(291,060)	100.0

How it was spent:

2020/21 £'000	Gross Expenditure	2021/22 £'000	%
7,478	Chief Executive & Economy	4,804	2.0
60,486	Operations	54,459	22.4
126,448	People	139,512	57.5
48,707	Services	40,578	16.7
927	Other	3,353	1.4
244,046		242,706	100.0
287	Precepts & Levies	294	
5,380	Interest Payable	4,981	
4,190	IAS 19 Pension cost adjustment	4,530	
6,976	Amount of non-current assets written off on disposal	1,397	
5,120	Investment property expenditure and change in fair value	530	
1,008	Other	2,429	
22,961		14,161	
267,007	Total Expenditure	256,867	
(9,296)	Deficit for year	(34,193)	

Narrative Report of Darlington Borough Council

Sources of Funds to meet Capital Expenditure Plans

The total resources available for capital schemes during 2021/22 totalled £202.949m; however not all of the resources were planned to be expended during 2021/22. Some schemes have a build life of longer than one year so the actual planned spend for 2021/22 was £85.181m with an actual spend of £43.388m. The main areas of slippage relate to major projects in Transport and Housing as well as the Railway Heritage Quarter. The slippage into 2022/23 will be financed by unsupported borrowing, grants carried forward, Usable Capital Receipts and Revenue and Capital Contributions.

Capital expenditure 2021/22	Capital Spend Available	Planned Spending 2021/22	Actual	Approved Capital Spend Carried Forward
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive & Economic Growth Operations	49,548	16,902	7,844	41,704
People	82,729	32,160	17,154	65,575
Services	5,381	3,784	3,362	2,019
Leased Assets	64,992	32,036	14,728	50,263
Total	299	299	299	(0)
Total	202,949	85,181	43,387	159,561
Financed by				
**Corporate Unsupported Borrowing			13,781	
Capital Grants			19,371	
Housing Revenue Contributions			8,502	
Capital Contributions			38	
Housing Revenue Account Capital Receipts			986	
General Fund Capital Receipts			586	
Revenue Contributions			123	
Total			43,387	

The following is a list of the major items of capital expenditure incurred during the year:

	£'000
Highways & Transport Infrastructure	11,343
Housing Stock - Improvements	10,728
Investment Properties	43
Operational Buildings - Improvements	11,373
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute (REFCUS)	1,403
Development Services	8,197
Children's Services Improvements to Schools	1
Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	299
Total	43,387

The Council is also committed to make payments estimated at £39.659m over the remaining term of the 25 year contract in respect of its PFI scheme (the Education Village and Harrowgate Hill Primary School). These became operational in March 2006 and August 2005 respectively. Both are part of the approved funding of £34.900m by the Department for Education. A recognition of the long-term contract entered into with partners Kajima Darlington Schools Limited can be found in Note 32 in the Notes to the Financial Statements and the liability relating to this contract can be found on the Balance Sheet.

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Four Year Capital Programme

The Council continues to deliver a significant capital investment programme in the main funded from the Housing Revenue Account and external funding which is targeted at specific schemes and programmes such as Transport and Schools. In addition there are a number of schemes financed from the Council's own resources.

The Council's 4 year capital programme and its funding can be summarised as follows:

Capital Expenditure and Funding

	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Total £'000
Capital Expenditure and funding					
Children, Families and Learning	142	142	142	142	568
Housing (HRA)	32,980	24,869	20,081	24,175	102,105
Transport	2,575	2,575	2,575	2,575	10,300
Other Capital Programmes	1,063	1,063	1,063	1,063	4,252
Council Funded Schemes	4,532	2,524	1,024	900	8,980
Self Financing	13,000	18,000	3,140	0	34,140
Total Spending Plans	54,292	49,173	28,025	28,855	160,345
Resources					
Capital Grants	4,480	3,780	3,780	3,780	15,820
HRA Revenue Contributions	17,618	16,491	16,693	14,179	64,981
HRA Investment Fund	0	0	0	0	0
HRA Capital Receipts	303	303	303	303	1,212
Corporate Resources	18,891	10,599	4,109	10,593	44,192
Self Financing	13,000	18,000	3,140	0	34,140
Total Resources	54,292	49,173	28,025	28,855	160,345

Balance Sheet

The Council's summarised Balance Sheet is shown below:

	As at 31 March 2021 £m	As at 31 March 2022 £m
Non-current assets	455	494
Net current assets - debtors, stock, cash and short term investments less short term creditors and liabilities	(14)	(16)
Long Term Liabilities and Provisions	(375)	(317)
Total Net Assets	66	161
Represented by:		
Usable reserves	115	133
Unusable reserves	(49)	28
Total Reserves	66	161

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5 Principal Risks and Uncertainties

Risk Management is an essential part of effective and efficient management and planning and it strengthens the ability of the Council to achieve its objectives and enhance the value of services provided. It is also an important element in demonstrating continuous improvement as well as being part of the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance that reflects the requirements of the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework of Corporate Governance.

A key element of the Council's planning process is that the areas of potential risk, which could adversely impact on the ability to meet objectives, are identified. These risks are plotted on to a standard likelihood and impact matrix with reference to management controls in place and working. The shaded part of the matrix signifies the area above the 'risk appetite line'. Risks in this region require further specific management i.e. are priorities for improvement that have an appropriate improvement action plan. The risk matrix shown below as reported to Audit Committee on 20 July 2022 highlights that the Council has 7 current Corporate risks that are above the 'risk appetite line'.

SR15 - Inability to cope with significant increase in homelessness cases following the impact of COVID.

- Additional funding has been provided by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUCH) for homeless services. More accommodation and support has been commissioned to cope with increased demand and additional staff have been recruited to the Housing Options Team. However, demand for emergency accommodation has remained high with the shortage of appropriate move on accommodation exacerbating the issue.

SR16 - Inability to contain placement costs for children looked after due to lack of sufficient in house placements

- A full Transformation and Efficiency programme is being delivered with the key objective of developing sufficient provision within or close to Darlington that meet the needs of looked after children. This includes in-house foster care, residential care and specialist provision for complex needs. Due to the changing complexities and the demand for placements not just locally, but also regionally and nationally, the work will be informed by other localities, and joint working will take place where this can add value.

SR20 - Increased demand for Adult Services impacts negatively on plans for budget efficiencies

- There is increasing demand for adult social care and support specifically domiciliary care, aides, adaptations and support for people with significant learning disabilities. People are living with multiple conditions and disabilities and require intensive support to remain at home and as independent as possible. Covid has also had a significant impact on people's wellbeing and support needs. Adult Social Care will continue with the Transformation programme, and ensure that all assessments are strength based and outcome focussed with the support of the local community.
- Performance, practice and quality will be continuously monitored and reviewed to ensure we reduce, delay and prevent people from requiring care and support prematurely. Funding streams and grants from the Department of Health & Social Care will support the demand management and provide some temporary cost mitigation. However, with the introduction of the Integrated Care Systems there is further dialogue required to understand the resources available to support post covid recovery.

SR21 - Increased demand for Children's Services impacts negatively on budget

- Work is ongoing within the Transformation Programme to safely reduce the level of risk in children's services. Input to this work has been enhanced with colleagues from Leeds City Council under the DfE sponsored Strengthening Families Programme. The ethos of the work will continue despite the programme formally ceasing.

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SR27 - Failure to respond appropriately to safeguard vulnerable children, in line with national legislation and safeguarding children, thresholds and procedures

- Services are in place to screen contacts and referrals, and to respond should concerns be identified. Pathways for intervention are both internal and multi-agency, and the Council ensures that its own staff understand and apply them robustly.

SR34 - Budget & resource implications arising from the ability to progress and complete schemes/projects in the event of further COVID-19 lockdowns & further construction inflation, material supply and resource demands

- Within the Construction industry there continues to be issues with rises in material prices and high demand for trades and resource to deliver projects of all sizes. These issues are across all sectors, both private and public. Projects developed prior to these issues materialising may not have built in contingencies into the budget or programme to absorb this. Therefore, this will require Programmes & Projects to be reviewed on an individual basis for affordability and deliverability as costs and programmes are finalised. Future project budgets will have inflation allowance built in linked to the proposed start and finish dates.

SR39 - The Council is unable to deliver housing targets detailed in the Local Plan as a result of the designation of nutrient neutrality catchment area

- In the interim period the Council (and other Tees Valley Authorities) will, based on Counsel advice, continue to determine all applications for housing where a permission already exists, for example, reserved matters applications and discharge of relevant conditions. Where housing applications are not yet determined arrangements are being set up with all of the authorities in the catchment area to make assessments on all new housing applications as far as they relate to nutrient neutrality.

CORPORATE

LIKELIHOOD	A Very High				
	B High			SR21	
	C Significant		SR11, SR13, SR29	SR15, SR16, SR20, SR34, SR39	
	D Low				SR27
	E Very Low				
	F Almost Impossible				
		IV Negligible	III Marginal	II Critical	I Catastrophic
IMPACT					

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6 Pension Liabilities

Following the implementation of IAS 19, the accounts show the benefit entitlement earned by employees of the Local Government Pension Scheme in the relevant year rather than the charges to revenue based on employer's contributions payable and payments to pensioners in the year. The effect on the Balance Sheet is to reduce the net worth of the Council by the IAS 19 pension liability of £181.540m (in 2020/21 the IAS 19 pension liability was £219.830m). The Council's Pension fund has to be revalued every 3 years to set future contribution rates and subsequent to the last full actuarial valuation date of 31 March 2022 the deficit is to be recovered over a period of 20 years, as agreed by the Pension Fund Administering Authority with the Actuary. Further information is available in Note 37 in the Notes to the Financial Statements.

7 Treasury Management

On 18 February 2021, Council approved the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22. Treasury management performance is reported to Cabinet and Council with detailed reviews being undertaken by Audit Committee.

The financial year 2021/22 was an unprecedented year with regard to treasury management due to the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic. Cost of borrowing remained low throughout 2021/22 and due to the Covid-19 pandemic the cost of shorter term borrowing is anticipated to remain relatively low in the future. Investments continued to be made only when there was low risk with the Council placing continuing reliance on internal borrowing (reduced external investments and using the money to pay for capital expenditure rather than borrowing). The Internal borrowing still had a positive effect on the MTFP's financing costs as generally investment rates are lower than borrowing rates and there would have been a cost of carrying those investments in addition to any counterparty risk there might have been.

During 2021/22 the Council complied with its legislative and regulatory requirements. The need for borrowing was only increased for capital purposes.

At 31 March 2022, the Council's external debt was £149.649m which is £11.882m less than the previous year, mainly with the Council not having to replace its matured short term debt due to the high levels of cashflow throughout the year. The average interest rate for borrowing was 2.47% down from 2.98% in 2020/21. Investments totalled £63.399m at 31 March 2022 (£59.399m at 31 March 2021) earning interest of 0.21% over the year. Included in the total investments figure were Property Fund units of £29.999m which provided an annualised net return of 2.21%.

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8 Explanation of the Accounting Statements

This Statement of Accounts has been prepared in accordance with the 'Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom' (the code) which defines proper accounting practices for local authorities in England and also complies with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The code is based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

Darlington Borough Council's accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 are set out in the following pages and a glossary of terms is provided on pages 84 to 94.

Movement in Reserves Statement (page 17)

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 reduce local taxation) and other reserves. The Surplus/(deficit) on the Provision of Services line shows the true economic cost of providing the Council's services, more details of which are shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. These are different from the statutory amounts required to be charged to the General Fund Balance and the Housing Revenue Account for council tax setting and dwellings rent setting purposes. The Net (Increase) / Decrease before Transfers (from)/to Earmarked Reserves line shows the statutory General Fund Balance and Housing Revenue Account Balance before any discretionary transfers to or from earmarked reserves undertaken by the Council.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (page 18)

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. Authorities raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Balance Sheet (page 19)

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Council. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Council. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the Council may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the Capital Receipts Reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt). The second category of reserves are those that the Council is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example, the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line 'Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations'.

Cash Flow Statement (page 20)

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Council are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Council. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Council's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e. borrowing) to the Council.

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Expenditure and Funding Analysis (page 22)

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, rents, council tax and business rates) by local authorities in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by authorities in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the Council's directorates. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The Supplementary Financial Statements are as follows: (page 69 -80)

Housing Revenue Account (page 69)

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reflects a statutory obligation to maintain a revenue account for local authority housing provision in accordance with Part 6 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (England and Wales).

Collection Fund (page 74)

The Collection Fund Statement is an agent's statement that reflects the statutory obligation for billing authorities to maintain a separate Collection Fund in accordance with section 89 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 1992). The Collection Fund 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 non-domestic rates.

Group Accounts (page 76)

There are a number of criteria by which the Council must determine whether its interests in associates, joint ventures and joint arrangements are significant enough to be included in the Council's consolidated accounts. After consideration of these criteria the Council has determined that it does have material interests and consequently group accounts have been prepared.

The Notes to these financial statements provide more detail about the Council's accounting policies and individual transactions.

Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts of Darlington Borough Council

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 Group Director of Operations;
- manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and to safeguard its assets; and
- approve the Statement of Accounts.

The Group Director of Operations' Responsibilities

The Group Director of Operations 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 Group Director of Operations has:

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

The Group Director of Operations has also:

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

Group Director's Statement

I certify that this Statement of Accounts has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and proper accounting practices. It presents a true and fair view of the Council's financial position as at 31 March 2022 and the income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2022.



Dated: 29-Jul-22

Movement in Reserves Statement for Darlington Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2022

	General Fund Balance £'000	Earmarked General Fund Reserves £'000	Housing Revenue Account £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Unusable Reserves £'000	Total Council Reserves £'000
Balance at 31 March 2020	(18,368)	(20,477)	(19,829)	(1,587)	(18,564)	(78,825)	(3,391)	(82,216)
Reporting of Schools Budget Deficit to new Adjustment Account at 1 April 2020		(4,525)				(4,525)	4,525	0
<u>Movement in reserves during 2020/21</u>								
Deficit/(Surplus) on the Provision of Services	(87)	0	(9,209)	0	0	(9,296)	0	(9,296)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	25,291	25,291
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(87)	0	(9,209)	0	0	(9,296)	25,291	15,995
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations (Note 5)	(23,222)	(708)	3,886	925	(3,426)	(22,545)	22,545	0
Net (Increase)/decrease before Transfers (to)/from Earmarked Reserves	(23,309)	(708)	(5,323)	925	(3,426)	(31,841)	47,836	15,995
Transfers from/(to) Earmarked Reserves (Note 6)	16,912	(16,912)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Decrease/(Increase) in 2020/21	(6,397)	(17,620)	(5,323)	925	(3,426)	(31,841)	47,836	15,995
Balance at 31 March 2021 carried forward	(24,765)	(42,622)	(25,152)	(662)	(21,990)	(115,191)	48,970	(66,221)
<u>Movement in reserves during 2021/22</u>								
Deficit/(Surplus) on the Provision of Services	(28,002)	0	(6,191)	0	0	(34,193)	0	(34,193)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	(60,962)	(60,962)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(28,002)	0	(6,191)	0	0	(34,193)	(60,962)	(95,155)
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations (Note 5)	21,010	0	4,335	83	(8,884)	16,544	(16,544)	0
Net decrease/(Increase) before Transfers from/(to) Earmarked Reserves	(6,992)	0	(1,856)	83	(8,884)	(17,649)	(77,506)	(95,155)
Transfers (to)/from Earmarked Reserves (Note 6)	8,000	(8,000)	0	1	(1)	0	0	0
(Increase)/decrease in 2021/22	1,008	(8,000)	(1,856)	84	(8,885)	(17,649)	(77,506)	(95,155)
Balance at 31 March 2022 carried forward	(23,757)	(50,622)	(27,008)	(578)	(30,875)	(132,840)	(28,536)	(161,376)

The 2020/21 Reserves values have been restated. Refer to HRA Note 8 (pg 74) for further detail of the restatement.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for Darlington Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2022

2020/21			2021/2022				
Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure / (Income) £'000		Note	Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure / (Income) £'000
7,478	(2,525)	4,953	Chief Executive and Economy	3	4,804	(2,755)	2,049
60,486	(64,390)	(3,904)	Operations	3	54,458	(54,448)	10
126,448	(69,805)	56,643	People	3	139,512	(75,385)	64,127
48,707	(14,466)	34,241	Services	3	40,578	(21,754)	18,824
927	0	927	Other	3	3,353	(621)	2,732
244,046	(151,186)	92,860	Cost of Services		242,705	(154,963)	87,742
826	0	826	Other operating expenditure	7	1,011	0	1,011
6,976	(7,658)	(682)	Losses/(Gains) on the disposal of non-current assets	7	1,397	(2,206)	(809)
15,159	(3,851)	11,308	Financing and investment income and expenditure	9	10,042	(9,886)	156
0	(113,608)	(113,608)	Taxation and non-specific grant income	10	1,711	(124,004)	(122,293)
267,007	(276,303)	(9,296)	(Surplus)/deficit on Provision of Services		256,866	(291,059)	(34,193)
		1,736	Surplus on revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment assets				(7,159)
		23,490	Actuarial (gains)/losses on pensions assets/liabilities	37			(53,820)
		65	Impairment losses on non-current assets charged to the revaluation reserve				17
		25,291	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				(60,962)
		15,995	Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				(95,155)

Balance Sheet of Darlington Borough Council as at 31 March 2022

As at 31 March 2021 £'000		As at 31 March 2022 £'000	Notes
396,923	Property, Plant and Equipment	433,163	16
11,807	Investment Properties	14,147	17
2,339	Heritage Assets	2,361	18
28,109	Long Term Investments	32,703	38
16,334	Long Term Debtors	12,212	38
455,512	Total Long Term Assets	494,586	
18,000	Short Term Investments	17,000	38
510	Inventories	202	20
32,842	Short Term Debtors	42,372	22
9,328	Cash and Cash Equivalents	15,312	23
60,680	Total Current Assets	74,886	
(21,333)	Short Term Borrowing	(24,979)	38
(50,660)	Short Term Creditors	(63,447)	24
(2,566)	Short Term Provisions	(2,566)	15
(74,559)	Total Current Liabilities	(90,992)	
(9,232)	Long Term Creditors	(8,687)	38
(981)	Long Term Provisions	(601)	25
(141,907)	Long Term Borrowing	(126,276)	38
(219,830)	Other Long Term Liabilities	(181,540)	37
(3,462)	Capital Grants Receipts In Advance	0	31
(375,412)	Total Long Term Liabilities	(317,104)	
66,221	Net Assets	161,376	
115,191	Usable Reserves	132,840	28
(48,970)	Unusable Reserves	28,536	29
66,221	Total Reserves	161,376	

Cash Flow Statement for Darlington Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2022

2020/21 £'000		2021/22 £'000
9,296	Surplus/(Deficit) on the provision of services	34,194
56,001	Adjustments to net deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements	17,551
16,937	Depreciation and impairment	5,436
(469)	Change in the fair value of investments	0
(49)	Decrease in Interest Creditors	(103)
18,255	Increase in Creditors	16,197
0	Increase in Interest and Dividend Debtors	0
318	(Increase)/Decrease in Debtors	(16,537)
(224)	(Decrease) in Inventories	(1,692)
9,600	Movement in Pension Liability	15,530
(108)	Contributions to/(from) Provisions	(380)
6,948	Carrying amount of non-current assets sold or derecognised	1,397
4,793	Movement in Investment Property Values	(2,297)
(22,051)	Adjustments for items included in the net (deficit) on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities	(29,114)
(14,397)	Capital Grants credited to the surplus or deficit on provision of services	(26,908)
0	Net adjustment from the sale of short and long term investments	0
2	Premiums or Discounts on the repayment of financial liabilities	0
(7,656)	Proceeds from the sale of non-current assets and investment property	(2,206)
43,246	Net cash flow from/(used in) Operating Activities	22,631
	Investing Activities	
(25,697)	Purchase of property, plant and equipment and investment property	(35,384)
(270,350)	Purchase of short term investments	(256,750)
257,350	Proceeds from the sale of short term investments	255,750
2,877	Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment and investment property	2,206
0	Other payments for investing activities	(6,587)
0	Other capital payments received	10,707
15,098	Capital grants received	23,446
0	Other receipts from investing activities	0
(20,722)	Net cash flow used in Investing Activities	(6,612)
	Financing Activities	
157	Cash receipts of short and long term borrowing	3,000
(9,990)	Billing Authorities - Council Tax and NNDR adjustments	4,180
(1,140)	Cash payments for the reduction of the outstanding liabilities relating to finance leases and on-Balance Sheet PFI contracts	(1,126)
(20,130)	Repayments of short and long term borrowing	(14,882)
1,644	Other (payments)/receipts for financing activities	(1,207)
(29,459)	Net cash flow from Financing Activities	(10,035)
(6,935)	Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	5,984
16,263	Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	9,328
9,328	Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period (Note 23)	15,312

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

1 Accounting Standards That Have Been Issued But Have Not Yet Been Adopted

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) requires the disclosure of information relating to the expected impact of an accounting change that will be required by a new standard that has been issued but not yet adopted. This applies to the adoption of the following new or amended standards within the 2022/23 Code although there are no such changes that are expected to have a significant effect on the Council's accounts.

IFRS 16 Leases will require local authorities that are lessees to recognise most leases on their balance sheets as right-of-use assets with corresponding lease liabilities (there is recognition for low-value and short-term leases). CIPFA/LASAAC have deferred implementation of IFRS 16 for local government to 1 April 2024.

IFRS 1 (First Time adoption) - amendment relates to foreign operations of acquired subsidiaries transitioning to IFRS.

IAS 37 (Onerous Contracts) - clarifies the intention of the code

IFRS 16 (Leases) - amendment removes a misleading example that is not referenced in the Code material

IAS 41 (Agriculture) - one of a small number of IFRS's that are only expected to apply to local authorities in limited circumstances

2 Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

In applying the accounting policies set out in note 41, the Council has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events:

The critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts are:

- The Council has a number of interests in other entities that fall within the group boundary of the Council on the grounds of control and significant influence in line with the Code. During 2021/22 the Council has assessed its interests in the 6 Joint Ventures with Esh Homes Ltd of which the Council owns 50% of the share capital of the Companies and concluded that they will be consolidated into its group accounts.
- In line with accounting standards and the Code, all maintained schools in the Borough are now considered to be entities controlled by the Council. Rather than produce group accounts, the income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, reserves and cashflows of each school are recognised in the Council's single entity accounts.
- Where the land and building assets used by the school are owned by an entity other than the Council, school or School Governing Body then it is included on the Council's Balance Sheet.
- As at the 31 March 2022 the Council has no Voluntary Aided (VA) schools.
- In the current economic climate there is a high degree of uncertainty about the future levels of funding for local government. However, the Council has determined that this uncertainty is not yet sufficient to provide an indication that assets of the Council might be impaired as a result of a need to close facilities and reduce levels of service provision.
- The Council continues to assess the degree of componentisation within its non-current asset portfolio, as part of the 5 year rolling programme of non-current asset valuations. On an annual basis the Council will review capital expenditure to assess if any new material components have been added to the Council's non-current asset portfolio.
- Judgement is required to determine whether the Council can be reasonably assured that the conditions of grant and contribution income have been met before recognising them as income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Where conditions require specified expenditure to have taken place, the grant monies will not be recognised until this has happened. Equally where conditions specify that a grant or contribution must be repaid in the event of non-expenditure, the income is not recognised until the conditions of the grant have been met.
- The Council is deemed to control the education services provided under the PFI agreement in the schools and also to control the residual value of the schools at the end of the agreement. The accounting policies and PFI schemes and similar contracts have been applied to the Education Village and Harrowgate Hill Primary School which became operational in March 2006 and August 2005 respectively. The Education Village transferred to Academy status on 1 April 2012 so has therefore been removed from the Council's Balance Sheet. Harrowgate Hill is recognised as Property, Plant and Equipment on the Council's Balance Sheet.
- The Council has a 2.91% shareholding in Teesside International Airport and with the adoption of IFRS 9 Financial Instruments it is now classified at fair value and although the airport has been acquired by Goosepool 2019 Ltd which is a subsidiary of the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA), the Council's shareholding is unaffected as is its valuation. The new standard sets out that investments in equity should be classified as fair value through profit and loss unless there is an irrevocable election to designate the asset as fair value through comprehensive income. The shareholding is a strategic investment and not held for trading and therefore the Council has opted to designate it as fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI). This means that there would be no impact on the revenue budget and that any gains or losses on the valuation of the shareholding will be transferred to a Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

3 Expenditure and Funding Analysis

2021/22	Reported for resource management	Adjustment to arrive at the net amount chargeable to the General Fund and HRA Balances	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund and HRA Balances	Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
Group	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive and Economy	1,382	22	1,404	645	2,049
Operations	15,915	(10,664)	5,251	(5,241)	10
People	54,329	1,259	55,588	8,539	64,127
Services	18,659	(716)	17,943	881	18,824
Other	(4,864)	7,596	2,732	0	2,732
Net Cost of Services	85,421	(2,503)	82,918	4,824	87,742
Other income and expenditure	(91,287)	(479)	(91,766)	(30,169)	(121,935)
(Surplus)/deficit on Provision of Services	(5,866)	(2,982)	(8,848)	(25,345)	(34,193)
Opening General Fund, HRA and Earmarked Reserves Balance at 1 April 2021			(92,538)		
Add surplus on General Fund and HRA Balance in Year			(8,848)		
Closing General Fund, HRA and Earmarked Reserves Balance at 31 March 2022 **			<u>(101,386)</u>		

** For a split of this balance between the General Fund and the HRA - see the Movement in Reserves Statement.

2020/21	Reported for resource management	Adjustment to arrive at the net amount chargeable to the General Fund and HRA Balances	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund and HRA Balances	Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
Group	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive and Economy	1,013	222	1,235	3,718	4,953
Operations	14,978	(13,144)	1,834	(5,738)	(3,904)
People	60,391	1,074	61,465	(4,822)	56,643
Services	21,096	40	21,136	13,105	34,241
Other	4,526	2,809	7,335	(6,408)	927
Net Cost of Services	102,004	(8,999)	93,005	(145)	92,860
Other income and expenditure	(108,263)	(13,373)	(121,636)	19,480	(102,156)
Deficit/(surplus) on Provision of Services	(6,259)	(22,372)	(28,631)	19,335	(9,296)
Opening General Fund, HRA and Earmarked Reserves Balance at 1 April 2020			(58,674)		
Dedicated Schools Grant Adjustment Account statutory adjustment *			(5,233)		
Plus surplus on General Fund and HRA Balance in Year			(28,631)		
Closing General Fund, HRA and Earmarked Reserves Balance at 31 March 2021			<u>(92,538)</u>		

* formerly an Earmarked Reserve, required by regulations to be held as an unusable reserve

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

3a Note to the Expenditure and Funding Analysis

2021/22	Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis 2021/22				
	Adjustments for Capital Purposes £'000	Net change for Pensions Adjustments £'000	Statutory Adjustments £'000	Non Statutory Adjustments £'000	Total Adjustments £'000
Group					
Chief Executive and Economy	40	517	191	(103)	645
Operations	(4,461)	2,330	(247)	(2,863)	(5,241)
People	4,629	4,853	684	(1,627)	8,539
Services	(2,485)	3,300	(5)	71	881
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Net Cost of Services	(2,277)	11,000	623	(4,522)	4,824
Other income and expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	(29,465)	4,530	(9,756)	4,522	(30,169)
Difference between General fund deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure deficit	(31,742)	15,530	(9,133)	0	(25,345)

2020/21	Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis 2020/21				
	Adjustments for Capital Purposes £'000	Net change for Pensions Adjustments £'000	Statutory Adjustments £'000	Non Statutory Adjustments £'000	Total Adjustments £'000
Group					
Chief Executive and Economy	3,148	247	424	(102)	3,717
Operations	(3,809)	1,166	(185)	(2,910)	(5,738)
People	340	2,374	(9)	(1,690)	1,015
Services	11,622	1,623	(5)	(134)	13,106
Other	0	0	0	(6,408)	(6,408)
Net Cost of Services	11,301	5,410	225	(11,244)	5,692
Other income and expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	(16,363)	4,190	14,572	11,244	13,643
Difference between General fund (surplus)/deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure deficit	(5,062)	9,600	14,797	0	19,335

3b Expenditure and income analysed by nature

The Council's expenditure and income is analysed as follows:	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Expenditure		
Employee benefits expenses	73,089	81,385
Other service expenses	162,281	161,262
Depreciation, impairment & other capital charges	18,455	6,831
Interest payments	5,380	4,981
Precepts and levies	287	294
Payments to Housing Capital Receipts Pool	539	717
Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal	6,976	1,397
Total expenditure	267,007	256,867
Income		
Fees, charges and other service income	(33,773)	(69,302)
Capital receipts	(7,658)	(2,206)
Interest and investment income	(2,481)	(9,886)
Income from council tax and business rates	(68,313)	(78,473)
Revenue grants and contributions	(149,681)	(104,285)
Capital grants and contributions	(14,397)	(26,908)
Total income	(276,303)	(291,060)
Deficit/(surplus) on the provision of services	(9,296)	(34,193)

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

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.

The items in the Council's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2022 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if Actual Results Differ from Assumptions
Property, Plant and Equipment	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. The current economic climate makes it uncertain that the Council will be able to sustain its current spending on repairs and maintenance, bringing into doubt the useful lives assigned to assets.	If the useful life of assets is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying amount of the asset falls. It is estimated that the annual depreciation charge for buildings would increase by £0.397M for every year that useful lives had to be reduced.
Pensions Liability	Estimation of the net liability of £182m to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. A firm of consulting actuaries is engaged to provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.	The effects on the net pensions liability of changes in individual assumptions can be measured. For instance, a 0.1% increase in the discount rate assumption as advised by the Actuary would result in a decrease in the pension liability of £11.6m for funded LGPS benefits. However, the assumptions interact in complex ways.
Fair Value Measurements	When the fair value of financial assets and financial liabilities cannot be measured based on quoted prices in active markets (i.e. Level 1 inputs) their fair value is measured using the following valuation techniques: For Level 2 inputs, quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets at the balance sheet date; and for Level 3 inputs, valuations based on; most recent valuations adjusted to current valuation by the use of indexation and impairment review. Where possible, the inputs to these valuation techniques are based on observable data, but where this is not possible judgement is required in establishing fair values. These judgements typically include considerations such as uncertainty and risk. Changes in assumptions could affect the fair value of the Council's assets and liabilities.	The Council uses a combination of indexation techniques, beacon valuations and discounted cash flow (DCF) models to measure the fair value of its Investment Properties, Surplus Assets and Assets Held for Sale under IFRS13 depending on which technique it considers most appropriate. The significant unobservable inputs used in the fair value measurement include management assumptions regarding rent growth, occupancy levels, floor area repairs backlogs, beacon classifications and others. Significant changes in any of the unobservable inputs would result in a significantly lower or higher fair value measurement of these areas.
Business Rates Appeals	Since the introduction of the Business Rates Retention Scheme effective from 1 April 2013, local authorities are liable for successful appeals against business rates charged to businesses in 2021/22 and earlier years in their proportionate share. Therefore, a provision has been recognised for the best estimate of the amount that businesses have been overcharged up to 31 March 2022. The estimate has been calculated using the latest Valuation Office ratings list of appeals and the analysis of successful appeals to date. The Council's share (49%) of the business rate appeals provision at this date amounted to £0.079m which is the same as the previous year. Following the 2017 revaluation a new check, challenge, appeal process has been introduced, the impact of which is highly uncertain at the present moment. A provision of £0.787m has been made for the estimated success of future appeals for losses for the period ended 31/03/22.	An increase over the forthcoming year of 10% in value of successful appeals would have the effect of adding £0.177m to the overall provision.
Arrears	At 31 March 2022, the Council had a balance of sundry debtors of £10.468m. A review of significant balances suggested that an impairment of doubtful debts of 28.82% (£3.017m) was appropriate. However, in the current economic climate it is not certain that such an allowance would be sufficient.	If collection rates were to deteriorate, a doubling of the amount of the impairment of doubtful debts wouldn't require a substantial additional amount to be set aside as an allowance, due to the current policy in place.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

5 Adjustments Between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Regulations

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.

2021/22	General Fund Balance £'000	Housing Revenue Account £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Major Repairs Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000
Adjustments to the Revenue Resources					
Amounts by which income and expenditure included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement are different from revenue for the year calculated in accordance with statutory requirements:					
Pension costs (transferred from the Pensions Reserve)	(14,750)	(780)	0	0	0
Financial instruments (transferred to the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account)	273	173	0	0	0
Council tax and NDR (transfers to Collection Fund)	3,198	0	0	0	0
Holiday pay (transferred to the Accumulated Absences Reserve)	(23)	0	0	0	0
Reversal of entries included in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in relation to capital expenditure (these items are charged to the Capital Adjustment Account)	25,142	(4,189)	0	0	(26,908)
Dedicated Schools Grant	(662)	0	0	0	0
Investment Funds	4,594	0	0	0	0
Total Adjustments to Revenue Resources	17,772	(4,796)	0	0	(26,908)
Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources					
Transfer of non-current asset sale proceeds from revenue to the Capital Receipts Reserve	2,206	0	(2,206)	0	0
Payments to the government housing receipts pool (funded by a transfer from the Capital Receipts Reserve)	(717)	0	717	0	0
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt (transfer from the Capital Adjustment Account)	1,626	629	0	0	0
Capital expenditure financed from revenue balances (transfer to the Capital Adjustment Account)	123	8,502	0	0	0
Total Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources	3,238	9,131	(1,489)	0	0
Adjustments to Capital Resources					
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance capital expenditure	0	0	1,572	0	0
Application of capital grants to finance capital expenditure	0	0	0	0	18,024
Total Adjustments to Capital Resources	0	0	1,572	0	18,024
Total Adjustments	21,010	4,335	83	0	(8,884)

2020/21 Comparative Figures	General Fund Balance £'000	Housing Revenue Account £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Major Repairs Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000
Adjustments to the Revenue Resources					
Amounts by which income and expenditure included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement are different from revenue for the year calculated in accordance with statutory requirements:					
Pension costs (transferred from the Pensions Reserve)	(9,110)	(490)	0	0	0
Financial instruments (to/(from) the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account)	273	169	0	0	0
Council tax and NDR (transfers from Collection Fund)	(9,407)	0	0	0	0
Holiday pay (transferred to the Accumulated Absences Reserve)	9	0	0	0	0
Reversal of entries included in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in relation to capital expenditure (these items are charged to the Capital Adjustment Account)	(12,880)	(2,172)	0	0	(14,397)
Investment Funds	(469)	0	0	0	0
Total Adjustments to Revenue Resources	(31,584)	(2,493)	0	0	(14,397)
Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources					
Transfer of non-current asset sale proceeds from revenue to the Capital Receipts Reserve	7,658	0	(2,878)	0	0
Payments to the government housing receipts pool (funded by a transfer from the Capital Receipts Reserve)	(580)	0	580	0	0
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt (transfer from the Capital Adjustment Account)	1,140	629	0	0	0
Capital expenditure financed from revenue balances (transfer to the Capital Adjustment Account)	144	5,750	0	0	0
Total Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources	8,362	6,379	(2,298)	0	0
Adjustments to Capital Resources					
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance capital expenditure	0	0	3,222	0	0
Application of capital grants to finance capital expenditure	0	0	0	0	10,971
Total Adjustments to Capital Resources	0	0	3,222	0	10,971
Total Adjustments	(23,222)	3,886	924	0	(3,426)

The 2020/21 Reserves values have been restated. Refer to HRA Note 8 (pg 74) for further detail of the restatement.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

6 Transfers to / from Earmarked Reserves

This note sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund and HRA balances in earmarked reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans and the amounts posted back to earmarked reserves to meet General Fund and HRA expenditure in 2021/22.

	Balance at 31 March 2020 £'000	Transfers Out 2020/21 £'000	Transfers In 2020/21 £'000	Balance at 31 March 2021 £'000	Transfers Out 2021/22 £'000	Transfers In 2021/22 £'000	Balance at 31 March 2022 £'000
General Fund	18,368	0	6,397	24,765	(5,350)	4,342	23,757
	18,368	0	6,397	24,765	(5,350)	4,342	23,757
Earmarked Reserves:							
2025 Rail Heritage Fund	0	0	0	0	0	496	496
Balances held by schools under scheme of delegation	817	(815)	866	868	(866)	1,068	1,070
Blackwell Pensions Reserve	55	0	4	59	0	5	64
Building Control	(42)	(50)	77	(15)	(11)	26	0
Business Central Planned Maintenance & Other Costs	1	0	13	14	(11)	0	3
CCG Joint Working	0	0	453	453	0	0	453
Civic Theatre Restoration Levy	(1,169)	0	0	(1,169)	0	0	(1,169)
Climate Change Reserve	0	0	0	0	(8)	100	92
Collection Fund Reserve	6,973	(13,750)	26,113	19,336	(20,008)	16,184	15,512
Covid Earmarked Reserve	0	0	1,553	1,553	(932)	0	621
Crematorium Refurbishment Fund	52	0	29	81	(227)	29	(117)
Crematorium - Mercury Abatement Reserve Fund Additional Fees	483	0	230	713	0	235	948
Crematorium - Mercury Abatement Reserve Fund	464	(50)	96	510	(32)	0	478
Environmental Levy							
Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve	(4,525)	0	4,525	0	0	0	0
Digital Apprenticeship Services Account	217	0	0	217	0	37	254
Direct Payments Contingency Reserve	243	(23)	0	220	0	0	220
Dolphin Centre Planned Maintenance	98	0	34	132	0	0	132
Earmarked Departmental Reserves	3,695	(3,695)	4,105	4,105	(4,105)	5,760	5,760
Eastbourne 3G Playing Pitch Sinking Fund	56	0	16	72	0	15	87
Education Village	0	0	0	0	0	350	350
Enterprise Zone NNDR	770	(54)	199	915	0	193	1,108
Experience Darlington	128	(48)	0	80	(42)	0	38
Feethams House Planned Maintenance	0	0	25	25	0	25	50
Feethams House TVCA Reserve	0	(67)	0	(67)	(104)	0	(171)
Former Blackwell Golf Club Grounds	5	0	0	5	0	0	5
Futures Fund	1,798	(372)	0	1,426	(190)	150	1,386
Hippodrome Activity Plan	129	(5)	0	124	(42)	0	82
Hippodrome Planned Maintenance	40	0	41	81	0	41	122
ICT Infrastructure	616	0	427	1,043	0	500	1,543
IFRS9 Property Funds Fair Value	0	0	500	500	0	0	500
Insurance Fund	2,445	0	365	2,810	0	578	3,388
Local Development Fund Public Enquiry	80	0	0	80	(80)	0	0
Local Authority EU Exit Preparation	315	0	0	315	0	0	315
Local Council Tax Support Schemes	0	0	0	0	0	1,415	1,415
Performance Reward Grant Reserve	(136)	0	0	(136)	0	0	(136)
Morton Palms - Homes England	297	0	0	297	0	0	297
Municipal Elections Reserve	46	0	23	69	0	26	95
Organisational Headroom (Project Preparation)	90	0	0	90	0	0	90
Permit Scheme for Road & Street Works	(11)	0	4	(7)	0	4	(3)
Public Health Reserve	553	0	220	773	0	397	1,170
Redundancy & Decommissioning Reserve	653	(83)	0	570	(20)	0	550
Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay	77	(145)	601	533	(123)	496	906
Revenue Grants Unapplied	3,654	(3,654)	4,366	4,366	(4,366)	5,195	5,195
Ring-fenced Planning Fees	162	0	44	206	(2)	70	274
Risk Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	5,350	5,350
Street Scene Volunteering	85	(6)	0	79	(28)	20	71
Stronger Communities Fund	0	0	0	0	(50)	50	0
Town Support Fund	0	0	0	0	(19)	251	232
Traffic Signal Replacements Reserve	100	0	32	132	0	0	132
Transformation Fund	0	0	0	0	0	200	200
VAT Reserve	1,163	0	0	1,163	0	0	1,163
	20,477	(22,817)	44,961	42,621	(31,266)	39,266	50,622
Housing Revenue Account	19,829	0	5,323	25,152	0	1,856	27,008
	19,829	0	5,323	25,152	0	1,856	27,008

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

7 Other Operating Expenditure

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Parish Council precepts	179	183
Levies	108	111
Payments to the Government Housing Capital Receipts Pool	539	717
(Gains)/Losses on the disposal of non-current assets	(681)	(809)
Total	145	202

8 Officers' Remuneration

8 a) Officer Remuneration in Bands

The number of employees in each salary band whose remuneration was £50,000 or more is set out below. Calculations are based on all sums paid to or receivable by an employee and sums due by way of taxable expenses, allowances and the monetary value of any other benefits received other than in cash. Pension contributions payable by either employee or employer are excluded.

Remuneration band	2020/21				2021/22			
	Number of employees			No. of redundancies included in total	Number of employees			No. of redundancies included in total
	Schools	Non - schools	Total		Schools	Non- schools	Total	
£50,000 - £54,999	4	36	40	0	2	28	30	1
£55,000 - £59,999	1	8	9	0	4	16	20	0
£60,000 - £64,999	0	7	7	0	0	6	6	0
£65,000 - £69,999	2	2	4	0	2	4	6	0
£70,000 - £74,999	0	2	2	0	0	4	4	0
£75,000 - £79,999	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
£80,000 - £84,999	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
£85,000 - £89,999	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
£90,000 - £94,999	1	4	5	0	1	3	4	0
£95,000 - £99,999	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
£100,000 - £104,999	0	2	2	0	0	2	2	0
£105,000 - £109,999	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
£110,000 - £114,999	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0
£115,000 - £119,999	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
£120,000 - £124,999	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
£125,000 - £129,999	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
£130,000 - £134,999	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
£135,000 - £139,999	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
£140,000 - £144,999	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
£145,000 - £149,999	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
£150,000 +	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
	10	66	76	0	11	67	78	1

N.B. Senior employees are included above and have been shown in detail below.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

8 b) Disclosure of Remuneration for Senior Employees 2021/22

	Post Holder (required if salary exceeds £150,000)	Salary	Expenses Allowances	Retirement Package	Total Remuneration (excl pension contributions)	Employer pension contributions	Total Remuneration (incl pension contributions)
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Chief Executive		147,378	0	0	147,378	26,590	173,968
Director - Adult & Children		118,239	0	0	118,239	21,860	140,099
Group Director of Operations		111,848	0	0	111,848	19,998	131,846
Group Director of Services		110,229	0	0	110,229	20,280	130,509
Director of Public Health		94,836	0	0	94,836	13,637	108,473

Disclosure of Remuneration for Senior Employees 2020/21

	Post Holder (required if salary exceeds £150,000)	Salary	Expenses Allowances	Retirement Package	Total Remuneration (excl pension contributions)	Employer pension contributions	Total Remuneration (incl pension contributions)
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Managing Director	Paul Wildsmith	155,007	0	0	155,007	29,606	184,613
Director of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services		126,198	0	0	126,198	24,104	150,302
Director of Children and Adult Services		119,894	0	0	119,894	22,900	142,794
Director of Public Health		100,769	0	0	100,769	13,698	114,467
Assistant Director Resources		103,238	0	0	103,238	19,718	122,956

8 c) Exit Packages

The costs included within the exit packages table below include termination benefits, all relevant redundancy costs including compulsory and voluntary redundancy costs, pension contributions in respect of added years, ex gratia payments and other departure costs.

The numbers of exit packages with total cost per band and total cost of the compulsory and other redundancies are set out in the table below:

Exit package cost band (including special payments)	Number of compulsory redundancies		Number of other departures agreed		Total number of exit packages by cost band		Total cost of exit packages in each band	
	2020/21	2021/22	2020/21	2021/22	2020/21	2021/22	2020/21	2021/22
							£	£
£0 - £20,000	2	1	12	12	14	13	66,526	59,018
£20,001 - £40,000	0	0	1	0	1	0	29,855	0
£40,001 - £60,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
£60,001 - £80,000	0	0	1	0	1	0	66,194	0
£80,001 - £100,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
£100,001 - £150,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
£150,001 +	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	1	14	12	16	13	162,575	59,018

9 Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Interest payable and similar charges	5,380	4,981
Pensions interest cost and expected return on pensions assets (Note 37)	4,190	4,530
Interest receivable and similar income	(2,481)	(1,454)
Income and expenditure in relation to investment properties and changes in their fair value (Note 17)	4,431	(2,408)
Gains on trading operations	(682)	(899)
Property Fund changes in fair value measurement	470	(4,594)
Total	11,308	156

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

10 Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Council Tax income	(52,429)	(55,843)
Business Rates income	(8,294)	(14,952)
Business Rates Top Up Grant	(7,590)	(7,678)
Non-ringfenced government grants	(30,898)	(16,912)
Capital grants and contributions	(14,397)	(26,908)
Total	(113,608)	(122,293)

11 Material Items of Income and Expense

There are no material items of Income and Expenditure that are not disclosed elsewhere within the Statement of Accounts.

12 Trading Operations

The Council operates a number of trading operations, details of which are:

	2020/21		2021/22	
	Turnover £'000	Surplus / (Deficit) £'000	Turnover £'000	Surplus / (Deficit) £'000
Building Cleaning	557	(97)	663	(131)
Construction	5,569	105	10,299	663
Catering	137	(772)	1,417	249
Grounds Maintenance	188	(19)	177	(7)
Highways and Sewerage	5,867	9	6,372	295
Maintenance	4,705	(7)	6,220	484
School Meals-Best Value	372	(173)	587	(100)
Surplus on Trading Accounts	17,395	(954)	25,735	1,453

Building Cleaning - The service covers the internal cleaning of both the Council's property portfolio as well as a number of schools and academies.

Construction - Construction deals with all major building works carried out by the direct labour organisation (DLO). Works carried out is for both internal and external clients.

Catering - The catering service operates from the Dolphin Centre and provides catering and bar provision for the general public at this venue.

Grounds Maintenance - Surplus bedding plant stock grown at the Council's Nursery is sold to various external clients including local authorities and other public bodies.

Highways and Sewerage - Routine road and street lighting maintenance and other scheme works to the road network are carried out by the direct labour organisation in liaison with engineering services.

Maintenance - Day to day repairs and cyclical maintenance carried out to the Council's housing stock.

School Meals-Best Value - This service provides school meals for a number of schools and academies throughout the borough as well as providing meals for extra care homes operated by Housing Services.

13 External Audit Costs

The Council has incurred the following costs in relation to the audit of the Statement of Accounts, certification of grant claims and to non-audit services provided by the Council's external auditors:

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Fees payable with regard to external audit services carried out by the appointed auditor for the year-scale fee	72	72
Fees payable with regard to external audit services carried out by the appointed auditor for the year-variation	39	44
Fees payable with regard to external audit services carried out by the appointed auditor for the 19/20 year rebased	38	0
Fees payable for the certification of grant claims and returns for the year	11	25
Fees payable in respect of other services provided during the year	11	16
Total	171	157

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

14 Dedicated Schools Grant

The Council's expenditure on schools is funded primarily by grant monies provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). DSG is ringfenced and can only be applied to meet expenditure properly included in the Schools Budget, as defined in the School Finance and Early Years (England) Regulations 2018. The Schools Budget includes elements for a range of educational services provided on an authority-wide basis and for the Individual Schools Budget (ISB), which is divided into a budget share for each school/nursery provider.

Details of the deployment of DSG receivable for 2021/22 are as follows:

	Central Expenditure £'000	ISB £'000	Total £'000
Final DSG for 2021/22 before Academy and high needs recoupment			99,062
Academy & high needs recoupment recouped 2021/22			(73,120)
Total DSG after academy & high needs recoupment for 2021/22			25,942
Final Early Years Adjustment 2020/21 (DSG adjusted 2021/22)			(118)
Sub-total			25,824
Plus Brought Forward from 2020/21			(5,233)
Carry Forward to 2022/23 agreed in advance			0
Final DSG for distribution in 2021/22			20,591
Agreed initial budget distribution in 2020/21 (note a)	12,600	86,674	99,274
In Year Adjustments (note b)	(5,826)	(72,857)	(78,683)
Final budget distribution for 2021/22	6,774	13,817	20,591
Less actual central expenditure	12,813	0	12,813
Less Actual ISB deployed to Schools	0	13,674	13,674
Carry Forward to 2022/23	(6,039)	143	(5,896)

Notes:

a. Initial budget allocation, based on indicative DSG allocation received December 2020.

b. Includes carry forward from 2020/21 and 2021/22 in year DSG adjustments included within the final DSG allocation, e.g. high needs export/imports, recoupment, and early years adjustments. Excludes the final 2021/22 Early Years adjustment to be received November 2022.

15 Short Term Provisions

	NNDR Appeals £'000	Other Provisions £'000	Total £'000
Balance at 1 April 2021	(866)	(1,700)	(2,566)
Additional Provisions made in 2021/22	0	0	0
Amounts Settled in 2021/22	0	0	0
Unused amounts reversed in 2021/22	0	0	0
Balance at 31 March 2022	(866)	(1,700)	(2,566)

NNDR appeals - A provision was created for potential outstanding appeals against NNDR ratings that should be settled in the next year. The provision is a requirement due to the change in legislation in the distribution of income of the new Business Rates Retention scheme as it used to be the responsibility of Central Government.

There is a provision of £1.700m that was created in 2019/20 to offset a potential repayment to HMRC. This balance has not yet been repaid to HMRC and due to the uncertainty of the timing of the outflow has been recognised as a short-term provision as at 31/03/2022.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

16 Property, Plant and Equipment

Movements in 2021/22:	Council Dwellings	Other Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	Community Assets	Assets Under Construction	Surplus	Total Property, Plant & Equipment	PFI Assets Included in Property, Plant & Equipment
Cost or Valuation	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
At 1 April 2021	179,708	90,947	29,766	8,329	19,043	60	327,853	8,686
Additions	10,728	11,373	2,299	0	1,597	0	25,997	15
Accumulated depreciation & impairment Written Off to Gross Carrying Amount	(1,850)	(2,133)	0	0	0	0	(3,983)	0
Revaluation increase recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	804	6,445	0	(112)	0	0	7,137	0
Revaluation increases / (decreases) recognised in the Deficit on the Provision of Services	(2,309)	3,215	0	0	0	0	906	0
Derecognition - disposals	(1,140)	0	(1,202)	0	0	0	(2,342)	0
At 31 March 2022	185,941	109,847	30,863	8,217	20,640	60	355,568	8,701
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment								
At 1 April 2021	173	2,975	18,051	157	31	12	21,399	601
Depreciation charge	1,863	1,011	1,136	0	0	0	4,010	171
Depreciation written out to the Deficit on the Provision of Services	(1,850)	(2,133)	0	0	0	0	(3,983)	0
Impairment losses recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	8	17	0	0	0	0	25	0
Impairment reversals recognised in the Deficit on the Provision of Services	0	108	0	0	0	0	108	0
Derecognition - disposals	0	0	(944)	0	0	0	(944)	0
At 31 March 2022	194	1,978	18,243	157	31	12	20,615	772
Net book value								
at 31 March 2022	185,747	107,869	12,620	8,060	20,609	48	334,953	7,929
at 31 March 2021	179,535	87,972	11,715	8,172	19,012	48	306,454	8,085

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

Comparative Movements in 2020/21	Council Dwellings	Other Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	Community Assets	Assets Under Construction	Surplus	Total Property, Plant & Equipment	PFI Assets Included in Property, Plant & Equipment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or Valuation								
At 1 April 2020	175,927	106,710	30,362	8,236	17,563	60	338,858	8,668
Additions	6,883	10,110	52	0	744	0	17,789	18
Accumulated depreciation & impairment Written Off to Gross Carrying Amount	(2,164)	(1,051)	0	0	0	0	(3,215)	0
Revaluation increase recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	(4)	(1,843)	0	112	0	0	(1,735)	0
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the Deficit on the Provision of Services	(37)	(7,935)	0	(19)	0	0	(7,991)	0
Derecognition - disposals Assets reclassified to Investment Properties	(1,182)	(6,254)	(648)	0	0	0	(8,084)	0
	0	280	0	0	0	0	280	0
Assets reclassified from Investment Properties	0	502	0	0	(8,547)	0	(8,045)	0
Other movements in cost or valuation	285	(9,572)	0	0	9,283	0	(4)	0
At 31 March 2021	179,708	90,947	29,766	8,329	19,043	60	327,853	8,686
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment								
At 1 April 2020	163	2,505	17,494	157	31	12	20,362	428
Depreciation charge	1,911	1,297	1,205	0	0	0	4,413	173
Depreciation written out to the Surplus on the Provision of Services	(1,902)	(476)	0	0	0	0	(2,378)	0
Impairment losses recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	49	17	0	0	0	0	66	0
Impairment reversals recognised in the Surplus on the Provision of Services	(48)	94	0	0	0	0	46	0
Derecognition - disposals	0	(462)	(648)	0	0	0	(1,110)	0
At 31 March 2021	173	2,975	18,051	157	31	12	21,399	601
Net book value								
at 31 March 2021	179,535	87,972	11,715	8,172	19,012	48	306,454	8,085
at 31 March 2020	175,764	104,205	12,868	8,079	17,532	48	318,496	8,240

Infrastructure Assets

In November 2022, CIPFA issued an Update to the 2021/22 (and 2022/23) Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. This Update allows for the movement between the opening and closing balance of infrastructure assets to be presented on a net book value (rather than gross cost/accumulated depreciation) basis for a temporary period up to and including 2024/25, in recognition that authorities do not typically hold sufficiently granular detail regarding historical expenditure on their infrastructure assets in order to accurately account for derecognitions on a gross basis.

Furthermore, an amendment to the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations was also laid in November 2022 which permits local authorities, when they replace a component of an infrastructure asset, to determine the carrying amount to be derecognised in respect of that replaced component as nil. This statutory override also applies up to and including 2024/25. Darlington Borough Council has made this determination in respect of its 2021/22 Statement of Accounts.

Infrastructure assets have therefore been excluded from the previous tables which analyse the movement on Property, Plant and Equipment on a gross book value/accumulated depreciation basis. The movement on infrastructure assets is instead presented in the following note, along with a reconciliation to total Property, Plant and Equipment as reported on the Balance Sheet and elsewhere in these financial statements.

In accordance with the temporary relief offered by the Update to the Code on infrastructure assets this note does not include disclosure of gross cost and accumulated depreciation for infrastructure assets because historical reporting practices and resultant information deficits mean that this would not faithfully represent the asset position to the users of the financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

Movements in 2021/22:	Infrastructure Assets		Other Property, Plant & Equipment		Total Property, Plant & Equipment		PFI Assets Included in Property, Plant & Equipment
	£'000		£'000		£'000		£'000
Net Book Value							
At 1 April 2021	90,469		306,454		396,923		8,085
Additions	11,343		25,998		37,341		15
Depreciation Charge	(3,561)		(4,010)		(7,571)		(171)
Revaluation increase recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	0		7,120		7,120		0
Impairment losses recognised in the Deficit on the Provision of Services			(116)		(116)		
Revaluation decreases recognised in the Deficit on the Provision of Services	(41)		905		864		0
Disposals	0		(1,398)		(1,398)		0
At 31 March 2022	98,210		334,953		433,163		7,929

Movements in 2020/21:	Infrastructure Assets		Other Property, Plant & Equipment		Total Property, Plant & Equipment		PFI Assets Included in Property, Plant & Equipment
	£'000		£'000		£'000		£'000
Net Book Value							
At 1 April 2020	87,158		318,496		405,654		8,240
Additions	7,646		17,789		25,435		18
Depreciation Charge	(3,562)		(4,414)		(7,976)		(173)
Revaluation increase recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	0		(1,801)		(1,801)		0
Revaluation decreases recognised in the Deficit on the Provision of Services	(5)		(7,991)		(7,996)		0
Impairment losses recognised in the Deficit on the Provision of Services	(770)		(882)		(1,652)		
Disposals	(1)		(6,974)		(6,975)		0
Assets reclassified to/from Held for Sale	0		280		280		0
Assets reclassified to/from Investment Properties	0		(8,045)		(8,045)		0
Other movements in cost or valuation	3		(4)		(1)		0
At 31 March 2021	90,469		306,454		396,923		8,085

Depreciation

The following useful lives and depreciation rates have been used in the calculation of depreciation:

- Council Dwellings - 60 years.
- Other Land and Buildings - over the life of the property as estimated by the valuer. As an indication the majority of buildings are depreciated over 60 years, car parks for 20 years and Community Assets have indefinite lives;
- Vehicles, Furniture & Equipment - typically between 2 and 15 years
- Plant - over the life of the asset as estimated by the valuer
- Infrastructure Assets - typically up to 40 years

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

Revaluations

The Council carries out a rolling programme that ensures that all Property, Plant and Equipment required to be measured at fair value is revalued at least every five years.

All valuations were carried out by Align Property Partners, of Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL6 2YD with valuations of land and buildings carried out in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Valuations of vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment are based on current prices where there is an active second-hand market or latest list prices adjusted for the condition of the asset.

The significant assumptions applied in estimating the fair values are:

- The estimated amount for which a property should exchange on the date of valuation;
- Completion is not unduly delayed with vacant possession;
- The transaction is between a willing buyer and a willing seller;
- The transaction is at arms length with the parties acting knowledgeably, prudently and without compulsion;
- Prior to exchange the property was the subject of proper marketing; and
- The potential for an increase in value as a result of an alternative use is recognised (not applicable for assets valued by Existing Use).

	Council Dwellings £'000	Other Land and Buildings £'000	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment £'000	Infrastructure Assets £'000	Community Assets £'000	Assets Under Construction £'000	Surplus £'000	Total Property, Plant & Equipment £'000	PFI Assets Included in Property, Plant & Equipment £'000
Carried at historical cost	0	6,816	12,620	98,210	8,060	20,609	48	146,363	1,160
valued at fair value as at:									
31 March 2022	185,747	48,413	0	0	0	0	0	234,160	6,925
31 March 2021	0	11,904	0	0	0	0	0	11,904	
31 March 2020	0	6,635	0	0	0	0	0	6,635	
31 March 2019	0	14,284	0	0	0	0	0	14,284	
31 March 2018	0	19,817	0	0	0	0	0	19,817	
Total Cost or Valuation	185,747	107,869	12,620	98,210	8,060	20,609	48	433,163	8,085

Capital Commitments

At 31 March 2022 the Council had entered into a number of contracts for the construction or enhancement of Property, Plant and Equipment that were budgeted to cost £54,292m in future years, of which £4.480m will be funded from grant, £17,921m from the Housing Revenue Account, £15.059m to be prudentially borrowed, £3.832m from corporate resources and £13.000 to be self financing. Similar commitments at 31 March 2021 were £24.598m. The commitments at 31 March 2022 are:

Scheme	Total Estimate £'000
Housing - new build	25,581
Housing - various other enhancements including heating replacement, internal planned maintenance & roofing	7,399
School condition allocations	142
Highway maintenance	1,689
Integrated Transport	886
Disabled Facilities	1,063
Dolphin Centre Mechanical & Electrical works Phase 3	850
Whinfield School Roof Replacement	372
West Cemetery Drainage	100
Economic Growth investment Fund (EGIF)	500
Eastbourne Sports Complex	2,310
Capitalised Repairs	250
Other	150
Self Financing Schemes	13,000
	54,292

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

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 and Expenditure Statement:

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Rental income from investment property	688	642
Direct operating expenses arising from investment property	(327)	(530)
Net gain	361	112

There are no restrictions on the Council's ability to realise the value inherent in its investment property or on the Council's right to the remittance of income and the proceeds of disposal. The Council has no contractual obligations to purchase, construct or develop investment property or repairs, maintenance or enhancement.

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

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Balance at start of the year	8,293	11,807
Additions:		
Purchases	0	0
Subsequent Expenditure	262	43
Disposals	0	0
Net loss/gain from fair value adjustments	(4,793)	2,297
Transfers from Property, Plant and Equipment	8,045	0
Balance at end of the year	11,807	14,147

Fair Value Hierarchy

All the Council's investment portfolio has been assessed as level 3 for valuation purposes.

18 Heritage Assets

Reconciliation of the Carrying Value of Heritage Assets Held by the Council

	Art Collection £'000	Civic Regalia £'000	Railway Museum £'000	Total Assets £'000
Cost or Valuation 1 April 2020	1,091	518	730	2,339
31 March 2021	1,091	518	730	2,339
Cost or Valuation 1 April 2021	1,091	518	730	2,339
Additions	0	22	0	22
31 March 2022	1,091	540	730	2,361

The Council holds a range of heritage assets comprising the Borough Art Collection, the Railway Museum Collection and various pieces of Civic Regalia. The Art Collection was valued by an external valuer in 19/20 at £1.091m. The Civic Regalia was valued by an external valuer in 21/22 at £0.540m. External valuations are reviewed periodically. The Railway Museum Collection is reported in the balance sheet at insurance valuation (based on market values) at £0.730m and is updated annually. In addition, the Council has on loan certain items from the National Railway Museum with an insurance valuation of £1.100m. Because of the nature of the loan agreement these assets are not included within the Council's Balance Sheet. The Council's heritage asset holdings are substantially static with low numbers of acquisitions or donations and no recent disposals.

Further information

Darlington Borough Art Collection is a collection of artworks with a large variety of subject matter, medium and style. The collection spans over 150 years and features work by local, national and international artists and it has been acquired over many years through donation, bequest and purchase. More details can be found on the Council's website.

The Council owns over 150 items of Civic Regalia ranging from dinner and silverware to the Chains of Office.

The Railway Museum's existing collections are mostly limited to material illustrating the development and operation of railways in North East England. Although regional in scope, in some areas they are of national importance because of their association with the Stockton & Darlington Railway. Exhibits include a locomotive, wagons, archives, maps, photographs and models/toys. Further information about the collection can be obtained from the Council's website.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

19 Impairment Losses

During 2021/22, the Council has recognised impairment losses of £0.166m (£1.718m in 2020/21) in relation to its land and buildings.

Where impairment losses are identified, they are initially set against any accumulated gains for each asset held in the Revaluation Reserve. Losses arising from impairments that cannot be absorbed by accumulated revaluation gains are charged to service lines in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Impairments have been charged as follows:

	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		
Chief Executive & Economic Growth	948	125
Operations	0	0
People	0	0
Services	770	41
	1,718	166

20 Inventories

	Consumable Stores		Maintenance Materials		Client Services Work In Progress		Total	
	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Balance at start of year	151	159	134	365	1	(14)	286	510
Purchases	948	1,114	744	937	0	0	1,692	2,051
Recognised as an expense in the year	(940)	(1,108)	(513)	(1,183)	(15)	(68)	(1,468)	(2,359)
Balance at year-end	159	165	365	119	(14)	(82)	510	202

21 Pooled Budgets

The Better Care Fund (BCF) has been established by the Government to support the introduction of a fully integrated health and social care system. Section 75 of the National Health Services Act 2016 gives powers to Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) to establish and maintain pooled funds to support the outcomes of the BCF.

The Council has entered into a pooled budget arrangement with Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group for the provision of health and social care services to meet the needs of the population of the borough of Darlington.

The services being commissioned or provided by the Council or Tees Valley CCG depend upon the needs of the service recipient. The Council and Tees Valley CCG has an ongoing Section 75 agreement in place for funding these services and this is reviewed annually.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Revenue Funding provided to the Pooled Budget		
Darlington Borough Council	81	123
Better Care Funding	2,688	2,708
Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group	486	1,413
	3,255	4,244
Expenditure met from the Pooled Budget		
Darlington Borough Council	81	123
Better Care Funding	2,002	2,536
Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group	420	507
	2,503	3,166
Net (deficit)/surplus arising on the Pooled Budget during the year	752	1,078
The Revenue surplus has been carried forward to be funded from 2020/21 commitments within the BCF.		
Capital Funding provided to the Pooled Budget		
Better Care Funding	1,063	1,063
Expenditure	0	1,063
Net Surplus arising on the Pooled Budget during the year	1,063	0

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

22 Short Term Debtors

	As at 31 March 2021 £'000	As at 31 March 2022 £'000
Central government bodies	10,843	8,349
Other local authorities	1,742	4,446
NHS bodies	287	246
Other Entities and Individuals	26,028	33,633
Payments in Advance	920	3,428
Provision for Bad and Doubtful Debts	(6,978)	(7,730)
	32,842	42,372

23 Cash and Cash Equivalents

The balance of cash and cash equivalents is made up of the following elements:

	As at 31 March 2021 £'000	As at 31 March 2022 £'000
Cash held by the Council	160	160
Bank current accounts / (Overdraft)	(2,232)	(1,248)
Short-term deposits	11,400	16,400
Total cash and cash equivalents	9,328	15,312

24 Short Term Creditors

	As at 31 March 2021 £'000	As at 31 March 2022 £'000
Central government bodies	(13,883)	(21,639)
Other local authorities	(1,987)	(1,791)
NHS bodies	(90)	(516)
Other entities and individuals	(34,700)	(39,501)
Total	(50,660)	(63,447)

25 Long Term Provisions

	Other £'000	Total £'000
Balance at 1 April 2021	(981)	(981)
Additional provisions made in 2021/22		0
Amounts used in 2021/22		369
Unused amounts reversed in 2021/22	0	11
Balance at 31 March 2022	(981)	(601)

Insurance Provision - The Council insures against the risk of claims in respect of personal injury and property loss. These risks are insured externally, however there is a £50,000 excess in respect of each and every claim on the liability policy. The balance of £601,555 on this account represents claims made and still outstanding as at 31 March 2022 which are within these excesses.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

26 Leases

Council as Lessee

- Finance Leases

The Council currently has one finance lease but the fair value as determined by the external valuer is deemed to be nominal and is recognised as Property, Plant and Equipment on the Council's Balance Sheet. It has an annual lease payment of £2,326.

- Operating Leases

The Council has acquired vehicles, furniture and equipment under operating leases. Payments made during the year in respect of these leases amount to £0.725m (£0.662m in 2020/21).

The future minimum lease payments due under non-cancellable leases in future years are:

	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000
Not later than 1 year	458	453
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	1,051	1,083
Later than 5 years	126	63
	1,635	1,599

There are no contingent rents payable in respect of the leases.

The Council has not sub-let any of the vehicles, furniture and equipment under these operating leases.

Council as Lessor

- Finance Leases

The Council does not have any leases categorised as Finance Leases in its capacity as Lessor.

- Operating Leases

The Council leases various Land and Buildings to third parties under operating leases. The leases are primarily to provide suitable affordable accommodation for local businesses but also includes the lease of buildings that enable the delivery of community services such as Community Centres. During 2021/22 £1.269m (£0.655m in 2020/21) was received by the Council in relation to these leases.

The future minimum lease payments receivable under non-cancellable leases in future years are:

	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000
Not later than 1 year	648	1,269
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	1,487	4,067
Later than 5 years	5,702	6,197
	7,837	11,533

The minimum lease payments do not include rents that are contingent on events taking place after the lease was entered into, such as adjustments following rent reviews.

27 Contingent Liabilities

At 31 March 2022, the Council had the following contingent liabilities:

During 1992/93 Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI) ceased accepting new business. MMI and its policyholders, including local authorities, have established a Scheme of Arrangement for the orderly run down of the company. MMI's future liabilities under its old policies cannot be fully quantified until all of the claims, current and yet to be made, have been settled. There is a Scheme of Arrangement in place that if MMI does not have enough assets to meet the claims and liabilities it can clawback from major policy holders part of the claims paid from October 1993.

This scheme was triggered in November 2012 and Darlington Borough Council has paid £0.236m up to 31st March 2022. This represents 25% of claims paid by MMI excluding the first £0.050m of claims. During 2018/19 the Council commissioned a further actuarial report from a firm of advisors, independent of MMI, who estimate at this time that the clawback amount could be as much as 50% of all claims excluding the first £50,000, this could be as much as £0.472m. As a result the Council has a contingent liability of £0.236m, this being the 50% that the Council could be liable for less the amount paid over to MMI to date (£0.236m).

Furthermore, the Council will be liable for 25% of all new claims that have been incurred but not yet been reported but this could increase to 50% of all new claims, therefore, a figure for this contingent liability is unknown at this time. It is intended that further Actuarial reports will be commissioned on a regular basis.

Darlington is one of a consortium of partners, forming a Community Interest Company (CIC) Achieving Real Change for Communities (ARCC). The ARCC is a CIC without shareholdings supported by Darlington and 8 other organisations. There is a Deed of Guarantee in place of £14.120m in the event of significant failures in performance of which Darlington's potential liability is £2.450m rising to £3.530m in the unlikely event of failure by the private guarantors to meet their obligations.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

28 Usable Reserves

Movements in the Council's usable reserves are detailed in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000
General Fund	24,765	23,757
Earmarked Reserves	37,387	44,357
Housing Revenue Account	25,152	27,008
Schools Revenue Balances	868	1,070
Revenue Grant Unapplied	4,366	5,195
Capital Receipts Reserve	662	578
Capital Grants Unapplied	21,991	30,875
Total Usable Reserves	115,191	132,840

General Fund - Resources available to meet future running costs for services other than council housing.

Earmarked reserves - are shown in Note 6 and are resources set aside for future spending plans.

Housing Revenue Account - Resources available to meet future running costs for social housing.

Schools Revenue Balances - Surplus balances of locally managed schools which are committed to be spent on the education service.

Revenue Grant Unapplied - The balance is in respect of revenue grants that have been recognised as income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, but the expenditure to be financed from the grant has not been incurred at the Balance Sheet date.

Capital Receipts Reserve - Proceeds of non-current asset sales available to meet future capital investment.

Capital Grants Unapplied - The balance is in respect of capital grants that have been recognised as income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, but the expenditure to be financed from the grant has not been incurred at the Balance Sheet date.

29 Unusable Reserves

	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000
Revaluation Reserve	37,672	46,747
Capital Adjustment Account	164,099	186,687
Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve	(1,890)	2,704
Financial Instruments Adjustment Account	(16,892)	(16,446)
Pensions Reserve	(219,830)	(181,540)
Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve	4,780	4,780
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	(11,074)	(7,876)
Accumulated Absences Account	(602)	(624)
Dedicated Schools Grant Adjustment Account	(5,233)	(5,896)
Total Unusable Reserves	(48,970)	28,536

Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and 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, or disposed of and the gains are realised.

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

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Balance at 1 April	40,139	37,672
Upward revaluation of assets	3,232	11,493
Downward revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the Deficit/(surplus) on the Provision of Services	(5,181)	(4,351)
Surplus on revaluation of non-current assets not posted to the Deficit/(surplus) on the Provision of Services	(1,949)	7,142
Difference between fair value depreciation and historical cost depreciation	(490)	1,988
Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	(28)	(55)
Amount written off to the Capital Adjustment Account	(518)	1,933
Balance at 31 March	37,672	46,747

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

Capital Adjustment Account (CAA)

The CAA absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets for financing and acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions. The CAA is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement as depreciation, impairment losses and amortisation are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (with reconciling postings from the Revaluation Reserve to convert fair value figures to a historical cost basis). The CAA is credited with the amounts set aside by the Council as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and enhancement. The CAA contains accumulated gains and losses on Investment Properties and gains recognised on donated assets that have yet to be consumed by the Council. The CAA also contains revaluation gains on accumulated Property, Plant and Equipment before 1 April 2007, the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains. Note 5 provides details of the source of all transactions posted to the CAA, apart from those involving the Revaluation Reserve.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Balance at 1 April	171,025	164,099
Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:		
Charges for depreciation and impairment of non-current assets	(9,627)	(7,729)
Revaluation losses on Property, Plant and Equipment	(16,998)	(9,770)
Revaluation gains used to reverse previous revaluation losses	9,002	10,675
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	(740)	(1,402)
Capital Expenditure classed as De-minimis	(92)	(14)
Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.	(6,948)	(1,342)
	(25,403)	(9,582)
Adjusting amount written out of the Revaluation Reserve	637	(1,988)
Net written out amount of the cost of non-current assets consumed in the year	(24,766)	(11,570)
Capital financing applied in the year:		
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	3,222	1,572
Use of the Major Repairs Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	0	0
Capital grants and contributions credited to the CIES that have been applied to capital financing	776	1,385
Application of grants to capital financing from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	10,971	18,024
	1,769	2,255
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment charged against the General Fund and HRA balances	5,895	8,625
	22,633	31,861
Movements in the market value of Investment Properties debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(4,793)	2,297
Balance at 31 March	164,099	186,687

Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve

The Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its investments that are measured at fair value through other comprehensive income. The balance is reduced when instruments with accumulated gains are revalued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost or disposed of and gains are realised.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Balance at 1st April	(1,421)	(1,890)
Surplus on revaluation of Financial Instrument Revaluation Reserve	(1,421)	(1,890)
Financial Instruments held under Fair Value through Profit and Loss subject to MHCLG Statutory Over-ride *	(469)	4,594
Balance at 31st March	(1,890)	2,704

* The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (now DLUHC) introduced a statutory over-ride to protect the General Fund balance from any fluctuations in fair value movements in quoted investment funds. The Council has 3 such property funds, namely CCLA, Hermes and Lothbury. This over-ride expires on 31 March 2023 and unless extended, all fair value movements will then impact upon the General Fund balance.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

Financial Instruments Adjustment Account

The Financial Instruments Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for income and expenses relating to certain financial instruments and for bearing losses or benefiting from gains per statutory provisions. The Council uses the Account to manage premiums paid on the early redemption of loans. Premiums are debited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when they are incurred, but reversed out of the General Fund Balance to the Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Over time, the expense is posted back to the General Fund Balance in accordance with statutory arrangements for spreading the burden on council tax. In the Council's case, this period is the unexpired term that is outstanding on the loans when they were redeemed. As a result, the balance on the Account at 31 March 2022 will be charged to the General Fund over the next 40 years.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Balance at 1 April	(17,334)	(16,892)
Premiums incurred in the year and charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	0	0
Proportion of premiums incurred in previous financial years to be charged against the General Fund in accordance with statutory requirements	442	446
Balance at 31 March	(16,892)	(16,446)

Pensions Reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Council accounts for post employment benefits in the CIES as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Council makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Council has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Balance at 1 April	(186,740)	(219,830)
Actuarial (losses) / gains on pensions assets and liabilities	(23,490)	53,820
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(18,410)	(24,480)
Employer's pension contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	8,810	8,950
Balance at 31 March	(219,830)	(181,540)

Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve

The Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve holds the gains recognised on the disposal of non-current assets but for which cash settlement has yet to take place. Under statutory arrangements, the Council does not treat these gains as usable for financing new capital expenditure until they are backed by cash receipts. When the deferred cash settlement eventually takes place, amounts are transferred to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000
Balance at 1 April	0	0
Transfer of deferred sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	4,780	4,780
Transfer to the Capital Receipts Reserve upon receipt of cash	0	0
Balance at 31 March	4,780	4,780

Collection Fund Adjustment Account

The Collection Fund Adjustment Account manages the differences arising from the recognition of council tax and non-domestic rates income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) as it falls due from council tax payers and business rates payers compared with the statutory arrangements for paying across to the General Fund from the Collection Fund.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Balance at 1 April	(1,667)	(11,074)
Amount by which council tax and non-domestic rates income credited to the CIES is different from council tax and non-domestic rates income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(9,407)	3,198
Balance at 31 March	(11,074)	(7,876)

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

Accumulated Absences Account

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the General Fund Balance from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year, for example, annual leave entitlement carried forward at 31 March. Statutory arrangements require that the impact on the General Fund Balance is neutralised by transfers to or from the Account.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Balance at 1 April	(611)	(602)
Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of the preceding year	611	602
Amounts accrued at the end of the current year	(602)	(624)
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory	(602)	(624)
Balance at 31 March	(602)	(624)

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Adjustment Account

On the 6 November 2020, the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government laid before Parliament a statutory instrument (the instrument) to amend The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations (the 2003 Regulations). The provisions came into effect from 29 November 2020.

The instrument amends the 2003 Regulations by establishing new accounting practices in relation to the treatment of local authorities' schools budget deficits such that where the Council has a deficit on its schools budget relating to its accounts for a financial year beginning on 1 April 2020, 1 April 2021 or 1 April 2022, it must not charge the amount of that deficit to a revenue account. The Council must record any such deficit in a separate account established solely for the purpose of recording deficits relating to its school's budget. The new accounting practice has the effect of separating schools budget deficits from the Councils' general fund for a period of three financial years.

This issue can only be fully resolved by closing the deficits. Therefore, the accounting treatment introduced by this regulation is limited to the financial reporting periods 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 to provide time for Government and the Council to look at budgetary and financial management strategies to reduce the deficit.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Balance at 1st April	0	(5,233)
Transfer of High Needs Block deficit balance at 1 April from Dedicated Schools Grant earmarked reserve	(4,525)	
Restated Opening Balance	(4,525)	(5,233)
In year High Needs Block deficit	(708)	(663)
Balance at 31st March	(5,233)	(5,896)

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

30 Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing

The total amount of capital expenditure incurred in the year is shown in the table below (including the value of assets acquired under finance leases and PFI/PP contracts), together with the resources that have been used to finance it. Where capital expenditure is to be financed in future years by charges to revenue as assets are used by the Council, the expenditure results in an increase in the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), a measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically by the Council that has yet to be financed. The CFR is analysed in the second part of this note.

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	219,488	220,685
Capital Investment		
Property, Plant and Equipment	25,434	37,341
Investment Properties	262	43
Long Term Debtors	3,501	6,587
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute	740	1,403
Other	92	14
Sources of Finance		
Capital receipts	(3,222)	(1,572)
Repayment of JV loans	(6,200)	(7,927)
Government grants and other contributions	(11,747)	(19,409)
Sums set aside from revenue:		
Direct revenue contributions	(5,894)	(8,625)
MRP/loans fund principal	(629)	(1,129)
Deferred liabilities movement	(1,140)	(1,126)
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	220,685	226,285
Explanation of movements in year		
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	(1,768)	(2,255)
Increase in underlying need to borrowing (unsupported by government financial assistance)	2,965	7,855
Increase in Capital Financing Requirement	1,197	5,600

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

31 Grant Income

The Council credited the following grants, contributions and donations to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in 2021/22:

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Credited to Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income		
Council tax income	52,429	55,843
Business Rates income	8,294	14,952
Business Rates Top Up Grant	7,590	7,678
Non-ringfenced Government grants	30,898	16,912
Capital Grants and Contributions	14,397	26,908
	113,608	122,293
Non-Ringfenced Grant Detail		
Revenue Support Grant	3,614	3,634
Expanded Retail Discount & Nursery Relief	0	3,544
LA Support Grant	8,682	2,958
NNDR1 S31	10,892	2,454
Local Council Tax Support Schemes	0	1,415
New Homes Bonus	1,286	1,182
Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund	0	976
Other	163	293
LA Discretionary Grants Fund	0	167
Sales Fees & Charges Support Grant	1,991	146
Lower Tier Services Grant	0	143
Covid-19 Principal Grant	4,270	0
	30,898	16,912
Capital Grant Income		
Towns Fund Capital	0	7,281
Developer Contributions	0	5,623
Other	5,308	2,857
ERDF Business Central 2	0	2,738
TVCA Business Central 2	0	2,300
Station Gateway	2,053	1,999
Local Transport Plan	2,270	1,852
Railway Heritage Quarter	0	1,172
Building Better Britain Funding	0	1,086
Indigenous Growth Fund	1,808	0
Housing Infrastructure Fund	1,684	0
Severe Weather Recovery & Pothole Fund	1,274	0
	14,397	26,908
Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	113,608	122,293
Credited to Net Cost of Services		
Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	23,938	25,942
Rent Allowances and Rent Rebates	27,438	23,062
Public Health Grant	8,512	8,590
Improved Better Care Fund	4,356	4,356
Social Care Grant	2,952	3,593
The Private Finance Initiative (PFI)	3,200	3,200
Infection Control Fund	2,896	2,032
Pupil Premium	1,088	1,094
LA Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme	0	490
Workforce recruitment and Retention Fund	0	966
Household Support Fund	0	914
Additional Restrictions Grant	3,085	771
Contain Outbreak Management Fund	1,214	763
Independent Living Fund	749	749
Culture Recovery Fund	900	638
Tackling Troubled Families	562	557
Adult Education Funding from Tees Valley Combined Authority	452	480
Covid-19 Local Support Grant	0	429
Housing Benefit Administration Subsidy Funding	358	361
Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Fund	391	328
Drug Treatment Universal Grant Scheme	0	319
Access Fund for Sustainable Travel	330	314
Adult Education Funding from Education & Skills Funding Agency	265	292
Routes to Work	238	253
16-19 Funding from Education & Skills Funding Agency	199	252
Youth Justice Grant	228	247
Holiday Activities and Food Programme	0	231

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

Domestic Abuse Support to Victims	0	222
Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme	491	218
Rough Sleeping	0	209
Homelessness Prevention Grant	0	197
Skerningham Garden Community Villages	0	164
Capability Fund Project	0	162
Localised Council Tax Support Administration Subsidy Funding	159	160
Universal Infant Free School Meals	174	157
Discretionary Housing Payments	283	151
Rough Sleeping Initiative (Cold Weather Fund)	0	148
Home to School College Grant	173	143
Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme	0	142
Burtree Garden Villages	150	135
Travel Demand Management Grant	0	132
Adult Social Care Omicron Support Fund	0	125
Design Code Pathfinder - Skerningham	0	120
Syrian Resettlement Programme	117	101
Virtual School Heads Social Worker Implementation Grant	0	100
Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund	1,214	0
Covid-19 Test and Trace Service Support Grant	779	0
Community Mass Testing Funding	630	0
Teachers Pension Grant	459	0
Workforce Capacity Fund for Adult Social Care	251	0
Self Isolation Payments - Discretionary Scheme	218	0
New Burdens Funding - Business Grants Administration	170	0
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable	165	0
Green Homes Grant	151	0
Teachers Pay Grant	137	0
LA Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies	135	0
North East Community Discharge Grant	121	0
Council Tax Hardship Fund	100	0
Other	1,803	1,653
	91,231	85,662

The Council has received a number of grants, contributions and donations that have yet to be recognised as income as they have conditions attached to them that will require the monies or property to be returned to the giver. The balance at the year-end is as follows:

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Capital Grants Receipts in Advance		
Developer Contribution	3,462	0
	3,462	0

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Revenue Grants Receipts in Advance		
Sales, Fees & Charges Grant	564	564
Council tax Rebate Grant - Discretionary Element	0	234
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Support	0	218
Practical Support for Self-Isolation	0	203
Other	394	417
	958	1,636

During the current year audit, it was noted that Note 31-Grant Income was not prepared in accordance with all disclosure requirements as prescribed in the CIPFA guidance notes. This has been rectified in the current year by revising the note for current year and comparative values. During the council's exercise of revising the note, it was noted that there were grants amounting to £5.8m in aggregate that were classified as Taxation from Non-Specific Grant Income instead of as Grants Credited to Cost of Services in the prior year's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES). This has been rectified in 2021/22 by restating the comparatives in the CIES for Cost of Services ('People') and Taxation and Non-Specific grant income by the £5.8m. Notes 3- Expenditure and Funding Analysis, 10 - Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income and 31-Grant Income have been updated to be consistent with the change in the CIES. The error pertains only to the classification of grant income. There is no overall impact on the 2020/21 surplus.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

32 Private Finance Initiative

Education PFI Scheme

2021/22 was year 17 of the Council's 25 year PFI scheme for the construction, maintenance and operation of four schools, the Education Village (a federation of schools comprising Springfield, Beaumont Hill and Haughton Schools) and Harrowgate Hill Primary School, which became operational in March 2006 and August 2005 respectively. The Education Village Schools converted to Academy status on 1 April 2012 under the provisions of the Academies Act 2010.

(1) Harrowgate Hill

The Council has certain exclusive use rights for the use of the school during specific times during school terms. The contract specifies minimum standards for the services to be provided by the contractor, with deductions from the fee payable being made if facilities are unavailable or performance is below the minimum standards. The contractor took on the obligation to construct the centres and maintain them in a minimum acceptable condition and to procure and maintain the plant and equipment needed to operate the centres. The buildings and any plant and equipment installed in them at the end of the contract will be transferred to the Council for nil consideration. The Council only has rights to terminate the contract if it compensates the contractor in full for costs incurred and future profits that would have been generated over the remaining term of the contract.

(2) Education Village

The Education Village Academy Trust has certain exclusive use rights for the use of the centres by schools during specific times during school terms. The contract specifies minimum standards for the services to be provided by the contractor, with deductions from the fee payable being made if facilities are unavailable or performance is below the minimum standards. The contractor took on the obligation to construct the centres and maintain them in a minimum acceptable condition and to procure and maintain the plant and equipment needed to operate the centres. The buildings and any plant and equipment installed in them at the end of the contract will be transferred to the Academy Trust for nil consideration. The Council continues to be the primary contracting party with the contractor but the Academy Trust has taken over a large part of the monitoring responsibilities for the three schools it serves. The payment arrangements are that the Council makes the payment to the contractor and receives the PFI credits and contributions from the schools involved to cover the majority of the costs with the remainder being top sliced from the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Property, Plant and Equipment

The assets used to provide services at the schools are recognised on the Council's Balance Sheet. Movements in their value over the year are detailed in the analysis of the movement on the Property, Plant and Equipment balance in Note 16.

Payments

The Council makes an agreed payment each year, part of which is increased each year by inflation and can be reduced if the contractor fails to meet availability and performance standards in any year but which is otherwise fixed. Payments remaining to be made under the PFI contract at 31 March 2022 (excluding any estimation of inflation and availability/performance deductions) are as follows:

	Payment for Services £'000	Reimbursement of Capital Expenditure £'000	Interest £'000	Total £'000
Payable in 2022/23	2,616	1,115	441	4,172
Payable within 2 to 5 years	11,134	4,392	1,234	16,760
Payable within 6 to 10 years	10,430	3,725	399	14,554
Total	24,180	9,232	2,074	35,486

Although the payments made to the contractor are described as unitary payments, they have been calculated to compensate the contractor for the fair value of the services they provide, the capital expenditure incurred and interest payable whilst the capital expenditure remains to be reimbursed. The liability outstanding for capital expenditure incurred is as follows:

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Balance outstanding at start of year	11,498	10,359
Payments during the year	(1,139)	(1,126)
Balance outstanding at end of year	10,359	9,233

33 Members' Allowances

Details of the amounts paid to each Member of the Council are published annually and can be viewed on the Darlington Borough Council website. The total amount paid to Members in respect of basic, special responsibility and travel and subsistence allowance was £597,084 (2020/21 £586,691).

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

34 Trust Funds

Trust Funds administered by Darlington Borough Council are as follows:

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £'000	Receipts £'000	Payments £'000	Balance at 31 March 2022 £'000
BAT Legacy	72	0	(72)	0
	72	0	(72)	0

Purpose of the Trust Funds:

BAT Legacy

British American Tobacco (BAT) closed its Darlington plant in 2004. A legacy was left to the town to support business growth and economic development.

35 Related Parties

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

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 the majority of its funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Council has with other parties (e.g. council tax bills, housing benefits). Grants received from government departments are included within Note 31 and the amounts outstanding from/to various government departments are summarised in Notes 22/24.

Members

Members of the Council have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies. The total of members' allowances paid in 2021/22 is shown in Note 33. Councillors are subject to the Council's Member Code of Conduct. The Register of Members' Interests and declarations of interests relating to specific items of discussion at meetings are available for inspection.

During 2021/22, the Council had transactions with the following entities in which Members were deemed to have the potential to control or have significant influence over that entity;

	Expenditure		Income		Creditors		Debtors	
	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Bishop Hogarth Educational Trust	9							
Education Village Academy Trust	3,073	3,383	(1,285)	(1,382)	0	(109)	153	483
St Aidan's Church of England Academy	61	114	(40)	(31)	0	(9)	4	11
TOTAL	3,143	3,497	(1,325)	(1,413)	0	(118)	157	494

During 2021/22, the Council paid £6.379m (£3.479m in 2020/21) to and received £7.465m (£0.019m in 2020/21) from other entities in which Members declared an interest on their Members' Interest forms but in which they were not deemed to have the potential to control or have significant influence over those entities. At the end of the year the Council was owed £2.1943m from these entities and owed £0.151m to these entities (£0.087m and £0.000m respectively in 2020/21).

Senior Officers

The Council's senior managers may influence financial and operating policies through the professional advice to elected Members and through the management decisions they make under delegated powers. Such officers are subject to the Council's Employee Code of Conduct and professional bodies' standards. There are no related party transactions between the Council and its senior managers that require disclosure in 2021/22 (none in 2020/21).

Other Public Bodies

The Council received £7,521,880 (£7,098,003 in 2020/21) from the NHS. The Council paid £2,789,849 (£3,549,325 in 2020/21) to the NHS. At the year end there was £2,682 (£92,545 in 2020/21) owed to the NHS and there was £2,169,623 (£1,542,413 in 2020/21) owed to the NHS.

Entities Controlled or influenced by the Council

The Council has financial relationships with a number of related companies, those considered significant due to the level of investment are detailed below.

Eastbourne Joint Venture Limited

This is a joint venture arrangement with Esh Homes Limited of which the Council owns 50% of the share capital of the Company. The Company was established to develop 60 homes on the former Eastbourne School land that was declared surplus in July 2016.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

Heighington Joint Venture Limited

This is a joint venture arrangement with Esh Homes Limited of which the Council owns 50% of the share capital of the Company. The Company was established to develop 43 homes (including 9 affordable) at Heighington.

Middleton St George Joint Venture Limited

This is a joint venture arrangement with Esh Homes Limited of which the Council owns 50% of the share capital of the Company. The Company was established to develop 55 homes (including 5 affordable) at Middleton St George.

West Park Joint Venture Limited

This is a joint venture arrangement with Esh Homes Limited of which the Council owns 50% of the share capital of the Company. The Company was established to develop 224 homes (including affordable) at West Park.

Neasham Joint Venture Limited

This is a joint venture arrangement with Esh Homes Limited of which the Council owns 50% of the share capital of the Company. The Company was established to develop 155 homes at Neasham.

Esh/DBC Joint Venture

This is a joint venture arrangement with Esh Homes Limited of which the Council owns 50% of the share capital of the Company. The Company was established to develop 71 homes (including affordable) at Springwell.

Teesside International Airport Limited (TIAL) (formerly Durham Tees Valley Airport Limited (DTVA))

89% shareholding of the Airport is owned by Goosepool 2019 Limited, who is in turn a 75% subsidiary of Tees Valley Combined Authority. The other 11% of the shares are held by the Tees Valley local authorities of which the Council holds 2.91% of the total shareholding in the airport. For the year ended 31 March 2021, Teesside International Airport Limited made an operating loss of £13.632m (£1.737m for year ended 31 March 2020) and a loss of £12.904m after taxation (loss of £1.239m for the year ended 31 March 2020).

Further information regarding the Company's accounts can be obtained from Companies House or its registered office at Cavendish House, Teesdale Business Park, Stockton on Tees, TS17 6QY.

36 Pension Schemes Accounted for as Defined Contribution Schemes

Teachers employed by the Council are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme, administered by Capita Teachers' Pensions on behalf of the Department for Education. The Scheme provides teachers with specified benefits upon their retirement, and the Council contributes towards the costs by making contributions based on a percentage of members' pensionable salaries.

The Scheme is technically a defined benefit scheme. However, the Scheme is unfunded and the Department for Education uses a notional fund as the basis for calculating the employers' contribution rate paid by local authorities. The Council is not able to identify its share of the underlying financial position and performance of the Scheme with sufficient reliability for accounting purposes. For the purposes of this Statement of Accounts, it is therefore accounted for on the same basis as a defined contribution scheme.

In 2021/22, the Council paid £0.879m to Teachers' Pensions in respect of teachers' retirement benefits, representing 23.68% of pensionable pay. The figures for 2020/21 were £0.830m and 23.68%. There were no contributions remaining payable at the year-end.

The Council is responsible for the costs of any additional benefits awarded upon early retirement outside of the terms of the teachers' scheme. These costs are accounted for on a defined benefit basis and detailed in Note 37.

During 2013/14, Public Health staff transferred to the Council and these staff have maintained their membership in the NHS pension scheme. The Scheme provides these staff with sufficient benefits upon their retirement and the Council contributes towards the costs by making contributions based on a percentage of members' pensionable salaries.

The scheme is an unfunded defined benefit scheme. However, the Council is not able to identify its share of the underlying financial position and performance of the scheme with sufficient reliability for accounting purposes and it is therefore accounted for on the same basis as a defined contribution scheme.

In 2021/22 the Council paid £0.023m to the NHS Pension scheme in respect of former NHS staff retirement benefits, representing 14.38% of pensionable pay. The figures for 2020/21 were £0.023m and 14.38%. There were no contributions remaining payable at the year end.

37 Defined Benefit Pension Schemes

Participation in Pension Schemes

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its officers, the Council makes contributions 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 that needs to be disclosed at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

The Council participates in two post employment schemes.

The disclosures below relate to the funded liabilities within the Durham County Council Pension Fund which is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit plan with benefits earned up to 31 March 2014 being linked to salary. Benefits after 31 March 2014 are based on a Career Average Revalued Earnings scheme. Details of the benefits earned over the period covered by this disclosure are set out in 'The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013' and 'The Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment)

There are arrangements in place for the award of discretionary post retirement benefits upon early retirement. This is an unfunded defined benefit arrangement, under which liabilities are recognised when awards are made. However, there are no investment assets built up to meet these pensions liabilities, and cash has to be generated to meet actual pensions payments as they eventually fall due.

Funding / Governance Arrangements of the LGPS

The funded nature of the LGPS requires participating employers and its employees to pay contributions into the Fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension liabilities with investment assets. Information on the framework for calculating contributions to be paid is set out in LGPS Regulations 2013 and the Fund's Funding Strategy Statement.

An actuarial valuation of the Fund was carried out at 31 March 2022 and as part of that valuation a new Rates and Adjustment Certificate has been produced for the three year period from 1 April 2020.

The pensions liability in the draft financial statements were based on the 2019 valuation which was available at the time of preparation of the draft financial statements. The financial statements have now been updated to reflect the value of the pension liability based on the 2022 triennial valuation that became available in 2023.

The Fund Administering Authority, Durham County Council is responsible for the governance of the Fund.

Assets

The assets allocated to the Employer in the Fund are notional and are assumed to be invested in line with the investments of the Fund for the purposes of calculating the return to be applied to those notional assets over the accounting period. The Fund is large and holds a significant proportion of its assets in liquid investments. As a consequence there will be no significant restriction on realising assets if a large payment is required to be paid from the Fund in relation to an employers' liabilities. The assets are invested in a diversified spread of investments and the approximate split of assets for the Fund as a whole is shown in the disclosures split by quoted and unquoted investments.

Transactions Relating to Post-Employment Benefits

We recognise the cost of retirement benefits in the reported cost of services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge we are required to make against council tax is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of post employment/retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement. The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the General Fund Balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year:

	Local Government Pension Scheme		Discretionary Benefits Arrangements	
	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement				
Cost of Services:				
• current service cost	(14,190)	(19,850)	0	0
• gains from settlements	(30)	(100)	0	0
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure				
• net interest expense	(4,010)	(4,380)	(180)	(150)
Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Deficit/(Surplus) on the Provision of Services	(18,230)	(24,330)	(180)	(150)
Other Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement				
• return on plan assets (excluding the amount included in the net interest expense)	(71,060)	(2,970)	0	0
• actuarial losses arising on changes in financial assumptions	100,640	(38,370)	(430)	(130)
• actuarial gains/(losses) arising on changes in demographic assumptions	0	(4,640)	0	(120)
• actuarial gains/(losses) due to liability experience	(5,690)	(7,620)	830	30
Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	5,660	(77,930)	220	(370)
Movement in Reserves Statement				
• reversal of net charges made to the Deficit/(Surplus) on the Provision of Services for post employment benefits in accordance with the Code	18,230	24,330	180	150
Actual amount charged against the General Fund Balance for pensions in the year:				
• employers' contributions payable to the scheme	8,050	8,280		
• retirement benefits payable to pensioners			760	670

The cumulative amount of actuarial gains and losses recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2022 is a gain of £35.540m (to 31 March 2021 a loss of £13.230m).

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

Pensions Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

	Local Government Pension Scheme		Discretionary Benefits Arrangements	
	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Fair value of assets	388,670	396,910	0	0
Present value of funded defined benefit obligation	(601,090)	(571,780)	(7,410)	(6,670)
Net liability recognised on the balance sheet	(212,420)	(174,870)	(7,410)	(6,670)

Assets and Liabilities in Relation to Post Employment Benefits

Pension Scheme Assets comprised:

The Discretionary Benefits arrangements have no assets to cover its liabilities. The Local Government Pension Scheme's assets consist of the following categories, by proportion of the total assets held:

	Asset Split at 31 March 2021			Asset Split at 31 March 2022		
	Quoted %	Unquoted %	Total %	Quoted %	Unquoted %	Total %
Equities	54.4	0.7	55.1	53.2	2.1	55.3
Property	1.2	5.1	6.3	1.5	5.3	6.8
Government Bonds	15.9	0.0	15.9	15.0	0.0	15.0
Corporate Bonds	18.0	0.0	18.0	5.9	0.0	5.9
Cash	4.7	0.0	4.7	2.5	0.0	2.5
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.5	0.0	14.5
	94.2	5.8	100.0	92.6	7.4	100.0

Reconciliation of present value of the scheme liabilities (defined benefit obligation):

	Funded Liabilities: Local Government Pension Scheme		Unfunded Liabilities: Discretionary Benefits	
	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Opening defined benefit obligation balance at 1 April	(490,290)	(601,090)	(8,390)	(7,410)
Current service cost	(14,190)	(19,850)	0	0
Interest expense on defined benefit obligation	(11,170)	(12,510)	(180)	(150)
Contributions by scheme participants	(2,710)	(2,780)	0	0
Actuarial gains on liabilities - financial assumptions	(100,640)	38,370	(430)	130
Actuarial losses/(gains) on liabilities - demographic assumptions	0	4,640	0	120
Actuarial losses/(gains) on liabilities - experience	5,690	7,620	830	(30)
Net Benefits paid out	12,250	13,920	760	670
Past Service cost (including curtailments)	(30)	(100)	0	0
Closing defined benefit balance at 31 March	(601,090)	(571,780)	(7,410)	(6,670)

Reconciliation of fair value of the scheme assets:

	Local Government Pension Scheme		Discretionary Benefits	
	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Opening fair value of assets balance at 1 April	311,940	388,670	0	0
Interest income on assets	7,160	8,130	0	0
Remeasurement (losses)/gains on assets	71,060	2,970	0	0
Contributions by the employer	8,050	8,280	760	670
Contributions by scheme participants	2,710	2,780	0	0
Net Benefits paid out	(12,250)	(13,920)	(760)	(670)
Closing fair value of assets balance at 31 March	388,670	396,910	0	0

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

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.

The actual gain on scheme assets in the year was £11.100m (2020/21: gain of £78.220m).

The liabilities show the underlying commitments that the Council has in the long run to pay post employment (retirement) benefits. The total liability of £181.540m has a substantial impact on the net worth of the Council as recorded in the Balance Sheet, resulting in a reduction in the net worth from £331.125m to £144.535m. However, statutory arrangements for funding the deficit mean that the financial position of the Council remains healthy:

- the deficit on the local government scheme will be made good by increased contributions over the remaining working life of employees (i.e. before payments fall due), as assessed by the scheme actuary.
- finance is only required to be raised to cover discretionary benefits when the pensions are actually paid.

The total contributions expected to be made to the Local Government Pension Scheme by the Council in the year to 31 March 2023 is £8.510m. Expected contributions for the Discretionary Benefits scheme in the year to 31 March 2023 are £0.690m.

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. Both the Local Government Pension Scheme and Discretionary Benefits liabilities have been assessed by AonHewitt Limited, an independent firm of actuaries, estimates for the County Council Fund being based on the latest full valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2022.

The principal assumptions used by the actuary have been:

	Local Government Pension Scheme		Discretionary Benefits	
	2020/21	2021/22	2020/21	2021/22
Mortality assumptions:				
Longevity at 65 for current pensioners:				
• Men	22.3	22.1	22.3	22.1
• Women	24.3	24.2	24.3	24.2
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners (aged 45 at accounting date):				
• Men	23.3	23.2	n/a	n/a
• Women	25.8	25.7	n/a	n/a
Rate of Inflation (CPI)	2.7%	3.0%	2.7%	3.0%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.7%	4.0%	n/a	n/a
Rate of increase in pensions	2.7%	3.0%	2.7%	3.0%
Pension accounts revaluation rate	2.7%	3.0%	n/a	n/a
Rate for discounting scheme liabilities	2.1%	2.7%	2.1%	2.7%

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. The sensitivity analyses below have been determined based on reasonably possible changes of the assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period and assumes for each change that the assumption analysed changes while all the other assumptions remain constant. The estimations in the sensitivity analysis have followed the accounting policies for the scheme, i.e. on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method.

	Impact on the Defined Benefit Obligation in the Scheme	
	Increase in Assumption	Decrease in Assumption
	£m	£m
Longevity (increase or decrease by 1 year)	20.30	(20.30)
Rate of increase in salaries (increase or decrease by 0.1% p.a.)	1.16	(1.16)
Rate of increase in pensions (increase or decrease by 0.1% p.a.)	10.44	(10.44)
Rate for discounting scheme liabilities (increase or decrease by 0.1% p.a.)	(11.60)	11.60

The liability calculated above includes an allowance for the McCloud/Sargeant judgement in line with last years valuation, as well as an allowance for full indexation on all Guaranteed Minimum Pension's (GMP).

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

38 Financial Instruments

Categories of Financial Instruments

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

	Long-term		Current	
	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000
Cash Equivalents Short Term Deposits (See Note 23)	0	0	9,328	15,312
Short Term Investments (Per Balance Sheet)	0	0	18,000	17,000
Loans and Receivables at amortised cost	0	0	27,328	32,312
Fair Value through Profit and Loss	28,109	32,703	0	0
Total Investments	28,109	32,703	27,328	32,312
Debtors				
Loans and Receivables	16,334	12,212	0	0
Financial assets carried at contract amounts (Debtors)	0	0	7,635	9,546
Total Debtors	16,334	12,212	7,635	9,546
Borrowings				
Financial liabilities (principal amount)	141,935	126,304	19,750	23,500
Add Accrued Interest	0	0	1,583	1,479
Less Other accounting adjustments	(28)	(28)	0	0
Financial Liabilities at amortised cost	141,907	126,276	21,333	24,979
Total Borrowings (Per Balance Sheet)	141,907	126,276	21,333	24,979
PFI and finance lease liabilities	9,232	8,687	1,127	1,116
Total other long term creditors (Per Balance Sheet)	9,232	8,687	1,127	1,116
Financial liabilities carried at contract amount	0	0	965	2,668
Total Creditors	0	0	965	2,668

Items of Income, Expense, Gains and Losses

	2020/21		2021/22	
	Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services £'000	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure £'000	Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services £'000	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure £'000
Net gains/(losses) on:				
Financial Assets measured at fair value through profit and loss	0	(469)	0	4,594
Financial Assets measured at fair value through other comprehensive income	0	0	0	0
Total gains / (losses)	0	(469)	0	4,594
Interest Income:				
Financial Assets measured at amortised cost	0	(2,481)	0	(2,653)
Other Financial Assets measured at fair value through other comprehensive income	0	0	0	0
Total interest income	0	(2,481)	0	(2,653)
Interest Expense		0	0	0

Fair Value of Financial Assets

Reclassification and remeasurement of financial assets at 1 April 2021

This note shows the effect of reclassification of financial assets following the adoption of IFRS 9 Financial Instruments by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

The Teesside International Airport (TIAL) shareholding is a strategic investment and not held for trading and therefore the Council has opted to designate it as fair value through Other Comprehensive Income. This means that there is no impact on the revenue budget and any gains or losses will be therefore transferred to the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

The Council holds a £30.000m pooled investment in 3 separate property funds and as a result of the change in accounting standards in 2018/19, under IFRS 9 the MHCLG have agreed a temporary override to allow Local Authorities time to adjust their portfolio of all pooled investments. The statutory override is for 5 years commencing 1 April 2018.

Some of the Council's financial assets are measured at fair value on a recurring basis and are described in the following table, including the valuation techniques to measure them.

Financial assets measured at fair value				
Recurring fair value measurements	Input level in fair value Hierarchy	Valuation technique used to measure fair value	As at 31 March 2021 £'000	As at 31 March 2022 £'000
Fair Value through Profit and Loss Property Funds	Level 2	Unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical shares - Bid price	28,109	32,703

Fair Values of Assets and Liabilities

Financial liabilities, financial assets represented by loans and receivables and long-term debtors and creditors 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 will take place over the remaining term of the instruments, using the following assumptions:

- for loans from both PWLB and non PWLB payable, borrowing rates from PWLB have been applied to provide the fair value under PWLB debt redemption procedures;
- no early repayment or impairment is recognised;
- where an instrument will mature in the next 12 months, carrying amount is assumed to approximate to fair value; and
- the fair value of trade and other receivables is taken to be the invoiced or billed amount.

The fair values calculated are as follows:

	31 March 2021		31 March 2022	
	Carrying amount £'000	Fair Value £'000	Carrying amount £'000	Fair Value £'000
Financial Liabilities:				
PWLB Debt	128,931	178,637	124,049	158,943
Non PWLB debt	32,600	49,716	25,600	39,367
PFI Debt	10,358	12,967	9,233	10,326
Total Debt	171,889	241,320	158,882	208,636
Creditors	965	965	2,668	2,668

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

The fair value of PWLB loans of £158.943m measures the economic effect of the terms agreed with the PWLB compared with estimates of the terms that would be offered for market transactions undertaken at the Balance Sheet date which has been assumed as the PWLB new borrowing rates. The difference between the carrying amount and the fair value measures the additional interest that the Council will pay over the remaining terms of the loans under the agreements with the PWLB, against what would be paid if the loans were at prevailing market rates.

However, the Council has a continuing ability to borrow at concessionary rates from the PWLB rather than from the markets. A supplementary measure of the additional interest that the Council will pay as a result of its PWLB commitments for fixed rate loans is to compare the terms of these loans with the new borrowing rates available from the PWLB. If a value is calculated on this basis, the carrying amount of £124.049m would be valued at £158.943m. But if the Council were to seek to avoid the projected loss by repaying the loans to the PWLB, the PWLB would raise a penalty charge based on the redemption interest rates, an early redemption charge of £34.894m for the additional interest which will not now be paid. The exit price for the PWLB loans including the penalty charge would be £158.943m.

The fair value of the assets is greater than the carrying amount because the Council's portfolio of investments includes a fixed rate investment where the interest rate payable is higher than the rates available for similar investments 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 receive interest from lenders above current market rates.

	31 March 2021		31 March 2022	
	Carrying amount £'000	Fair Value £'000	Carrying amount £'000	Fair Value £'000
Financial Assets				
Debtors	7,635	7,635	9,546	9,546

Short term debtors and creditors are carried at cost as this is a fair approximation of their value.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

39 Nature and Extent of Risks Arising from Financial Instruments

Key Risks

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

- 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 commitment 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 and stock market movements.

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. The procedures for risk management are set out in a legal framework in the Local Government Act 2003 and associated regulations. These require the Council to comply with the CIPFA Prudential Code, the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services and investment guidance issued through the Act. Overall these procedures require the Council to manage risks in the following

- by formally adopting the requirements of the Code of Practice;
- by the adoption of a treasury policy statement and treasury management clauses within the Constitution;
- by approving annually in advance prudential indicators for the following three years limiting the Council's overall borrowing including:
 - its maximum and minimum exposures to fixed and variable rates;
 - its maximum annual exposure to investments maturing beyond 1 year
- by approving an investment strategy for the forthcoming year setting out its criteria for both investing and selecting investment counterparties in compliance with Government Guidance.

These are required to be reported and approved at or before the Council's annual Council Tax setting budget. These items are reported with the annual treasury management strategy which outlines the detailed approach to managing risks in relation to the Council's financial instrument exposure. Actual performance is also reported half-yearly to Members.

The annual treasury management strategy which incorporates the prudential indicators was approved by Council on 18 February 2021 and is available on the Council's website. The key issues within the strategy were:

- The Authorised Limit for 2021/22 was set at £240.979m. This was the maximum amount of external borrowings and other long term liabilities allowed. This was subsequently updated to £237.156m in the revised strategy.
- The Operational Boundary was expected to be £186.550m. This is the expected level of borrowing and other long term liabilities during the year. This was subsequently updated to £174.081m in the revised strategy.
- The maximum amounts of fixed and variable interest rate exposure were set at 100% and 40% based on the Council's net debt.
- The maximum and minimum exposure to the maturity structure of debt are shown in the note relating to refinancing and maturity risk.

Risk Management is carried out by a central treasury team under policies approved by the Council in the Annual Treasury Management Strategy. The Council provides written principles for overall risk management, as well as written policies covering specific areas, such as interest rate risk, credit risk, and the investment of surplus cash through Treasury Management Practices (TMPs). These TMPs are a requirement of the Code of Practice and are reviewed regularly.

Credit Risk

Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions, as well as credit exposures to the Council's customers. Deposits are not made with banks and institutions unless they meet the minimum requirements of investment criteria outlined below.

This risk is minimised through the Annual Investment Strategy, which requires that deposits are not made with financial institutions unless they meet identified minimum credit criteria, as laid down by Credit Ratings Services. The Annual Investment Strategy also imposes a maximum sum to be invested with a financial institution located within each category. Additional selection criteria are also applied after these initial criteria are applied. Full details of the Investment Strategy can be found on the Council's website. The key areas of the investment Strategy are the minimum criteria for investment counterparties which include:

- UK institutions Credit rating of Short Term F1, Long Term A- or equivalent
- Non UK institutions Credit rating of Short Term F1+, Long Term AA- or equivalent
- UK institutions provided with support from the UK Government.

The full Investment Strategy for 2021/22 was approved by full Council on 18 February 2021 and is available on the Council's website.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

The following analysis summarises the Council's potential maximum exposure to credit risk, based on experience of default assessed by the ratings agencies and the Council's experience of its customer collection levels over the last five financial years, adjusted to reflect current market conditions:

	Amount at 31 March 2022 £'000	Historical experience of default %	Lowest Long Term and Fund Rating	Estimated maximum exposure to default and uncollectability at 31 March 2022 £'000	Estimated maximum exposure at 31 March 2022 £'000
Deposits with banks and Financial Institutions					
Brentwood Council	5,000	0.004	AA-	0	0
Goldman Sachs International Bank	4,000	0.013	A+	1	0
Standard Chartered Bank	4,000	0.015	A+	1	0
National Bank of Kuwait (International) Plc	4,000	0.008	A	1	0
BNP Paribas MMF	5,000	0.000	AAA	0	0
CCLA MMF	5,000	0.000	AAA	0	0
Federated Investors MMF	1,400	0.000	AAA	0	0
Insight MMF	5,000	0.000	AAA	0	0
Total	33,400				

No breaches of the Council's counterparty criteria occurred during the reporting period and the Council does not expect any losses from non-performance by any of its counterparties in relation to deposits.

The Council does not generally allow credit for customers, such that £6.291m of the £10.468m balance shown in the balance sheet as part of short term debtors is past its due date for payment. The past due but not impaired amount can be analysed by age as follows:

	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000
Debts on Payment plans	1,332	1,769
Less than 3 months	597	458
3 to 6 months	365	569
6 months to 1 year	820	504
More than 1 year	2,742	2,991
	5,856	6,291

Liquidity Risk

The Council has ready access to borrowings from the money markets to cover any day to day cash flow need, and the PWLB and money markets for access to longer term funds. The Council is also required to provide a balanced budget through the Local Government Finance Act 1992, which ensures sufficient monies are raised to cover annual expenditure. There is therefore no significant risk that it will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments under financial instruments.

The maturity analysis of financial assets is as follows:

	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000
Less than 1 year	29,400	33,400
	29,400	33,400

All trade and other payables are due to be paid in less than one year and are not shown in the table above.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

Refinancing and Maturity Risk

The Council maintains a significant debt and investment portfolio. Whilst the cash flow procedures above are considered against refinancing risk procedures, longer-term risk to the Council relates to managing the exposure to replacing financial instruments as they mature. This risk relates to both the maturing of longer term financial liabilities and longer term financial assets.

The approved treasury indicators limits for the maturity structure of debt and the limits placed on investments placed for greater than one year in duration are the key parameters used to address this risk. The Council approved treasury and investment strategies address the main risks and the central treasury team address the operational risks within the approved parameters. This includes:

- monitoring the maturity profile of financial liabilities and amending the profile through either new borrowing or rescheduling of the existing debt: and
- monitoring the maturity profile of investments to ensure sufficient liquidity is available for the Council's day to day cashflow needs, and the spread of longer term investments provide stability of maturities and returns in relation to the longer term cash flow needs.

The maturity analysis of financial liabilities is as follows, with the maximum and minimum limits for fixed interest rates maturing in each period (approved by Council in the Treasury Management Strategy)

	Approved Maximum Limits	31 March 2022	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000
Less than 1 year	40%	16%	19,750	23,500
Between 1 and 2 years	50%	19%	15,500	5,000
Between 2 and 5 years	60%	19%	5,000	0
Between 5 and 10 years	80%	29%	15,372	15,372
More than 10 years	100%	100%	105,909	105,777
Total			161,531	149,649

Market Risk

Interest Rate Risk

The Council is exposed to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. Movements in interest rates have a complex impact on the Council, depending on how variable and fixed rates move across differing financial instrument periods. For instance, a rise in variable and fixed interest rates would have the following effects:

- borrowings at variable rates – the interest expense charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise;
- borrowings at fixed rates – the fair value of the liabilities borrowings will fall (no impact on revenue balances);
- investments at variable rates – the interest income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise; and
- investments at fixed rates – the fair value of the assets will fall (no impact on revenue balances).

Borrowings are not carried at fair value on the balance sheet, so nominal gains and losses on fixed rate borrowings would not impact on the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services or Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. However, changes in interest payable and receivable on variable rate borrowings and investments will be posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services and affect the General Fund Balance subject to influences from Government grants (HRA). Movements in the fair value of fixed rate investments that have a quoted market price will be reflected in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

The Council has a number of strategies for managing interest rate risk. The Annual Treasury Management Strategy brings together the Council's prudential and treasury indicators and its expected treasury operations, including an expectation of interest rate movements. From this Strategy, a treasury indicator is set which provides limits for fixed and variable rate exposure. The central treasury team will monitor market and forecast interest rates within the year to adjust exposures appropriately. For instance during periods of falling interest rates and where economic circumstances make it favourable, fixed rate investments may be taken for longer periods to secure better long term returns, similarly the drawing of longer term fixed rates borrowing would be postponed.

According to this assessment strategy, at 31 March 2022, if interest rates had been 1% higher with all other variables held constant, the financial effect would be:

	£'000
Increase in interest payable on variable rate borrowings	164
Increase in interest receivable on variable rate investments	(308)
Impact on Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(144)
Share of overall impact debited to the HRA	95
Decrease in fair value of fixed rate borrowings liabilities (no impact on the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services or Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure) includes PFI contract.	50,321

The impact of a 1% fall in interest rates would be as above but with the movements being reversed. These assumptions are based on the same methodology as used in the note Fair value of Assets and Liabilities carried at Amortised Cost.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

Price Risk

The Council, excluding the Pension Fund, does not generally invest in equity shares or marketable bonds and therefore does not have exposure to price risk in its investments.

The Council holds investment units in property funds that have been classified as Fair Value through Profit and Loss, however the Council has elected to use the 5 year override as allowed by CIPFA (and the Government) to allocate to Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income, therefore any gains or losses on prices will be taken to the Financial Instrument Revaluation Reserve. A gain of £4.594m was recognised in 2021/22 in relation to the Council's holding in the property funds.

A general shift of 5% in the general price of units (positive or negative) would have resulted in a £1.635m gain or loss in the Financial Instrument Revaluation Reserve.

Foreign Exchange Risk

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

40 Events After the Balance Sheet Date

The Statement of Accounts was authorised for issue by the Group Director of Operations on 29 July 2022. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statements or notes. Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing at 31 March 2022, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect the impact of this information.

There are no significant post balance sheet events to be disclosed.

41 Reconciliation of prior year CIES

During the financial year 2021/22 the Council reclassified its operational services for internal reporting purposes. The table below shows a comparison of the reclassified amounts.

Old Service Area	New Service Area					2020/21 Original
	Chief Executive and Economy	Operations	People	Services	Other	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Children and Adults Services	0	0	56,643	0	0	56,643
Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services	4,886	(8,870)	0	34,241	0	30,257
Resources	67	4,966	0	0	0	5,033
Other	0	0	0	0	927	927
	4,953	(3,904)	56,643	34,241	927	92,860

42 Statement of Accounting Policies

a) 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, which those Regulations require to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. The principal accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year.

These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22 (the Code), supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and statutory guidance issued under section 12 of the 2003 Act.

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.

The Statement of Accounts has been prepared on a 'going concern' basis, which assumes that the functions of the Council will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The provisions in the Code in respect of going concern reporting requirements reflect the economic and statutory environment in which the Council operates. As a result of this, it would not therefore be appropriate for the financial statements to be provided on anything other than a going concern basis

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

Despite Covid 19 pandemic restrictions being gradually lifted throughout 2021/22 it has continued to impact upon the Council's finances. Grants totalling £2.958m have been provided by central government to continue to help with expenditure pressures and the government have also continued to provide support for income losses with a further grant of £0.146m. The Council had a closing cash balance as at the 31 March 2022 of £15.312m

The post Covid 19 impact on the Council's finances remains uncertain, however a revised Medium Term Financial Plan was presented to Cabinet in February 2022 which set out the impact on the 2022/23 budget and beyond. The Council has a balanced budget over the life of the MTFP up to 2025/26. The Council's strategy in the MTFP is to balance the budget going forward with the use of reserves.

The mitigating factor underpinning the going concern assessment is that the Council continues to have available general fund balances to balance the budget where necessary. At the end of 22/23 the general fund balance is forecast to be £24.013m. Additionally, the Council's cash flow forecasts anticipate that cash balances will remain in a positive position for at least 12 months following the date of the audit opinion and do not forecast a need to borrow apart from potentially replacing short term borrowing that will mature in the period. The Council has undertaken cash flow modelling through to March 2025 which demonstrates the Council's ability to work within its Capital Financing Requirement and cash management framework with a minimum cash balance forecast during the period of £5m.

b) Accruals of Income and Expenditure

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

- Revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods, is recognised when (or as) the goods or services 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 received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.
- Interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure on the basis of the interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where debts may not be settled, the balance is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected. The Council has adopted a de minimis level of £500 for year-end accruals which means that they are not included in the accounting statements.
- Income and expenditure are credited and debited to the relevant service revenue account, unless they properly represent capital receipts or capital expenditure.

The only exceptions to these principles where costs are not apportioned between years are:

- housing rents are shown in whole weeks
- quarterly accounts e.g. electricity are reflected on the basis of four payments per year

This policy is consistently applied each year and does not materially affect the accounts.

c) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions, including on-call accounts and deposits with Money Market Funds, repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours held to meet short-term cash commitments. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that mature in no more than three months or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

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

d) Prior Period Adjustments, Changes In Accounting Policies and Estimates and Errors

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policies 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 financial performance. Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively (unless stated otherwise) by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period as if the new policy had always been applied.

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

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

e) Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets

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

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

The Council is not required to raise council tax to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisation. However, it is required to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Council in accordance with statutory guidance.

Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisation are therefore replaced by the contribution in the General Fund Balance (Minimum Revenue Provision), by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

f) Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates

Billing authorities act as agents, collecting council tax and non-domestic rates (NDR) on behalf of major preceptors (including government for NDR) and, as principals, collecting council tax and NDR for themselves. Billing authorities are required by statute to maintain a separate fund (i.e. the Collection Fund) for the collection and distribution of amounts due in respect of council tax and NDR. Under the legislative framework for the Collection Fund, billing authorities, major preceptors and central government share proportionately the risks and rewards that the amount of council tax and NDR collected could be less or more than predicted.

Accounting for Council Tax and NDR

The council tax and NDR income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the Council's share of accrued income for the year. However, regulations determine the amount of council tax and NDR that must be included in the Council's General Fund. Therefore the difference between the income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the General Fund is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account and included as a reconciling item in the Movement in Reserves

The Balance Sheet includes the Council's share of the end of year balances in respect of council tax and NDR relating to arrears, impairment allowances for doubtful debts, overpayments and prepayments and appeals.

Where debtor balances for the above are identified as impaired because of a likelihood arising from a past event that payments due under the statutory arrangements will not be made (fixed or determinable payments), the asset is written down and a charge made to the Financing and Investment Income an Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The impairment loss is measured as the difference between the carrying amount and the revised future cash flows.

g) Employee Benefits

Benefits Payable During Employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled wholly within 12 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 entitlements (or any form of leave, e.g. flexi time or time off in lieu) earned by employees but not taken before the year-end which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the wage and salary rates applicable in the following accounting year, being the period in which the employee takes the benefit.

The accrual is charged to 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 in which the holiday 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 in exchange for those benefits and are charged on an accruals basis to the relevant service line or, where applicable, to a corporate service line at the earlier of when the Council can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the Council recognises costs for a restructuring.

Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require the General Fund to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or pensioner in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards although it is the Council's policy not to award any such enhancements.

Post Employment Benefits

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

- The Teachers' Pension Scheme, administered by Capita Teachers' Pensions on behalf of the Department of Education (DfE).
- The NHS Pension Scheme, administered by NHS Pensions
- The Local Government Pensions Scheme, administered by Durham County Council.

The schemes provide defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions) earned as employees of the Council.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

However, the arrangements for the teachers' and the NHS schemes mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot ordinarily be identified specifically to the Council. The schemes are therefore accounted for as if they were a defined contribution scheme and no liability for future payments of benefits is recognised in the Balance Sheet. The Childrens' and Adults Services line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is charged with the employer's contributions payable to Teachers' Pensions in the year as is the employer's contributions payable to the NHS Pension scheme in the year.

The Local Government Pension Scheme

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

- The liabilities of the Durham County Council pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis the projected unit method - i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc. and projections of projected earnings for current employees.
- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate of 2.7% (based on the indicative rate of return on high quality corporate bonds).
- The assets of Durham County Council pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:
 - quoted securities – current bid price
 - unquoted securities – professional estimate
 - unitised securities – current bid price
 - property – market value.

The change in the net pensions liability is analysed into the following components:

- Service cost comprising:
 - current service cost - the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year - allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked;
 - past service cost - the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service in earlier years, debited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
 - net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset), i.e. net interest expense for the Council - the change during the period in the net benefit liability (asset) that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement - this is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit of the period taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.
- Remeasurements comprising:
 - the return on plan assets - excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined liability (asset) charged to the Pensions Reserve Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
 - actuarial gains and losses - changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions - charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
- Contributions paid to the Durham County Council pension fund - cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities not accounted for as an expense.

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

Discretionary Benefits

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

h) Events After the Reporting Period

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; and
- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period - the Statement of Accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events, 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 effect.

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

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

i) 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 fair value and are carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments over the life of the instrument to the amount at which it was originally recognised.

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

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

Where premiums and discounts have been charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, regulations allow the impact on the General Fund Balance to be spread over future years. The Council has a policy of spreading the gain or loss over the term that was remaining on the loan against which the premium was payable or discount receivable when it was repaid. The reconciliation of amounts charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the net charge required against the General Fund Balance is managed by a transfer to or from the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Financial Assets

Financial assets are classified based on a classification and measurement approach that reflects the business model for holding the financial assets and their cashflow characteristics.

There are three main classes of financial assets measured at:

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

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

Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost

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

The Council has the facility to make loans at less than market rates (soft loans). When soft loans are made, a loss is recorded in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (debited to the appropriate service) for the present value of the interest that will be foregone over the life of the instrument, resulting in a lower amortised cost than the outstanding principal.

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

Any gains or losses that arise on the derecognition of an asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

Expected Credit Loss Model

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

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

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

Financial assets measured at Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income (FVOCI)

Financial assets that are measured at FVOCI 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 other comprehensive income.

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit and Loss (FVPL)

Financial assets that are measured at FVPL are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured and carried at fair value. Fair value gains and losses are recognised as they arise in the surplus or deficit on the provision of services.

Fair value measurements of financial assets

Fair value of an asset is the price that would be received to sell an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. The fair value measurements of the Council's financial assets are based on the following techniques:

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

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

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

Any gains or 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.

An equity instrument can be elected into a FVOCI treatment rather than a FVPL treatment if it is not held for trading. The Council has reviewed its assets that would be measured at FVPL on the basis of the business model and has elected to classify instruments as either FVPL or FVOCI on an instrument by instrument basis based on the assessed benefit to the Council from the chosen classification.

As far as Teesside International Airport shares are concerned the Council has elected to treat them as an equity instrument which is not held for trading and therefore will be utilising the FVOCI treatment.

Instruments entered into before 1st April 2006

The Council has a financial guarantee that is not required to be accounted for as a financial instrument. This guarantee is reflected in the Statement of Accounts to the extent that it is shown in contingent liabilities (note 27).

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

j) 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 or contributions will be received.

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

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (attributable revenue grants and contributions) or Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income (non-ringfenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

k) Heritage Assets

A heritage asset is defined as an asset with 'historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that is held and maintained principally for its contribution to knowledge and culture'.

Heritage assets are accounted for in accordance with the Council's accounting policies on property, plant and equipment except 'where it is not practical to obtain a valuation at a cost which is commensurate with the benefits to users of the financial statements, heritage assets shall be measured at historic cost.' Valuations may also be made by any method that is appropriate and relevant.

The carrying amounts of heritage assets are reviewed where there is evidence of impairment for heritage assets e.g. where an item has suffered physical deterioration or breakage or where doubts arise as to its authenticity. Any impairment is recognised and measured in accordance with the Council's general policies on impairment (see page 62). If any heritage assets are disposed of then the proceeds are accounted for in accordance with the Council's general provisions relating to the disposal of property, plant and equipment. Disposal proceeds are disclosed separately in the notes to the financial statements and are accounted for in accordance with statutory accounting requirements relating to capital expenditure and capital receipts.

l) Interests in Companies and Other Entities

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2019/20 requires local authorities to produce group accounts to reflect significant activities provided to council taxpayers by other organisations in which an authority has an interest. The Council has reviewed its interests in companies and other entities that have the nature of subsidiaries, associates and joint ventures against the criteria in the Code and concluded that there are such material interests that require the preparation of group accounts. In the Council's own single-entity accounts, the interest in companies and other entities are recorded as financial assets at cost, less any provision for losses.

m) Inventories and Long Term Contracts

Inventories are included in the Balance Sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value, with the exception of stores held at Allington Way Depot, which are valued at last price paid. This is a departure from the Code of Practice but the effect of the different treatment is not material. Work in progress is subject to an interim valuation at the year-end and recorded in the balance sheet at cost plus any profit reasonably attributable to the works.

n) Investment Properties

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

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, being the price that would be received to sell such an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. As a non-financial asset, investment properties are measured at highest and best use. Properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually according to market conditions at year-end. Gains and losses on revaluation are posted to the Financing and Investment Income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

Rentals received in relation to investment properties are credited to the Financing and Investment Income line and result in a gain for the General Fund Balance. However, revaluation and disposal gains and losses are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the General Fund balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account and (for any sale proceeds greater than £10,000) the Capital Receipts Reserve.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

o) 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.

Arrangements that do not have the legal status of a lease but convey a right to use an asset in return for payment are accounted for under this policy where fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent upon the use of specific assets.

The Council as Lessee

Finance Leases

Property, plant and equipment held under finance leases is recognised on the Balance Sheet at the commencement of the lease at its fair value measured at the lease's inception (or the present value of the minimum lease payments, if lower). The asset recognised is matched by a liability for the obligation to pay the lessor. Initial direct costs of the Council are added to the carrying amount of the asset. Premiums paid on entry into a lease are applied to writing down the lease liability. Contingent rents are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

Lease payments are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property, plant or equipment - 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 and Expenditure Statement).

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

Operating Leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefiting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment. 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).

The Council as Lessor

Finance Leases

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

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property - applied to write down the lease debtor (together with any premiums received);
- finance income (credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

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

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

Operating Leases

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

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

p) Overheads and Support Services

The costs of overheads and support services are charged to service segments in accordance with the Council's arrangements for accountability and financial performance.

q) Property, Plant and Equipment

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

Capital expenditure under £5,000 is classified as de-minimis and is charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The de-minimis expenditure is financed using existing capital resources or by borrowing, this is posted out of the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement so there is no impact on the levels of council tax.

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of property, plant and equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Council and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but that does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

- the purchase price;
- any costs attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management;
- the initial estimate of the costs of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located.

The Council does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred whilst assets are under construction.

The cost of assets acquired other than by purchase is deemed to be its fair value, unless the acquisition does not have commercial substance (i.e. it will not lead to a variation in the cash flows of the Council). In the latter case, where an asset is acquired via an exchange, the cost of the acquisition is the carrying amount of the asset given up by the Council.

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

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

- infrastructure, community assets and assets under construction - depreciated historical cost;
- dwellings - current value, determined using the basis of existing use value for social housing (EUV- SH);
- school buildings - current value, but because of their specialised nature, are measured at depreciated replacement cost which is used as an estimate of current value;
- surplus assets - the current value measurement basis is fair value, estimated at highest and best use from a market participant's perspective;
- all other assets - current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value - EUV).

Where there is no market-based evidence of current value because of the specialised nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost (DRC) is used as an estimate of current value.

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

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at current value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their current value at the year-end, but as a minimum 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 Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and 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 by:

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

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

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

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

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

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all property, plant and equipment 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) and assets that are not yet available for use (i.e. assets under construction).

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

- dwellings and other buildings - straight-line allocation over the useful life of the property as estimated by the valuer;
- vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment - a percentage of the value of each class of assets in the Balance Sheet, as advised by a suitably officer; and
- infrastructure - straight-line allocation over 30 years.

Where an item of property, plant and equipment has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately. Assets valued higher than £1m that are made up from different components and whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item are depreciated on a component by component basis. The components used are host (structure), externals, services and roof. Once separated, depreciation is charged across each components useful life as appropriate.

Revaluations 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.

Disposals and Non-current Assets Held for Sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an asset held for sale. The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and fair value less costs to sell. Where there is a subsequent decrease to fair value less costs to sell, the loss is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any previously recognised losses in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services. Depreciation is not charged on assets held for sale.

If assets no longer meet the criteria to be classified as assets held for sale, they are reclassified back to non-current assets and valued at the lower of their carrying amount before they were classified as held for sale; adjusted for depreciation, amortisation or revaluations that would have been recognised had they not been classified as held for sale, and their recoverable amount at the date of the decision not to sell.

Assets that are to be abandoned or scrapped are not reclassified as assets held for sale.

When an asset is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether property, plant and equipment or assets held for sale) is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

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

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

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

r) Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and Similar Contracts

PFI and similar contracts are agreements to receive services, where the responsibility for making available the property, plant and equipment needed to provide the services passes to the PFI contractor. As the Council is deemed to control the services that are provided under its PFI schemes, and as ownership of the property, plant and equipment will pass to the Council at the end of the contract for no additional charge, the Council carries the assets used under the contract on its Balance Sheet as part of property, plant and equipment (unless the PFI scheme is a school that has subsequently transferred to Academy status and then it will be removed from the Council's Balance Sheet).

The original recognition of these assets at fair value (based on the cost to purchase the property, plant and equipment) was balanced by the recognition of a liability for amounts due to the scheme operator to pay for the capital investment.

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

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

- fair value of the services received during the year - debited to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement,
- finance cost - an interest charge of 4.77% on the outstanding Balance Sheet liability, debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, and
- payment towards liability - applied to write down the Balance Sheet liability towards the PFI operator (the profile of write-downs is calculated using the same principles as for a finance lease).

s) 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 or service potential, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. For instance, the Council may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or the payment of compensation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when the Council has an obligation, and are measured at the best estimate at the Balance Sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year - where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

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

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

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in note 27 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 although at present the Council doesn't have any Contingent Assets.

t) Reserves

The Council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by transferring amounts out of the General Fund Balance. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in that year to score against the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then transferred back into the General Fund Balance so that there is no net charge against council tax for the expenditure.

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

u) 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 and Expenditure Statement in the year. Where the Council has determined to meet the cost of this expenditure from existing capital resources or by borrowing, a transfer in the Movement in Reserves Statement from the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account then reverses out the amounts charged so that there is no impact on the level of council tax.

Notes to the Financial Statements of Darlington Borough Council for Year ended 31 March 2022

v) Value Added Tax (VAT)

VAT payable is included as an expense only to the extent that it is not recoverable from Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs. VAT receivable is excluded from income.

If the Council was unable to recover exempt input tax it would be included as an expense in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

w) Schools

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom confirms that the balance of control for local authority maintained schools (i.e. those categories of school identified in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended) lies with the local authority.

The Code also stipulates that those schools' assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows are recognised in the local authority financial statements. Therefore schools' transactions, cash flows and balances are recognised in each of the financial statements of the Council as if they were the transactions, cash flows and balances of the Council.

x) 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 shareholdings 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:

- a) in the principal market for the asset or liability, or
- b) 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 the asset in highest or best use.

The Council uses valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data is available, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs.

Inputs to the valuation techniques in respect of assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the Council's financial statements are categorised within the fair value hierarchy, as follows:

- Level 1 - quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets 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.

y) Exceptional Items

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

Housing Revenue Account for Darlington Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2022

HRA Income and Expenditure Statement

As at 31 March 2021 re-stated		As at 31 March 2022	Notes
£'000		£'000	
	<u>Expenditure</u>		
(4,101)	Repairs and maintenance	(4,700)	
(6,103)	Supervision and management	(6,490)	
(50)	Rent, rates, taxes and other charges	(148)	
63	Increased provision for bad and doubtful debts	(20)	7
	<u>Depreciation of non-current assets:</u>		
(1,920)	On HRA dwellings	(1,871)	6
0	On Non-HRA dwellings	0	6
0	Impairment of Fixed Assets	0	3
(252)	Revaluation (Loss) / Gain on Fixed Assets	(2,309)	3
0	Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute	0	4
0	Debt management costs	0	
(12,363)	Total Expenditure	(15,538)	
	<u>Income</u>		
20,222	Dwelling rents	20,423	
505	Non-dwelling rents	422	
2,903	Charges for services & facilities	3,024	
765	Contribution towards Expenditure	954	
24,395	Total Income	24,823	
12,032	Net Expenditure or Income of HRA Services as included in the whole authority Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	9,285	
(276)	HRA Share of other amounts included in the whole Authority net costs of services	(552)	
11,756	Net income for HRA Services	8,733	
	HRA Share of Operating income and expenditure included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:		
(2,395)	Interest Payable and Similar Charges	(2,374)	
42	Gain on sale on HRA non-current assets	52	
15	Interest and Investment Income	7	
(214)	Pension Interest Cost and Expected Return on Pension Assets	(227)	
9,204	Surplus for the Year on HRA Services	6,191	

Housing Revenue Account for Darlington Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2022

Movement on the HRA Statement

As at 31 March 2021		As at 31 March 2022	As at 31 March 2022
£'000		£'000	£'000
19,829	Balance on the HRA at the end of the previous year		25,152
9,204	Surplus for the year on the HRA Income and Expenditure Statement	6,191	
	Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under statute:		
(169)	Difference between amounts charged to Income and Expenditure for amortisations of premiums and discounts and the charge for the year determined in accordance with statute	(173)	
2,178	Difference between any other item of income and expenditure determined in accordance with the Code and determined in accordance with statutory HRA requirements	4,189	
(629)	Voluntary set aside for debt repayment	(629)	
(5,751)	Capital expenditure funded by the HRA	(8,502)	
4,833	Net decrease before transfers to reserves	1,076	
	Transfers (to) or from earmarked reserves:		
939	Net charges made for retirement benefits in accordance with IAS19	1,229	
0	Other transfers from/(to) earmarked reserves	0	
(449)	Employer's contributions payable to the Durham County Council Pension Fund and retirement benefits payable direct to pensioners.	(449)	
490	Transfers from reserves	780	
5,323	Increase in year on the HRA		1,856
25,152	Balance on the HRA at the end of the current year		27,008

The 2020/21 values in the Income & Expenditure Statement have been restated. Refer to HRA Note 8 (pg 74) for further detail of the restatement.

Notes to the Housing Revenue Account for Darlington Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2022

1 Housing Stock

		31 March 2022
1 April 2021		
	<u>Number and types of dwellings</u>	
2,616	Houses	2,579
2,316	Flats	2,339
13	Maisonettes	13
344	Bungalows	344
<u>5,289</u>	Total dwellings	<u>5,275</u>
	<u>Balance Sheet values</u>	
£000		£000
51	Land	50
178,765	Houses	184,852
719	Other property	846
<u>179,535</u>	Total net Balance Sheet value	<u>185,748</u>
	Operational Assets	
178,765	Dwellings	184,852
<u>0</u>	Other Land & buildings	<u>0</u>
178,765		184,852
770	Non-operational assets	896
<u>179,535</u>	Total net Balance Sheet value	<u>185,748</u>

2 Vacant Possession Values

The vacant possession value of dwellings as at 1 April in the financial year is £404.503m (£382.176m in 2020/21).

The vacant possession value of a property is defined as an opinion of the best price at which the sale of an interest in the property would have been completed unconditionally for cash consideration on the date of the valuation.

The vacant possession value most naturally relates to sale of a single owner-occupied dwelling. Therefore it must be adjusted to obtain the balance sheet or social housing value. The social value housing value reflects a valuation for a property if it were disposed of with sitting tenants enjoying sub-market rents and tenants' rights. Rents in the private sector reflect capital values quite well since they are market rents. Rents set by local authorities are unlikely to reflect the market position as they have been arrived at through a combination of historic practice and current policy.

The difference between the vacant possession value and the balance sheet value therefore shows the economic cost to the Government of providing council housing at less than open market value.

3 Impairment/Revaluation of Non-current assets

These charges occur where there is a material reduction in the value of a non-current asset during an accounting period. Impairment/revaluation charges of £2.309m (£0.252m in 2020/21) were charged to the Income and Expenditure Statement in 2021/22. This represents £0.000m (£0.215m in 2020/21) of capital expenditure incurred in the year that did not add value to the current housing stock valuation and £8.114m (£7.251m in 2020/21) following a re-valuation exercise carried out during the year.

Notes to the Housing Revenue Account for Darlington Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2022

4 Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute

Capital expenditure in 2021/22 included expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but does not result in the creation of fixed assets and has been charged as expenditure to the HRA Income and Expenditure Account. Grants received towards the cost of this expenditure can be regarded as revenue grants despite their classification as capital. In 2021/22 Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute was nil (nil in 2020/21), capital grants treated as revenue totalled nil (nil in 2020/21).

5 Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure within the HRA during 2021/22 was as follows :

2020/21 £'000		2021/22 £'000
6,884	Houses	10,715
4	Other property	14
6,888	Total capital expenditure	10,729

Total capital expenditure on land, houses and other property within the HRA during 2021/22 was funded via the following

2020/21 £'000		2021/22 £'000
684	Usable capital receipts	986
5,750	Revenue	8,502
454	Other Grant Funding	1,241
0	Capital Contribution	0
6,888	Total capital expenditure	10,729

A summary of total capital receipts from disposals is as follows :

2020/21 £'000		2021/22 £'000
1,265	Houses	1,703
1,265	Total capital receipts	1,703

6 Depreciation of Non-current Assets

Depreciation charges also form part of the New Financial Framework. They reflect the consumption of HRA assets over their useful life and are as follows:

2020/21 £'000		2021/22 £'000
1,910	Houses	1,863
10	Vehicle, Plant & Equipment	10
1,920	Total charge for depreciation	1,873
	Operational Assets	
1,910	Dwellings	1,863
10	Vehicle, Plant & Equipment	10
1,920	Total charge for depreciation	1,873

Notes to the Housing Revenue Account for Darlington Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2022

7 Rent Arrears

Details of gross rent arrears, which include garages, heating and water charges are:

2020/21		2021/22
£'000		£'000
1,178	Gross rent arrears as at 31 March	1,178

A provision in respect of uncollectable rent debts is included in the consolidated balance sheet.

Year Ended		Year Ended
31 March		31 March
2021		2022
£'000		£'000
1,086	Opening provision for uncollectable debts	402
(621)	Amounts written off in the year	(43)
(63)	Increase/(decrease) in provision for the year	63
402	Closing provision for uncollectable debts	422

8 Restatement of HRA and MIRS

In the 2020/21 financial statements, the council processed an adjustment to record Council Dwellings at its appropriate value as at 31st March 2021. However, the impact of this adjustment of £7.214m was not fully reflected in the 2020/21 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Movement in Reserves Statement (MIRS) as the revaluation gain was taken to the General Fund Reserve instead of the HRA. This error has been rectified in the 2021/22 financial statements by restating the comparative values relating to the HRA and MIRS. The 2021/22 comparatives in the HRA Income and Expenditure Statement and HRA Movement on the HRA Statement have been restated to recognise the revaluation gain of £7.214m. In addition, the comparative Adjustments to Revenue Resources in Note 5 - Adjustments Between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Regulations (pg 25) has been restated to recognise the gain in the correct reserve. There is no overall impact on the total 2020/21 Reserves balance.

Collection Fund for Darlington Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2022

2020/21		2021/22			Notes
		Council Tax	Non-domestic rates	Total	
Total					
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	
	<u>Income</u>				
(61,725)	Income from Council Tax	(67,579)		(67,579)	2
(17,269)	Income from Business Rates		(25,358)	(25,358)	3
	Contributions				
(1,208)	Darlington Borough Council	(676)	(8,527)	(9,203)	
(2,021)	Central Government		(8,702)	(8,702)	
(43)	County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Authority	(93)	(174)	(267)	
(54)	Office of Durham Police Crime & Victims' Commissioner	(45)		(45)	
(82,320)	Total Income	(68,393)	(42,761)	(111,154)	
	<u>Expenditure</u>				
	Precepts and demands				
72,074	Darlington Borough Council	55,213	17,968	73,181	
7,174	Office of the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner	7,708		7,708	
3,877	County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Authority	3,601	366	3,967	
16,149	Central Government		18,274	18,274	
848	Transitional Protection payment - NNDR		844	844	
	Business Rates				
145	Costs of collection		145	145	
	Impairment of Bad or Doubtful Debts / Appeals				
215	Write offs	532	65	597	
824	Movement in net provision	298	335	633	
0	Increase in Provision for Appeals			0	
101,306	Total Expenditure	67,352	37,997	105,349	
18,986	Collection Fund deficit for the year	(1,041)	(4,764)	(5,805)	
2,669	Collection Fund deficit balance b/fwd	1,364	20,291	21,655	
18,986	Collection Fund deficit for the year	(1,041)	(4,764)	(5,805)	
21,655	Collection Fund deficit balance c/fwd	323	15,527	15,850	
	Allocated to:				
11,075	Darlington Borough Council	268	7,608	7,876	
156	Office of the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner	37		37	
279	County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Authority	18	155	173	
10,145	Central Government		7,764	7,764	
21,655		323	15,527	15,850	

Notes to the Collection Fund of Darlington Borough Council for year ended 31 March 2022

1 Collection Fund

In order to comply with the terms of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 1992), local authorities must maintain a separate Collection Fund. The purpose of the Collection Fund therefore, is to isolate the income and expenditure relating to Council Tax and National Non-domestic Rates.

The Collection Fund is an agent's statement that reflects the statutory obligations for billing authorities to maintain a separate Collection Fund. The statement 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 non-domestic rates (NDR).

2 Income From Council Tax

The Council Tax is a tax based on property bandings (A to H).

There is a basic tax for the middle band (Band D) with proportionately higher and lower taxes for the other bands.

The Council's tax base i.e. the number of chargeable dwellings in each band (adjusted for discounts and exemptions) and converted to an equivalent number of Band D dwellings was calculated as follows and approved by Full Council in January 2021:

Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Chargeable Dwellings	9,893	6,717	5,639	5,186	3,596	1,729	915	73
Ratio	6/9	7/9	8/9	9/9	11/9	13/9	15/9	18/9

The Council set a basic council tax in 2021/22 of £1,643.69 (£1,565.56 in 2020/21), being the amount payable in respect of properties in Band D for services provided by Darlington Borough Council.

The Office of the Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner set a Band D council tax in 2021/22 of £230.24 (£215.24 in 2020/21) for their services.

County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service set a Band D council tax in 2021/22 of £107.55 (£105.48 in 2020/21) for their services.

A small additional charge is also payable in respect of parish council services in certain areas of the borough.

3 Income Collectable From Business Rate payers

Under the national system for non-domestic rates, the Council collects from local businesses an amount equal to the rateable value of their property multiplied by a uniform rate set by the Government. In previous financial years the total amount due, less certain allowances, was paid to a central pool (the NDR pool) administered by Central Government, which in turn, paid to Local Authorities their share of the pool, such shares being based on a standard amount per head of the local adult population.

The Council retains 49% with the remainder distributed to Central Government (50%) and the other 1% to the County Durham Fire & Rescue Authority.

Central Government set a baseline level for each authority identifying the expected level of retained business rates and a top up or tariff amount to ensure that all authorities receive their baseline amount. Tariffs due from authorities payable to Central Government are used to finance the top ups to those authorities who do not achieve their targeted baseline funding. Darlington is a top up authority and in 2021/22 it received a grant of £7.297m.

In addition to the local management of business rates, authorities are expected to finance appeals made in respect of rateable values as defined by the Valuation Office and hence business rates outstanding as at 31 March 2022. As such authorities are required to make a provision for these amounts in the same proportion as the precepting shares (49:50:1). In 2021/22 the total provision was reviewed and was kept at £1.768m (no reduction in either the 2010 or 2017 Valuations).

The total national non-domestic rateable value at 31st March 2022 was £87.598m (£88.889m in 2020/21). The non-domestic rating multiplier for 2021/22 was 51.2p per £ (51.2p per £ in 2020/21) and the small business non-domestic rating multiplier for 2021/22 was 49.9p per £ (49.9p per £ in 2020/21).

One Collection Fund accounting change which affects 2021/22 relates to the phasing of Collection Fund deficits. The intention to implement the three year local tax collection fund deficit phasing was announced by the Secretary of State on 2 July 2020. The Local Authorities (Collection Fund: Surplus and Deficit) (Coronavirus) (England) Regulations 2020 were laid before Parliament on 5 November 2020, and came into force on 1 December 2020. The regulations amend the rules governing the apportionment of Collection Fund surpluses and deficits for Council Tax and Business Rates set out in the Local Authorities (Funds) (England) Regulations 1992 and the Non-Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013. The phasing of deficits relates only to the 'exceptional amount' (i.e. relating to COVID-19), therefore does not include any amount brought forward into the Collection Fund, relating to previous years surpluses or deficits.

Group Accounts of Darlington Borough Council as at 31 March 2022

Group Accounts

Introduction

The CIPFA Code of Practice requires that where a Council has material financial interests and significant level of control over one or more entities, it should prepare group accounts. The aim of these statements is to give an overall picture of the Council's financial activities and the resources employed in carrying out those activities.

The Group Accounts show the full extent of the Council's wider assets and liabilities. Whilst the Group Accounts are not primary statements, they provide transparency and enable comparison with other entities that have different corporate entities.

Joint Venture

"A joint venture is a joint arrangement whereby the parties that have joint control of the arrangements have rights to the net assets of the arrangement".

The Council has a number of joint venture arrangements with Esh who is a house building developer and these arrangements have been incorporated into the group accounts of the Council. These comprise the following:

- Eastbourne JV Limited
- Heighington JV Limited
- Middleton St George JV Limited
- West Park JV Limited
- Neasham Road JV Limited
- Esh DBC JV Limited

The objective of the joint ventures is first and foremost to develop various sites within the borough with a view to providing housing (including affordable housing) and secondly to provide the Council with an income stream to supplement its resources.

The Council's share of all of the joint ventures is 50% and each joint venture is registered as a separate entity in its own right with each of the shareholders having equal rights to the profits (or losses) of each entity.

The Group Accounts include the following:

- Group Movement in Reserves - shows the movement in the year on the Council's single entity usable and unusable reserves together with the Council's share of the Group reserves.
- Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement - summarises the resources that have been generated and consumed in providing services and managing the Group during the year.
- Group Balance Sheet - summarises the financial position of the Council and its joint ventures as a whole. It shows the value of the group assets and liabilities at the end of the financial year.
- Group Cash Flow Statement - shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Group during the year

Group Accounting Policies

The joint ventures have prepared their financial statements in compliance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102. This gives the entity certain disclosure exemptions, subject to certain conditions, but this doesn't materially effect the Council's Group Accounts.

Group Movement in Reserves Statement for Darlington Borough Council for year ended 31 March 2022

	General Fund Balance £'000	Earmarked General Fund Reserves £'000	Housing Revenue Account £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Unusable Reserves £'000	Total Council Reserves £'000	Authority's share of the reserves of joint ventures £'000	Total Council Reserves (Group Accounts) £'000
Balance at 31 March 2020	(18,368)	(20,477)	(19,829)	(1,587)	(18,564)	(78,825)	(3,391)	(82,216)	332	(81,884)
Reporting of Schools Budget Deficit to new Adjustment Account at 1 April 2020		(4,525)				(4,525)	4,525	0		
<u>Movement in reserves during 2020/21</u>										
Deficit/(Surplus) on the Provision of Services	(87)	0	(9,209)	0	0	(9,296)	0	(9,296)	0	(9,296)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	25,291	25,291	(663)	24,628
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(87)	0	(9,209)	0	0	(9,296)	25,291	15,995	(663)	15,332
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations (Note 5)	(23,222)	(708)	3,886	925	(3,426)	(22,545)	22,545	0	0	0
Net (Increase)/decrease before Transfers (to)/from Earmarked Reserves	(23,309)	(708)	(5,323)	925	(3,426)	(31,841)	47,836	15,995	(663)	15,332
Transfers from/(to) Earmarked Reserves (Note 6)	16,912	(16,912)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Decrease/(Increase) in 2020/21	(6,397)	(17,620)	(5,323)	925	(3,426)	(31,841)	47,836	15,995	(663)	15,332
Balance at 31 March 2021 carried forward	(24,765)	(42,622)	(25,152)	(662)	(21,990)	(115,191)	48,970	(66,221)	(331)	(66,552)
<u>Movement in reserves during 2021/22</u>										
Deficit/(Surplus) on the Provision of Services	(28,002)	0	(6,191)	0	0	(34,193)	0	(34,193)	0	(34,193)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	(60,962)	(60,962)	(759)	(61,721)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(28,002)	0	(6,191)	0	0	(34,193)	(60,962)	(95,155)	(759)	(95,914)
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations (Note 5)	21,010	0	4,335	83	(8,884)	16,544	(16,544)	0	0	0
Net (Increase)/decrease before Transfers (to)/from Earmarked Reserves	(6,992)	0	(1,856)	83	(8,884)	(17,649)	(77,506)	(95,155)	(759)	(95,914)
Transfers (to)/from Earmarked Reserves (Note 6)	8,000	(8,000)	0	1	(1)	0	0	0	0	0
(Increase)/decrease in 2021/22	1,008	(8,000)	(1,856)	84	(8,885)	(17,649)	(77,506)	(95,155)	(759)	(95,914)
Balance at 31 March 2022 carried forward	(23,757)	(50,622)	(27,008)	(578)	(30,875)	(132,840)	(28,536)	(161,376)	(1,090)	(162,466)

161,376

The 2020/21 Reserves values have been restated. Refer to HRA Note 8 (pg 74) for further detail of the restatement.

Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for Darlington Borough Council for year ended 31 March 2022

2020/21			2021/22				
Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure / (Income) £'000		Note	Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure / (Income) £'000
7,478	(2,525)	4,953	Chief Executive and Economy	3	4,804	(2,755)	2,049
60,486	(64,390)	(3,904)	Operations	3	54,458	(54,448)	10
126,448	(69,805)	56,643	People		139,512	(75,385)	64,127
48,707	(14,466)	34,241	Services	3	40,578	(21,754)	18,824
927	0	927	Other	3	3,353	(621)	2,732
244,046	(151,186)	92,860	Cost of Services		242,705	(154,963)	87,742
826	0	826	Other operating expenditure	7	1,011	0	1,011
6,976	(7,658)	(682)	Losses/(Gains) on the disposal of non-current assets	7	1,397	(2,206)	(809)
15,159	(3,851)	11,308	Financing and investment income and expenditure	9	10,042	(9,886)	156
0	(113,608)	(113,608)	Taxation and non-specific grant income	10	1,711	(124,004)	(122,293)
267,007	(276,303)	(9,296)	(Surplus)/deficit on Provision of Services		256,866	(291,059)	(34,193)
		(663)	Joint ventures accounted for on an equity basis				(759)
		1,736	Surplus on revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment assets				(7,159)
		23,490	Actuarial losses on pensions assets/liabilities	37			(53,820)
		65	Impairment losses on non-current assets charged to the revaluation reserve				17
		24,628	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				(61,721)
		15,332	Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				(95,914)

Group Balance Sheet of Darlington Borough Council as at 31 March 2022

As at 31 March 2021 £'000		As at 31 March 2022 £'000
396,923	Property, Plant and Equipment	433,163
11,807	Investment Properties	14,147
2,339	Heritage Assets	2,361
28,109	Long Term Investments	32,703
331	Investments in joint ventures	1,090
16,334	Long Term Debtors	12,212
455,843	Total Long Term Assets	495,676
18,000	Short Term Investments	17,000
510	Inventories	202
32,842	Short Term Debtors	42,372
9,328	Cash and Cash Equivalents	15,312
60,680	Total Current Assets	74,886
(21,333)	Short Term Borrowing	(24,979)
(50,660)	Short Term Creditors	(63,447)
(2,566)	Short Term Provisions	(2,566)
(74,559)	Total Current Liabilities	(90,992)
(9,232)	Long Term Creditors	(8,687)
(981)	Long Term Provisions	(601)
(141,907)	Long Term Borrowing	(126,276)
(219,830)	Other Long Term Liabilities	(181,540)
(3,462)	Capital Grants Receipts In Advance	0
(375,412)	Total Long Term Liabilities	(317,104)
66,552	Net Assets	162,466
115,191	Usable Reserves	132,840
331	Usable Reserves - Group Accounts	1,090
(48,970)	Unusable Reserves	28,536
66,552	Total Reserves	162,466

Group Cash Flow Statement for Darlington Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2022

2020/21 £'000		2021/22 £'000
9,296	(Surplus)/Deficit on the provision of services	34,194
56,001	Adjustments to net deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements	17,551
16,937	Depreciation and impairment	5,436
(469)	Change in the fair value of investments	0
(49)	Decrease in Interest Creditors	(103)
18,255	Increase in Creditors	16,197
0	Increase in Interest and Dividend Debtors	0
318	Decrease in Debtors	(16,537)
(224)	Increase/(Decrease) in Inventories	(1,692)
9,600	Movement in Pension Liability	15,530
(108)	Contributions to/(from) Provisions	(380)
6,948	Carrying amount of non-current assets sold or derecognised	1,397
4,793	Movement in Investment Property Values	(2,297)
(22,051)	Adjustments for items included in the net (deficit) on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities	(29,114)
(14,397)	Capital Grants credited to the surplus or deficit on provision of services	(26,908)
2	Premiums or Discounts on the repayment of financial liabilities	0
(7,656)	Proceeds from the sale of non-current assets and investment property	(2,206)
43,246	Net cash flow from/(used in) Operating Activities	22,631
	Investing Activities	
(25,697)	Purchase of property, plant and equipment and investment property	(35,384)
(270,350)	Purchase of short term investments	(256,750)
257,350	Proceeds from the sale of short term investments	255,750
2,877	Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment and investment property	2,206
0	Other payments for investing activities	(6,587)
0	Other capital payments received	10,707
15,098	Capital grants received	23,446
(20,722)	Net cash flow used in Investing Activities	(6,612)
	Financing Activities	
157	Cash receipts of short and long term borrowing	3,000
(9,990)	Billing Authorities - Council Tax and NNDR adjustments	4,180
(1,140)	Cash payments for the reduction of the outstanding liabilities relating to finance leases and on-Balance Sheet PFI contracts	(1,126)
(20,130)	Repayments of short and long term borrowing	(14,882)
1,644	Other (payments)/receipts for financing activities	(1,207)
(29,459)	Net cash flow from Financing Activities	(10,035)
(6,935)	Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	5,984
16,263	Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	9,328
9,328	Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period (Note 23)	15,312

Independent Auditor's report to the Members of Darlington Borough Council

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Glossary of Darlington Borough Council

Accounting Period

The period of time covered by the accounts, normally a period of twelve months commencing on 1 April and ending as at the balance sheet date, 31 March.

Accruals

The concept that income and expenditure is accounted for as it is earned or incurred, not as money is received or paid.

Accounting Policies

Those principles, bases, conventions, rules and practices applied by an entity that specify how the effects of transactions and other events are to be reflected in its financial statements through:

- recognising
- selecting measurement bases for, and
- presenting assets, liabilities, gains, losses and changes to reserves.

Accounting policies do not include estimation techniques.

Accounting policies define the process whereby transactions and other events are reflected in financial statements.

Actuarial Gains and Losses

Actuaries assess financial and non-financial information provided by the Pension Authority to project levels of future pension fund requirements. For a defined benefit pension scheme, the changes in actuarial deficits or surpluses can arise because:

- events have not coincided with the actuarial assumptions made for the last valuation (experience gains or losses) or
- the actuarial assumptions have changed.

Agency

The provision of a service by an authority on behalf of another authority, which is legally responsible for providing that service. The responsible authority reimburses the authority providing the service in the first instance.

Asset

An item owned by the Council, which has a monetary value. Assets are defined as current or non-current.

- Current assets will be consumed or cease to have value within the next financial year, e.g. stocks and debtors;
- Non-current assets provide benefits to the Council and to services it provides for a period of more than one year, for example, land, buildings, vehicles and equipment;
- intangible assets are non-financial fixed assets, such as software licences, that do not have physical substance but are identifiable and are controlled through custody or legal rights.

Associate

An entity other than a subsidiary or joint venture in which the reporting authority has a participating interest and over whose operating and financial policies the reporting authority is able to exercise significant influence.

Audit

An independent examination of the Council's activities, either by internal audit or the Council's external auditor, who are Ernst & Young LLP.

Authorised Limit

This represents the legislative limit on the Council's external debt under the Local Government Act 2003.

Balance Sheet

A statement of the recorded assets, liabilities and other balances at the end of an accounting period.

Balances

The capital or revenue reserves of the Council made up of the accumulated surplus of income over expenditure on the General fund or any other fund.

Budget

The forecast of the net revenue and capital expenditure over the accounting period. Members approve budgets, based on policies, linked to the corporate plan.

Glossary of Darlington Borough Council

Capital Adjustment Account

This account accumulates the write-down of the historical cost of Property, Plant and Equipment as they are consumed by depreciation and impairments or written off on disposal. It accumulates the resources that have been set aside to finance capital expenditure. The same process applies to capital expenditure that is only capital by statutory definition (revenue expenditure funded by capital under statute). The balance on the account thus represents timing differences between the amount of the historical cost of fixed assets that has been consumed and the amount that has been financed in accordance with statutory requirements.

Capital Charges

A charge to services for the use of non-current assets, which comprises:

- a capital financing charge equivalent to notional interest on the net value of the assets; and
- a depreciation charge based on the remaining finite life of the asset.

Capital Expenditure

Expenditure on the acquisition of a fixed asset, which will be used in providing services beyond the current accounting period or, expenditure which adds to an existing non-current asset.

Capital Financing

The raising of money to pay for capital expenditure. There are various methods of financing capital expenditure including borrowing, leasing, direct revenue financing, usable capital receipts, capital grants, capital contribution, revenue reserves and earmarked reserves.

Capital Financing Requirement

The capital financing requirement is one of the indicators that must be produced as part of the CIPFA prudential code. This measures the Council's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose. In order to ensure that over the medium term net borrowing will only be for a capital purpose, the local authority should ensure that net external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of capital financing requirement in the preceding year plus the estimate of any additional capital financing requirement for the current and the next two financial years.

Capital Grants

Grants received toward capital expenditure on a particular service or project.

Capital Receipts

The proceeds from the disposal of land or other capital assets. Proportions of capital receipts can be used to finance new capital expenditure, within rules set down by the Government, but they cannot be used for revenue purposes.

Carry-forwards

Unspent revenue budgets which, upon approval, services can use in future years.

Carrying Amount

The Balance Sheet value recorded of either an asset or liability.

CIPFA

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. This is the professional institute governing how public money is used and how it has to be reported.

CoP - 'Code of Practice on Local Authority accounting in the United Kingdom'

The Code of Practice specifies the principles and practices of accounting required to prepare a Statement of Accounts which 'presents fairly' the financial position and transactions of a local authority.

Collection Fund

The Collection Fund is an agent's statement that reflects the statutory obligation of billing authorities to maintain a separate Collection Fund. The statement shows the transactions of the billing authority in relation to the collection from taxpayers of Council Tax and NDR and its distribution to other local government bodies and Central Government.

Community Assets

This is a category of Property, Plant and Equipment that the Council intends to hold in perpetuity, that have no determinable useful life, and that may have restrictions on their disposal. Examples of community assets are parks and historic buildings.

Consistency

The concept that the accounting treatment of like items within an accounting period and from one period to the next are the same.

Glossary of Darlington Borough Council

Contingency

A condition which exists at the balance sheet date, where the outcome will be confirmed only on the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain events.

Contingent Asset

A contingent asset is a possible asset arising from past events whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the Council's control.

Contingent Liability

A condition which exists at the balance sheet date, which may arise in the future but where the outcome will be confirmed only on the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more future events.

Corporate and Democratic Core (CDC)

The corporate and democratic core comprises all activities which local authorities engage in specifically because they are elected, multi-purpose authorities. The cost of these activities are thus over and above those which would be incurred by a series of independent, single purpose, nominated bodies managing the same services. There is therefore no logical basis for apportioning these costs to services.

Council Tax

This is a banded property tax which is levied on domestic properties throughout the Borough. The banding is based on estimated property values as at 1 April 1991.

Council Tax Requirement

This is the estimated revenue expenditure on General Fund services that needed to be financed from the Council Tax after deducting income from fees and charges, certain specific grants and any funding from reserves.

Creditor

Amounts owed by the Council for works done, goods received or services rendered before the end of the accounting period but for which payments have not been made by the end of that accounting period.

Current Service Costs (Pensions)

The increase in the present value of a defined benefit scheme's liabilities expected to rise from employee service in the current period.

Curtailment

Curtailments will show the cost of the early payment of pension benefits if any employee has been made redundant in the previous year.

Debt Outstanding

Amounts borrowed to finance capital expenditure that are still to be repaid.

Debtor

Amounts due to the Authority for works done, goods received or services rendered before the end of the accounting period but for which payments have not been received by the end of that accounting period.

Deferred Capital Receipts

These represent capital income still to be received after disposals have taken place and wholly consists of principal outstanding from the sale of council houses.

Deferred Charges

Expenditure of a capital nature, met from borrowing, but where there is no tangible asset, e.g. improvement grants. This includes loans outstanding on assets sold in cases where the sale proceeds were used for new capital investment.

Defined Benefit Pension Scheme

Pension schemes in which the benefits received by the participants are independent of the contributions paid and are not directly related to the investment of the scheme.

Defined Contribution Scheme

A Defined Contribution Scheme is a pension or other retirement benefit scheme into which an employer pays regular contributions as an amount or as a percentage of pay and will have no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions if the scheme does not have sufficient assets to pay all of the employee benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Glossary of Darlington Borough Council

Depreciation

The measure of the wearing out, consumption, or other reduction in the useful economic life of a fixed asset, whether arising from use, the passage of time or obsolescence through technological or other changes.

Discretionary Benefits (Pensions)

Retirement benefits which the employer has no legal, contractual or constructive obligation to award and are awarded under the authority's discretionary powers such as The Local Government (Discretionary Payments) Regulations 1996.

Earmarked Reserves

The Council holds a number of reserves earmarked to be used to meet specific, known or predicted future expenditure.

Entity

A body that is delivering a service, or carrying on a trade or business, with or without a view to profit.

Estimation Techniques

The methods adopted by an entity to arrive at estimated monetary amounts, corresponding to the measurement bases selected, for assets, liabilities, gains, losses and changes to reserves.

Estimation techniques implement the measurement aspects of accounting policies. An accountancy policy will specify the basis on which an item is to be measured; where there is uncertainty over the monetary amount corresponding to that basis, the amount will be arrived at by using an estimation technique. Estimation techniques include, for example:

- methods of depreciation, such as straight line and reducing balance, applied in the context of a particular measurement basis, used to estimate the proportion of the economic benefits of a tangible fixed asset consumed in a period; and
- different methods used to estimate the proportion of debts that will not be recovered, particularly where such methods consider a population as a whole rather than individual balances.

Exceptional Items

Material items that derive from events or transactions that fall within the ordinary activities of the Council and which need to be disclosed separately by virtue of their size or incidence to give fair presentation of the accounts.

Expected Return on Pension Assets

For a funded defined benefit scheme, the average rate of return, including both income and changes in fair value but net of scheme expenses, expected over the remaining life of the related obligation on the actual assets held by the scheme.

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, as expenditure is deemed to have been incurred once the goods or services have been received, even if they have not yet been paid for.

Extraordinary Items

Material items, possessing a high degree of abnormality, which derive from events or transactions that fall outside the ordinary activities of the authority and which are not expected to recur. They do not include exceptional items, nor do they include prior period items merely because they relate to a prior period.

Events after the Balance Sheet Date

Events after the balance sheet date are those events, favourable or unfavourable, that occur between the balance sheet date and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue.

Fair Value

The fair value of an asset is the price at which it could be exchanged in an arm's length transaction less, where applicable, any grants receivable towards the purchase or use of the asset.

Finance Lease

A lease that transfers substantially all of the risks and rewards of ownership of a fixed asset to the lessee.

Financial Instruments

A financial instrument is any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another. The term 'financial instrument' covers both financial assets and financial liabilities and includes both the most straightforward financial assets and liabilities such as trade receivables and trade payables and the most complex ones such as derivatives and embedded derivatives.

Glossary of Darlington Borough Council

Fixed Assets

Tangible assets that yield benefits to the local authority and the services it provides for a period of more than one year.

General Fund

This is the main revenue fund of the Council and includes the net cost of all services financed by local taxpayers and Government Grants.

Going Concern

The concept that the statement of accounts are prepared on the assumption that the Council will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

Government Grants

Grants made by the Government towards either revenue or capital expenditure to support the cost of the provision of the Council's services. These grants may be specifically towards the cost of particular schemes or to support the revenue spend of the Council.

Heritage Assets

An asset with historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that is held and maintained principally for its contribution to knowledge and culture.

Housing Act Advances

Loans made by an authority to individuals or Housing Associations towards the cost of constructing, acquiring or improving dwellings. Loans to individuals are termed mortgages.

Housing Benefits

A system of financial assistance to individuals toward certain housing costs administered by authorities and subsidised by Central Government.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

A statutory account maintained separately to the General Fund. It includes all revenue expenditure and income relating to the provision, maintenance and administration of council housing and associated areas.

IFRS

Defined Accounting Standards that must be applied by all reporting entities to all financial statements in order to provide a true and fair view of the entity's financial position, and a standardised method of comparison with financial statements of the other entities.

Impairment

A reduction in the value of a non-current asset, below its carrying amount on the balance sheet.

Income

Amounts which the Council receives or expects to receive from any source, including fees, charges, sales and grants.

Income and Expenditure Account

The revenue account of the Council that reports the net cost for the year of the functions for which it is responsible, and demonstrates how that cost has been financed from precepts, grants and other income.

Infrastructure Assets

A class of fixed assets belonging to the Council whose life is of indefinite length and which are not usually capable of being sold. Examples include roads, highways, footpaths, bridges and water facilities.

Intangible Assets

These are non-financial fixed assets, such as software licences, that do not have physical substance but are identifiable and are controlled by custody or legal rights.

Interest Cost (Pensions)

For a defined benefit scheme, the expected increase during the period in the present value of the scheme liabilities because the benefits are one period closer to the settlement.

Glossary of Darlington Borough Council

IAS 1 - Presentation of Financial Statements

The objective of this Standard is to prescribe the basis for presentation of general purpose financial statements, to ensure comparability both with the Council's financial statements of previous periods and with the financial statements of other entities. To achieve this objective, this Standard sets out overall requirements for the presentation of financial statements, guidelines for their structure and minimum requirements for their content.

IAS 7 - Cash Flow Statements

The objective of this standard is to require the provision of information about the historical changes in cash and cash equivalents of an entity by means of a cash flow statement which classifies cash flows during the period from operating, investing and financing activities.

IAS 8 - Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors

The objective of this Standard is to prescribe the criteria for selecting and changing accounting policies, together with the accounting treatment and disclosure of changes in accounting policies, changes in accounting estimates and correction of errors. The Standard is intended to enhance the relevance and reliability of an entity's financial statements, and the comparability of those financial statements over time and with the financial statements of other entities.

Disclosure requirements for accounting policies, except those for changes in accounting policies, are set out in IAS 1 Presentation of Financial Statements.

IAS 16 - Property, Plant and Equipment

The objective of this Standard is to prescribe the accounting treatment for property, plant and equipment so that users of the financial statements can discern information about an entity's investment in its property, plant and equipment and the changes in such investment. The principal issues in accounting for property, plant and equipment are the recognition of the assets, the determination of their carrying amounts and the depreciation charges and impairment losses to be recognised in relation to them.

IAS 17 - Leases

The objective of this Standard is to prescribe, for lessees and lessors, the appropriate accounting policies and disclosure to apply in relation to leases.

IAS 19 - Employee Benefits

The objective of this Standard is to prescribe the accounting treatment and disclosure requirements for employee benefits. The Standard requires an entity to recognise:

- (a) a liability when an employee has provided service in exchange for employee benefits to be paid in the future; and
- (b) an expense when the entity consumes the economic benefit arising from service provided by an employee in exchange for employee benefits.

IAS 24 - Related Party Disclosures

The objective of this Standard is to ensure that an entity's financial statements contain the disclosures necessary to draw attention to the possibility that its financial position and profit and loss may have been affected by the existence of related parties and by transactions and outstanding balances with such parties.

IAS 32 Financial Instruments: Presentation

The objective of this Standard is to establish principles for presenting financial instruments as liabilities or equity and for offsetting financial assets and financial liabilities. It applies to the classification of financial instruments, from the perspective of the issuer, into financial assets, financial liabilities and equity instruments; the classification of related interest, dividends, losses and gains, and the circumstances in which financial assets and financial liabilities should be offset.

IAS 36 - Impairment of Assets

The objective of this Standard is to prescribe the procedures that an entity applies to ensure that its assets are carried at no more than their recoverable amount. An asset is carried at more than its recoverable amount if its carrying amount exceeds the amount to be recovered through use or sale of the asset. If this is the case, the asset is described as impaired and the Standard requires the entity to recognise an impairment loss. The Standard also specifies when an entity should reverse an impairment loss and prescribes disclosures.

Glossary of Darlington Borough Council

IAS 37 - Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

The objective of this Standard is to ensure that appropriate recognition criteria and measurement bases are applied to provisions, contingent liabilities and contingent assets and that sufficient information is disclosed in the notes to enable users to understand their nature, timing and amount.

Inventories

Items of raw materials and stores the Council has produced to use on a continuing basis and which it has not yet used. Examples are consumable stores, raw materials and components purchased for incorporation into products for sale.

Investments (Pension Fund)

The investments of the Pension Fund will be accounted for in the statements of that fund. However, authorities are also required to disclose, as part of the disclosures relating to retirement benefits, the attributable share of pension scheme assets associated with their underlying obligations.

Investments - Long Term

A long-term investment is an investment that is intended to be held for use on a continuing basis in the activities of the Council. Investments should be so classified only where an intention to hold the investment for the long term can be clearly demonstrated or where there are restrictions as to the investors ability to dispose of the investment.

Investment Properties

Interest in land and/or buildings in respect of which construction work and development have been completed, and which is held for its investment potential.

Joint Venture

An entity in which the reporting authority has an interest on a long-term basis and is jointly controlled by the reporting authority and one or more other entities under a contractual or other binding arrangement.

Liability

A liability is where an authority owes payment to an individual or another organisation:

- A current liability is an amount which will become payable or could be called in within the next accounting period, e.g. creditors or cash overdrawn.
- A deferred liability is an amount which, by arrangement is payable beyond the next year at some point in the future, or to be paid off by an annual sum over a period of time.

Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO)

The common feature of these loans is a reduced interest rate for an initial period and then a stepped increase to the end of the term. The lender can opt to increase the interest rate payable at the end of the initial period. If the lender opts to increase the interest rate payable above the fixed rate then the borrower can either agree to this increase and continue to repay the loan up to the maturity date or can reject the new terms and repay the loan in full (without penalty). The inclusion of options within LOBO's means the loans effectively become variable rate instruments and under FRS 4, interest should be averaged over the period to the earliest date at which the instrument would be redeemed or cancelled on exercise of such an option rather than the original term of the instrument where there is uncertainty over the term of the instrument.

Loans Outstanding

The total amounts borrowed from external lenders for capital and temporary revenue purposes but not repaid at the balance sheet date.

Materiality

The concept that the Statement of Accounts should include all amounts which, if omitted or misstated, could be expected to lead to distortion of the financial statements to a reader of the statements.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

Represents the minimum amount that must be charged to a revenue account in each financial year to repay external borrowings.

Net Book Value

The amount at which fixed assets are included in the balance sheet, i.e. their historical cost or current value less the cumulative amount provided for depreciation and any impairment losses.

Glossary of Darlington Borough Council

Net Current Replacement Cost

The cost of replacing an asset in its existing condition and use.

Net Realisable Value

The open market value of the asset in its existing use (or open market value in the case of non-operational assets), less the expenses to be incurred in realising the asset.

National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

NNDR Poundage is set annually by Central Government based on the assessed value of properties used for business purposes and is collected by charging authorities. The proceeds are redistributed by the Government in accordance with the new business rates retention scheme.

Net Worth

The Council's value of total assets less total liabilities.

Non-Distributed Costs

These are overheads for which no user now benefits and as such are not apportioned to services.

Non-Operational Assets

Fixed assets held by the Council but not directly occupied, used or consumed in the delivery of services. Examples of Non-Operational Assets are investment properties and assets that are surplus to requirements pending sale or development.

Operating Lease

An agreement in which the Council derives the use of an asset in exchange for rental payments, but where the risks and rewards of ownership are not transferred.

Operational Assets

Fixed assets held and occupied, used or consumed by the Council in the direct delivery of those services for which it has a statutory or discretionary responsibility.

Past Service Costs (Pensions)

For a defined benefit pension scheme, the increase in the present value of the scheme liabilities related to employee service in prior periods arising in the current period as a result of the introduction of, or the improvement to, retirement benefits.

Pension Scheme Liabilities

The liabilities of a defined benefit scheme for outgoings due after the valuation date. Scheme liabilities measured using the projected unit method reflect the benefits that the employer is committed to provide for service up to the valuation date.

Post Balance Sheet Events

Those events, both favourable and unfavourable, which occur between the balance sheet date and the date on which the Statement of Accounts is signed by the responsible financial officer.

Precept

The levy made by precepting authorities on billing authorities, requiring the latter to collect income from council taxpayers on their behalf e.g. Police Authority, Fire Authority and Parish Councils.

Prior Year Adjustment

Material adjustments applicable to prior years arising from changes in accounting policies or from the correction of fundamental errors. This does not include normal recurring corrections or adjustments of accounting estimates made in prior years.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

PFI's are a method of funding/acquiring assets such as schools, but the supplier of the building is usually an agreed contractor or bidder, usually over a 25 year term. The Council pays for the use of the asset by means of a unitary charge and can acquire the asset after the term if included in the terms of the contract. Up until this point the Council does not own the asset and simply pays for the use of the asset. Government grant is available to assist authorities who enter into these agreements, however, known as PFI credits. These have a direct impact upon the level of government grant paid each year to help pay for the schemes.

Glossary of Darlington Borough Council

Projected Unit Method

An accrued benefits valuation method in which the pension scheme liabilities make allowance for projected earnings. The accrued benefits are the benefits for service up to a given point in time, whether vested rights or not.

Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE)

Assets that yield benefits to the Council and the services it provides for a period of more than one year. Examples include land, buildings and vehicles

Provision

An amount put aside in the accounts for liabilities or losses which have occurred but uncertainty surrounds the exact amounts involved or the dates on which they will arise.

Provision for Credit Liabilities

This represents the sum set aside for the repayment of debt. This provision is subsumed within the capital financing reserve.

Prudence

The concept that revenue is not anticipated but is recognised only when realised in the form either of cash or of other assets, the ultimate cash realisation of which can be assessed with reasonable certainty.

Prudential Framework

One of the principal features of the Local Government Act 2003 was to provide the primary legislative requirements to introduce a new prudential regime for the control of Local Authority capital expenditure. The regime relies upon both secondary legislation in the form of regulations, and a prudential code which has been published by CIPFA.

Under the prudential framework local authorities are free to borrow without specific government consent if they can afford to service the debt without extra government support. The basic principle is that authorities will be free to invest as long as their capital spending plans are affordable, sustainable and prudent. As a control mechanism to ensure this occurs all authorities must follow the prudential code published by CIPFA. This involves setting various prudential limits and indicators that must be approved by the Council before the start of the relevant financial year as part of their budget setting process.

Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)

This is a Central Government Agency which provides loans for one year and above to authorities at interest rates only slightly higher than those at which the Government itself can borrow.

Rateable Value

The annual assumed rental value of a hereditament, (inheritable property), which is used for NDR purposes.

Related Parties

Two or more parties are related, when at any one time during the financial period:

- one party has direct or indirect control of the other party; or
- the parties are subject to common control from the same source; or
- one party has influence over the financial and operational policies of the other party might be inhibited from pursuing at all times its own separate interests; or
- the parties, in entering a transaction, are subject to influence from the same source to such an extent that one of the parties to the transaction has subordinated its own separate interests.

Related Party Transactions

A related party transaction is the transfer of assets or liabilities or the performance of services by, to or for a related party irrespective of whether a charge is made. Examples of related party transactions include:

- the purchase, sale, lease, rental or hire of assets between related parties;
- the provision by a pension fund to a related party of assets or loans, irrespective of any direct economic benefit to the pension fund;
- the provision of a guarantee to a third party in relation to a liability or obligation of a related party;
- the provision of services to a related party, including the provision of pension fund administration services;
- transactions with individuals who are related parties of an authority or a pension fund, except those applicable to other members of the community or the pension fund, such as council tax, rents and payments of benefits.

The materiality of related party transactions is judged not only in terms of their significance to the Council, but also in relation to its related party.

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Remuneration

Includes taxable salary payments to employees less employees' pensions contributions, together with non-taxable payments when employment ends, taxable expense allowances and any other taxable benefits.

Reserves - Usable

The accumulation of surpluses, deficits and appropriations over past years. Usable Reserves of a revenue nature can be released to spend on services or added to for future spending on services.

Reserves - Unusable

Unusable reserves are reserves that in simple terms balance the Council's Balance Sheet and cannot be released to spend on services e.g. the Revaluation Reserve records the effect of revaluing fixed assets and is not available for general use in the financing of capital expenditure.

Residual Value

The net realisable value of an asset at the end of its useful life. Residual values are based on prices prevailing at the date of the acquisition (or revaluation) of the asset and do not take account of expected future price changes.

Retirement Benefits

All forms of consideration given by an employer in exchange for services rendered by employees that are payable after the completion of employment.

Revaluation Reserve

This Reserve records the accumulated gains on the fixed assets held by the Council arising from increases in value as a result of inflation or other factors (to the extent that these gains have not been consumed by subsequent downward movements in value).

Revenue Balances

These are accumulated surpluses on the General Fund. They can be applied to reduce borrowing, reduce council tax, or held to be applied in future years.

Revenue Contributions

The method of financing capital expenditure directly from revenue. The Council may determine that certain capital schemes should be financed in this way or alternatively may include a prescribed sum in the revenue budget for this purpose.

Revenue Expenditure

The day-to-day expenses of providing services. It is usually of a constantly recurring nature and produces no permanent asset, e.g. salaries, wages, supplies and services, and debt charges.

Revenue Expenditure Funded by Capital Under Statute (REFCUS)

Items of capital expenditure, which do not result in, or remain matched by, tangible fixed assets. Revenue Expenditure funded by Capital under Statute is charged to revenue in the year in which the expenditure is incurred.

Revenue Support Grant

This is a Central Government grant to authorities, contributing towards the cost of their services. It is based on the Government's assessment of how much an authority needs to spend to provide a standard level of service.

SeRCOP

CIPFA's Service Reporting Code of Practice establishes proper practices with regard to consistent financial reporting for services in England and Wales. It is given legislative backing by regulations which identify the accounting practices it propounds as proper practice under the Local Government Act 2003. It aims to:

- Modernise the system of local authority accounting and reporting to meet the changed and changing needs of local government, particularly the duty of to secure and demonstrate Best Value in the provision of services to the community;
- Facilitate accurate comparison between both services and authorities;
- Strengthen the arrangements for recharging all support costs which may be reasonably charged to front-line services and in so doing bringing efficiency pressures to support services comparable to those of service providers to the community; and
- Represent best practice.

Scheme Liabilities

The liabilities of a defined benefit scheme for outgoings due after the valuation date. Scheme liabilities measured using the projected unit method reflect the benefits that the employer is committed to provide for service up to the valuation date.

Specific Grants

Government grants to Local Authorities in aid of particular services.

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Temporary Borrowing / Investment

Money borrowed or invested for an initial period of less than one year.

Total Cost

The total cost of a service or activity includes all costs which relate to the provision of the service (directly or bought in) or to the undertaking of the activity. Gross total cost includes employee costs, expenditure relating to premises and transport, supplies and services, third party payments, support services and overheads, which need to be apportioned.

Trust Funds

Funds administered by the Council for such purposes as charities and specific projects.

Unapportionable Central Overheads

These are overheads for which no user now benefits and should not be apportioned to services.

Useful Life

The period over which the Local Authority will derive benefits from the use of a fixed asset.

Work In Progress

The cost of work done on an uncompleted project at the balance sheet date, which should be accounted for.

A copy of the Statement of Accounts is available on the Council's website on www.darlington.gov.uk

AUDIT COMMITTEE
8 April 2024

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Purpose of Report

1. To approve the Council's draft Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

Information and Analysis

2. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021 required local authorities to prepare, approve and publish, each year, an AGS. These regulations also determined the timetable for approval and publication. The Council was required to publish its draft AGS no later than 31 July and its final audited version no later than 30 September of the financial year immediately following the end of the financial year to which the statement relates. While the Council did publish its draft AGS by 31 July, because of the ongoing delays in the external audit process, the Council was unable to publish its final audited version by 30 September 2022. The audit was completed in March 2024.
3. The Annual Governance Statement must be signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive and is a key corporate document involving a variety of people charged with delivering governance such as the Group Director of Operations i.e. the financial officer responsible for the accounting control systems and records and the preparation of the Statement of Accounts and the Assistant Director Law and Governance as Monitoring Officer in meeting his statutory responsibilities.
4. The Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22 is attached at **Appendix 1**. It outlines the Council's responsibilities, explains the purpose of the governance framework, sets out the key elements, details the review of its effectiveness, highlights any significant governance issues and includes a commitment by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to ensure the continuous improvement of the system in place.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that the draft Annual Governance Statement at Appendix 1 be approved.

Reasons

6. The recommendation is supported as it comprises part of the Council's corporate governance arrangements.

Ian Williams
Chief Executive

Background Papers

- (i) The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
- (ii) The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021.
- (iii) CIPFA/SOLACE Publication(s) – ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government – Framework and Guidance Note, 2016 Edition’.
- (iv) CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government.
- (v) CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Public Service Organisations.
- (vi) Climate Change Progress report to Cabinet July 2022.
- (vii) Briefing from the CIPFA Better Governance Forum – 7 April 2020 - The Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20 Matters to consider as a result of the coronavirus pandemic
- (viii) Internal Audit - Activity Report to Audit Committee January 2022 and April 2022.
- (ix) Internal Audit – Audit Charter report to Audit Committee April 2021.
- (x) Internal Audit - Audit Services Audit Work 2021/22 – Annual Report to Audit Committee July 2022.
- (xi) Managers Assurance Statements reported to Audit Committee July 2022.
- (xii) Risk Management Report to Audit Committee July 2022.
- (xiii) Darlington Borough Council ICT Strategy 2022.
- (xiv) ICT Strategy Implementation Progress Report to Audit Committee April 2022.
- (xv) Information Governance Programme Progress Reports to Audit Committee April 2022.
- (xvi) Fraud and Corruption Strategy Report to Audit Committee September 2021.
- (xvii) Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring reports to Cabinet November 2021, February 2022.
- (xviii) Revenue Budget Monitoring Reports to Cabinet July 2022, November 2019 and February 2020.
- (xix) Performance Management Framework Reports to Scrutiny Committees.
- (xx) Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Reports to Audit Committee Jan 2022, Cabinet February 2022 and Council February 2022.
- (xxi) Annual Review of Significant Partnerships Report to Audit Committee July 2022.
- (xxii) Xentrall Shared Services Annual Report to Cabinet July 2022.

- (xxiii) Ethical Governance and Member Standards Report to Audit Committee April 2022.
- (xxiv) Equality Policy and Objective 2018-22 Report to Cabinet March 2018.
- (xxv) Borough of Darlington Proposed Submission Local Plan 2016 – 2036: Proposed Submission Local Plan and Local Plan Timetable Reports to Cabinet and Council February 2020.
- (xxvi) Council Plan 2020-2023 Report to Cabinet March 2020 and Council November 2020.
- (xxvii) Adoption of Darlington Borough Council Local Plan 2016 – 2036 Report to Special Council February 2022.
- (xxviii) Special Educational Needs Strategy and Funding Report to Cabinet March 2019.
- (xxix) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (Send) Capital Projects Update Report to Cabinet November 2021.
- (xxx) Darlington Borough Council Peer Review 2022 Position Statement.

Lee Downey: Extension 5451

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no specific issues which relate to crime and disorder.
Health and Well Being	The work detailed under the headings External Regulatory Reviews, Children and Adults Transformation and Better Care Fund (BCF) impacts on Health and Well Being.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There are no specific recommendations contained within the attached reports concerning Carbon Reduction.
Diversity	There is no specific diversity impact.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally.
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally.
Budget and Policy Framework	The report does not affect the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Council Plan	The Council’s governance arrangements and achievements help support the delivery of the Council Plan.
Efficiency	The Council’s governance arrangements directly impact on efficiency.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The work detailed under the heading External Regulatory Reviews and the Children’s Transformation has a direct impact on Looked After Children.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2021/22

Scope of Responsibility

1. Darlington 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 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.
2. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
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, the 2016 Edition. A copy of the Code is on our [website](#) at or can be obtained from:

Democratic Services
Operations Group
Town Hall
Feethams
Darlington
DL1 5QT
Tel (01325) 405995

4. This Statement explains how the Council has complied with the Code and also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021 in relation to the publication of an AGS.

The Purpose of the Governance Framework

5. The governance framework comprises the systems and processes and culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate leads the community. The governance framework is intended to help the Council plan and deliver sustainable economic, environmental and social outcomes while living within its resource limits and enable the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money.
6. The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to 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 ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and

objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

7. The governance framework has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2022 and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts.

The Governance Framework

8. The key elements of the Council's governance framework are tabulated in Appendix A to this statement which also indicates their relevance to the following seven core principles that underpin good governance: -
 - (a) Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
 - (b) Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
 - (c) Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.
 - (d) Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
 - (e) Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
 - (f) Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
 - (g) Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit, to deliver effective accountability.
9. Each key element, as detailed in the Council's Local Code, has a nominated lead officer, outlines the duty to which it relates and includes three discrete types of action:
 - (a) Awareness - making sure that everyone who needs to know about the element does know.
 - (b) Monitoring - ensuring that the duty is carried out.
 - (c) Review - actions to ensure that the element is reviewed in the light of effectiveness and emerging good practice.
10. The governance framework continually evolves to embrace new areas of service and the associated controls, and also to encompass regulatory reviews/recommendations and the Council's financial management arrangements that conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government. The governance arrangements also conform to the requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit in public service organisations.

Review of Effectiveness

Background

11. 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 an Assurance Framework, documented in Appendix B, that includes the work of the executive managers within the Council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Annual Internal Audit Report, and also comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.
12. This Statement has been prepared by a management group that has responsibility for evaluating assurances and the supporting evidence. The group comprises the:
 - (a) Chief Executive
 - (b) Group Director of Operations (S151 Officer)
 - (c) Assistant Director Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)
 - (d) Head of Strategy, Performance and Communications
 - (e) Complaints and Information Governance Manager
13. The Audit Committee is responsible for the independent review and approval of the AGS following examination of the supporting evidence.
14. Assurance on adequacy and effectiveness is outlined under the following categories identified in the Council's Assurance Framework.

External Regulatory Reviews

Children's Services

15. Darlington Children's services are judged as requires improvement to be good. Ofsted Inspectors carried out a focused visit on 26 and 27 October 2021 looking at the arrangements for care leavers. Ofsted held an Annual Engagement Meeting on the 3 June 2021 to receive an update on our journey of progress and on our response to safeguarding children during the pandemic, with a further Annual Engagement Meeting scheduled for 15 September 2022.
16. Children's Services are a trailblazer for the National Strengthening Families Programme. Embedding the programme is continuing at pace. Formal oversight and input from the Department for Education (DfE) and Leeds City Council has ceased and a sustainability plan has been developed with key strategic aims for 2022-23. Changes in culture and practice are long-term goals that will continue to take place over the next couple of years.
17. Our learning culture approach has evolved with the quality assurance framework which now provides weekly live learning in practice for practitioners through case file audit and deep dive analysis of performance and practice. Our relentless focus on improving quality of practice continues throughout, with staff now demonstrating relational approaches to their work.
18. The journey to good is progressing at pace, enabling children to be safe and well cared for at home, wherever this is in their best interests. There is a stable and committed leadership team with strong political support. Recovery from the pandemic continues to be challenging for the

workforce as increasing numbers of children and families require help and support. Workforce pressures remain, with challenges over recruitment and retention of Childrens Social Care staff which reflects the regional and national position. There is ongoing work to improve marketing and recruitment of social workers to ensure vacancies are kept to a minimum.

19. Children and Families receive services at the earliest stage and at the right level to support their needs through our targeted and multi-agency Early Help offer. Young children develop well, are ready for education and where necessary are supported with targeted speech and language input. Children report their mental health, anxiety and maintaining healthy eating habits as the major impacts of lockdown and supportive services have been put in place to provide advice, guidance and interventions to children and young people.
20. Teesside Combined Family Court has been in recovery which has seen an increase in the number of hearings which has helped address the backlog of cases to be heard. This coincided with the an Adoption case law ruling (Somerset Judgement) which has led to a delay in progressing Adoption applications leading to some delay for children and leading to continued artificially high Children in Care numbers.
21. Children in need of help and protection are safeguarded through Children's services maintaining a business as usual approach with the most change having taken place with regard to the introduction of virtual contacts, through modes such as WhatsApp and Zoom, enabling practitioners to keep in touch with children, young people and their families. Childrens Services work has fully returned to face to face working where this is deemed most appropriate however the service is part of the wider Agile working pilot to identify areas of strength in practice that was learned through the pandemic. The focus is very much on learning from the pandemic, returning to best practice from pre pandemic but also adopting some of the enforced changes in the pandemic where they are seen as being good practice.
22. Senior leaders recognise there is more to do to ensure that the help and support provided to all children in need of help and protection result in sustained improvements in their lives. The impact of the pandemic in relation to trauma and loss is significant and training for practitioners in trauma informed work has begun, enabling them to provide effective support and interventions that will help maintain family resilience, security and stability.
23. The Local Authority operates four children's residential provisions, following a ceasing of Inspections by OFSTED in 2020, these commenced again in 2021. Two of our homes are judged as good and two judged as requiring improvement to be good. We work collaboratively with OFSTED to learn from inspection findings and provide the highest quality care. Monthly independent monitoring, under Regulation 44 has taken place, which evidences the high-level quality care given to our children and young people from the staff.

Special Educational Needs

24. The joint Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection was carried out over five days in January. It looked at how providers across Darlington – including the Council, NHS and schools – have implemented SEND reforms since 2014 to the present day.
25. Inspectors have published a report on the services provided to children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in Darlington – highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

26. Inspectors spoke to children and young people with SEND as well as their parents and carers, visiting a range of settings.
27. They noted that there had been signs of improvement in SEND provision in Darlington recently, but said there was a lack of effective working across education, health and care services to ensure consistently positive outcomes.
28. The Local Area is required to submit a written statement of action to Ofsted detailing how areas for improvement will be addressed.

Darlington Borough Council Peer Review

29. The Council embarked on a Peer Review in May 2022. The Council wrote a position statement and over 120 people from the Council, private and the third sector were interviewed by the team from the Local Government Association (LGA). The LGA team was very impressed with the borough, referencing it a number of times as a jewel in the region with a bright future ahead of it and a great story to tell. They made particular references to the fantastic partnerships the Council has, the incredible and passionate workforce who resonated positivity, the great economic growth achievements made to date, and the opportunities emerging for Darlington. The LGA team's report will be presented to Cabinet.

Corporate Planning and Performance Management Framework

30. The focus of the Council Plan is to provide a strategic vision for the Council and in doing so identify the priority actions required to achieve the vision. Service plans are reviewed annually and are aligned with the Council Plan.
31. The Council Plan was reviewed in 2020 and has subsequently been approved by Cabinet and Council. Performance measures associated with the plan have been developed, with progress against the plan reported to Cabinet after Q2 and Q4.
32. Many performance measures reported to scrutiny committees are already aligned with the Council Plan performance measures, and in most cases this is done on a 6 monthly basis, with the exception of Children and Young People committee being quarterly. Scrutiny committees can request more or different measures, and such requests are responded to as and when they arise.

Transformation Programme

Children's Transformation

33. The Children's transformation programme 2022 continues to align with Strengthening Families, centred on relational practice with children's services and partnership organisations working with children and their families to build resilience and ensure that where appropriate, children remain within their family home or are returned from local authority care to the family with strong extended and supportive family members. The programme continues to work toward achieving savings as determined by the Strengthening Family Programme plan and the MTFP with improvements to service delivery. The programme is supported by a Strengthening Families Board.

Adults Transformation

34. Significant progress has been made in delivering the Adults programme. The majority of the projects, that were originally identified, are now complete, or nearing completion, and will become 'business as usual'. There continues to be a focus on taking forward developments that will support the sustainability of the operating model in order to respond to challenges and maximise the opportunities that face the sector. The adoption of strength-based approaches that prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal support continues to be at the centre of service delivery. This approach promotes the independence and quality of life of adults living in our communities.
35. The Adults programme has been centred on the delivery of four strategic themes, which have now become embedded within the operating model: managing demand, maximising independence, self-directed support and a cost effective and sustainable market.
36. The Adults transformation programme is currently being reviewed to ensure the recommendations set out within the recently published set of mutually reinforcing reforms are implemented locally, including those set out in the Health and Care Bill, the Health and social care integration white paper, Joining up care for people, places and populations and the Adult Social Care Reform white paper, People at the Heart of Social Care.

Education Transformation

37. A specific transformation programme for education services is now fully established. The programme seeks to develop high standard educational opportunities for all and ensure the needs of vulnerable pupils are met. A key element of the programme is developing a modern approach to the local authority role in education by driving change through strategic influence, highly effective partnership arrangements and collaborative networks. Education have worked closely with Public Health on COVID-19 support for schools and the transformation programme has been refreshed to focus on transition for pupils, implementation of the SEND strategy and the importance of inclusion in schools.
38. Delivery of all three internal programmes are monitored via a Transformation Board, with monthly meetings and monthly reporting on progress in terms of delivery and financial savings.
39. The Education Strategy Group (ESG) provides overall strategic direction to educational partnership activity across Darlington, working with the Primary Headteachers Forum, the 11-19 Partnership, Vulnerable Pupil Panel and other partnership groups. It provides overall strategic direction for identified partnership work programmes and funded projects and promotes high standards and inclusive practice to support educational progress and outcomes for all, including the most vulnerable children, children with special educational needs and disabilities and children for whom the partnership has a corporate parenting role.

Better Care Fund (BCF)

40. The Better Care Fund (BCF) is a programme spanning both the NHS and Local Government which seeks to join-up health and care services, so that people can manage their own health and well-being and live independently in their communities for as long as possible. The BCF is pooled under a Section 75 agreement under the National Health Service Act (2006).

41. The Darlington BCF Plan is subject to a number of levels of scrutiny to ensure performance against the aims and objectives. These included regional and national scrutiny of quarterly submissions, assurance from the Pooled Budget Partnership, with overall strategic ownership with the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB).
42. As a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic national reporting against metrics and performance was suspended given the pressures across the system. 2021/22 was therefore a “roll-over” programme, with no changes to the metrics or national conditions.
43. The BCF national team announced in March 2022, that there was a requirement for all HWBB areas to submit a an End of Year performance report against the Better Care Fund. This was submitted on 30 May, with agreement by HWBB chair that all national conditions continue to be met.
44. Operationally, the BCF is overseen by a joint Pooled Budget Partnership Board comprised of the Council and Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Discharge Management and Intermediate Care Delivery Groups, whose membership includes County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust (CDDFT), Primary Care Network, Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust (TEWV), Darlington CCG and the Council. A joint Commissioning Group has also been established to explore areas for closer alignment between the Council and Darlington CCG.
45. Each BCF Plan is required to meet four national conditions in order for the grant to be agreed. These were met during 2021/22, as detailed below:
 - (a) Jointly agreed plan between the Local Authority and CCG

The Plan was jointly considered and agreed by all colleagues with virtual agreement by the Chair and Vice Chair of HWBB in May 2022
 - (b) Level of social care spend in line with minimum CCG contribution

Confirmation that minimum spend will be met
 - (c) NHS commissioned out of hospital services (has the area committed to spend at equal or above the minimum allocation for NHS commissioned out of hospital services)

Confirmation out of hospital spend is at least above the minimum allocation
 - (d) Implementation of the High Impact Change Model through managing transfers of care

A system wide self-assessment of the High Impact Change Model undertaken and agreed by all partners
46. In addition to the national conditions, there are four metrics against which performance is measured:

Metric	Definition
Non Elective Admissions	Total number of specific acute (replaces General & Acute) non-elective spells per 100,000 population
Residential Admissions	Rate of permanent admissions to residential care per 100,000 population (65+)
Reablement	Proportion of older people (65 and over) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement / rehabilitation services
Delayed Transfers of Care	Average Number of People Delayed in a Transfer of Care per Day (daily delays)

47. The BCF Plan 2021/22 continued to build on the foundations laid in subsequent years, with a focus on the areas of unplanned hospital admissions avoidance in 65+, a joint approach to discharge management, reablement and intermediate care services, improving health in care homes and building a robust community and universal services offer in support of managing demand into the future. The BCF delivery plan also integrates with the Better Health Programme “New Models of Care”.

Additional Improved BCF Grant

48. The grant is subject to conditions which, in summary, are that the grant may only be used for the purposes of meeting adult social care needs, reducing pressures on the NHS, including supporting more people to be discharged from hospital when they are ready and ensuring that the local social care provider market is supported.

Health and Safety Policy

49. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA) places a duty on employers to prepare a health and safety policy statement detailing the organisation’s health and safety arrangements and revise the policy if circumstances change.
50. The Corporate Health and Safety Statement of Intent Poster received its annual review in August 21 and again in June 22. The latest revision reflecting the organisational changes, appointments and the new corporate logo and branding.
51. Managing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 remained a health and safety priority throughout 2021/22. The Council applied the HSE’s guidance, to protect the health and safety of employees and members of the public accessing services and venues. Although restrictions on the public were relaxed at varying points throughout the period, the governments ‘Working Safely’ guidance remained in place until 1 April 2022.

52. The Council continued to embed health and safety practice during this period with the profile and importance of health and safety being raised and relationships with partner organisations strengthened.

Equalities Policy

53. A revised Equalities Policy and objective (2018-22) was approved by Cabinet on 6 March 2018, and covers a 4 year period. Responsibility for corporate equalities sits within the Stronger Communities portfolio.
54. The objective is 'To remind all Members and staff of their duties under the Equality Act 2010, demonstrate how the Council has done this via training and engagement with services users and support organisations, and publicise the differences that this work has made'. In practice the ambition is to deliver a comprehensive training programme to the entire workforce and all members throughout the life of the policy.
55. A corporate trainer for equalities was appointed in September 2019, and a comprehensive training programme started at the end of 2019 aimed at all staff and Members. Despite unanticipated challenges presented by the COVID pandemic, the trainer used innovative ways to enable the continuation of training to staff with online access (via MS Teams). Over 1,000 of our current workforce has received the basic training, with the number rapidly increasing now that COVID restrictions have been eased and harder to reach staff are more accessible. An enhanced equalities training programme has been developed and is being delivered to staff responsible for making key decisions that involve equality impact assessments.

Darlington Borough Local Plan 2016-36

56. The Local Plan received a favourable report from the Government Inspector and was adopted at the Council Meeting of the 17 February 2022.

Managers' Assurance Statements

57. Annual Managers' Assurance Statements (MAS) are an integral part of the framework that supports production of the AGS.
58. The Statements cover key aspects of the internal control environment on which assurance is required and were completed by all Assistant Directors and endorsed by the appropriate Director. The output from the exercise was reported to the Audit Committee in July 2022.
59. The 2021/22 MAS demonstrate a thorough review has been undertaken and generally an overall positive position was identified. While there were no common improvement themes highlighted in the 2021/22 MAS a number of improvements to process/controls were identified, including in some cases where the Assistant Director was already able to provide assurance in relation to a particular issue. These matters are to be progressed by Assistant Directors during 2022/23.

Financial Management

60. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) incorporates a four-year financial plan. The Council sets its annual revenue budget, capital programme and council tax and treasury

management strategy within this wider planning framework. The MTFP, annual budgets and council tax are developed in consultation with partner organisations in all sectors, residents and employees and are approved by full Council.

61. The Council has continued to face significant financial challenges over the last decade following the economic downturn and reduction in grant funding but to date has been successful in responding to these challenges and has a four year balanced MTFP. However, the Council is very aware there are still pressures to be faced particularly in respect of a growing elderly population, pressures in the children's services, inflationary increases and the impact as we come out of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has again changed the financial outlook and whilst at the time of writing there are signs of recovery the longer term effects cannot be predicted with accuracy particularly in regard to the overall economy and impact on service demand.
62. The Government have committed to cover the cost of COVID-19 and to date have awarded £8.7m in grant funding along with the Sales Fees and charges recovery scheme. This funding is welcomed and covers the pressures to date but we are mindful of the economic recovery and potential impacts on income in regards to council tax collection and business rates. Due to the Council's robust financial management over the years there are general fund reserves that can be used to cover any deficit in 2021/22 if it occurs. However, if the impact continues into future years and no further assistance is forthcoming a full review of the MTFP will take place to look at how any gap will be met.
63. The MTFP is continually monitored and reviewed by officers and Members and is revised at least annually when an updated rolling four-year plan is produced.
64. Responsibility for controlling and managing budgets is delegated to directors and devolved to service managers. Financial management is closely integrated with service management and a quarterly update is taken to Cabinet and Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee to enable them to monitor and scrutinise financial performance and service delivery.
65. The Council must comply with external financial reporting requirements, including publishing an annual Statement of Accounts ('the Accounts') and reporting to Central Government and other funding providers. The Accounts, which are prepared in accordance with relevant legislation and codes of practice, are approved by the Council's Audit Committee and are independently audited.
66. The Council's cash-flow, borrowing to finance capital expenditure and investments are managed through the Treasury Management Strategy, approved by full Council, and in accordance with legislation and codes of practice. The strategy and associated policies and procedures were reviewed in 2021. The Council manages its investments to minimise risk of losses, ensure funds are available when needed and achieve interest income.
67. Governing Bodies have formal responsibility for financial management within schools. A Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) has been designed by the Department for Education (DfE) to assist schools in managing their finances and to give assurance that they have secure financial management in place. The Governing Bodies of each local authority maintained school are required to undertake a self-assessment annually against the SFVS and send a copy, signed by the Chair of Governors, to the Local Authority Finance Division. All returns for 2021/22 have been received and overall, they reflect a positive position. Any remedial actions considered necessary are detailed together with an appropriate implementation date. The

SFVS returns are used by the Local Authority to inform their programme of financial assessment and audit.

Counter Fraud

68. The Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy reflects a zero tolerance approach and is based on a series of comprehensive and inter-related policies and procedures designed to deter, frustrate, or take effective action against any attempted fraudulent or corrupt acts.
69. The counter fraud arrangements are subject to annual review and the revised strategy was reported to the Audit Committee in September 2021. The review included self-assessments against the 'CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption' and the 'Local Government Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy 2016-19' checklists; a summary of reported suspected frauds and whistle blowing cases; and an update on the National Fraud Initiative.
70. The review concluded that the Council's arrangements remain appropriate and fit for purpose when compared to national good practice guidance and that overall the number of reported frauds and whistle blowing cases remains low. However, the Council is not complacent and the position will be kept under review.

Risk Management

71. Risk is one of the elements of information incorporated into the Council's service planning process. Risk management is, therefore an essential element in establishing policy, developing plans and enhancing operational management.
72. The risk management process involves identifying, analysing, managing and monitoring risks. The identification of risks is derived from a 'top down' and a 'bottom up' process of risk assessment and analysis resulting in coverage of the whole Council. The process prioritises the risks resulting in a focus upon the key risks and priorities. The risks are managed through the development of appropriate action plans, allocated to responsible officers.
73. The approach to, and the outcomes from, the Council's annual risk management processes for 2021/22 were reported to the Audit Committee in July 2022. The report detailed a number of risks as being above the 'risk appetite line'. It also detailed the removal of a number of risks as a result of work undertaken to reduce them to an acceptable level and as a consequence of the lifting of the remaining COVID-19 restrictions, as well as the introduction of a number of new risks. The report also contained the Council's updated Risk Management Strategy 2022, detailed generally positive progress upon delivery of action plans to mitigate key risks and outlined advances in the management of operational risks.

ICT

74. The Council's ICT Strategy focuses on three strategic priorities, namely ICT Governance and Service Development; ICT Strategic Architecture and Council Service Development and Transformation.

75. Implementation of the Strategy is led by the Chief Officers Board acting as the Systems and Information Governance Group (SIGG). SIGG is tasked to produce six-monthly reports on implementation progress to the Audit Committee.
76. The progress report to the Audit Committee in April 2022 documented positive progress across each of the three key programmes. This included reference to:
- (a) Procured new UPS (uninterruptable power supply) for the Darlington data centre.
 - (b) Upgraded the operating system for the virtual server platform.
 - (c) Renewed our contracts for the 10Gb links between the Darlington and Stockton data centres.
 - (d) Implemented a tool whereby ICT can remotely isolate suspect laptops which may be virus infected and this also allows remote scan and repairs.
 - (e) Migrated all web-based services to new BT Internet links, which have increased security services associated with them.
 - (f) Achieved savings on the remote site network contract re-procurement.
 - (g) Procured and deployed increased web-based security measures for public facing PCs e.g. libraries, which also reduces our effort in support these.
 - (h) Procured a new contract for network monitoring and alerting services.
 - (i) As well as some of the central ICT architecture projects listed above, a further seventeen service specific projects have been completed since the last progress report to Audit Committee.
77. As regards Council Service Development and Transformation, the Council's Systems and Information Strategy complements the ICT Strategy by ensuring that investment in service-based ICT systems is correctly targeted, whilst the ICT Strategy is concerned with corporate systems and underpinning ICT architecture. Development and delivery of the Systems and Information Strategy is by SIGG who approve the work programme requested of the ICT Service, thereby ensuring that this finite resource is correctly targeted to meet the objectives of the Council as a whole.
78. As part of the Microsoft Office 365 roll-out and the features this brings, ICT have been working with a task group and different services across the Council to migrate their shared data to Teams. This involves data analysis, cleansing and restructuring before migration. Services currently working through this process are: Comms & Marketing, Highways and HR.
79. Xentrall ICT are continuing to support the Council during the pandemic as services continue to work in an office/home hybrid situation and we are also assisting with the recovery process and blended working pilot.

Information Governance

80. The Council has an Information Governance Work Programme shaped by a number of external information assurance requirements that represent good practice and have common objectives, namely compliance with information related legislation, approval to use essential external party systems and services and improvement in service delivery.

81. Implementation of the Programme is led by the Systems and Information Governance Group (SIGG) which is tasked to produce six-monthly reports on implementation progress to the Audit Committee.
82. The update report considered by Audit Committee in April 2022 noted the ongoing delivery of our information governance programme continues to provide the assurance required to reduce our information risks to an acceptable level. While that is the case it must be recognised that the data processing activities of the Council continually evolve and must be kept under review and that the processes implemented by the Council include review mechanisms to ensure this takes place.
83. Ongoing work includes:
 - (a) The Microsoft Office 365 Programme.
 - (b) Review of the Council's Information Asset Register (IAR) and Privacy Notices.
 - (c) ICT work plan.
 - (d) Web Team work plan.
 - (e) Systems and Process Team work plan.
 - (f) Work to achieve our target for the completion of on-line mandatory information governance training courses.
84. The area of highest priority in the information governance programme is:
 - a) The Microsoft Office 365 Programme.

Capital Project Management

85. The Council has an established dedicated Capital Projects Team that operates to a consistent capital project management methodology. This methodology has been developed and is used across the Council on significant projects. Projects can be assigned to the Capital Projects Team for delivery or delivered under the principles and methodology.
86. The Asset Management and Capital Programme Review Board (AMCPRB) perform a strategic gate-keeping role on capital projects and considers their governance arrangements. The Board is chaired by the Group Director of Services with membership from chief officers with responsibility for capital projects, Council assets and those with specific technical, financial and legal expertise to add value to challenge and monitor the programme.
87. The Capital Projects Team has responsibility for the coordination of a Project Position Statement (PPS). The PPS provides a single source of key information relating to the Council's commitments on capital projects and programmes monitoring projects that deviate from agreed tolerances in relation to time, cost or quality to enable proactive management. The PPS is reported to the AMCPRB at every meeting and quarterly to Economy & Resources Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

88. Further enhancement to the project management systems are underway and a proprietary system is being considered within Xentrall's ICT Work Programme. The system is currently being tested by the Capital Projects Team. Once the testing phase is complete a roll-out will be scheduled with a refresh of the methodology and training on use of the electronic system.

Internal Audit

89. The Council's Internal Audit Division operates to the UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and Local Government Application Note.
90. The Annual Internal Audit Plan is a rolling programme that is risk based and sets the foundation for an objective review of key controls and procedures operating within the Council. The Audit Committee approves the Audit Plan and receives progress reports during the year, including any significant matters arising or other issues of concern, and Internal Audit's Annual Report.
91. Internal Audit concluded in their Annual Report for 2021/22, reported to the July 2022 Audit Committee, that overall the Council continues to operate within a control environment that is generally sound.
92. A Shared Internal Audit Service with Stockton Borough Council commenced on 1 April 2017, following the agreement of both Councils. The intention was to future proof the important functions that the service provides while enabling a saving to be achieved, not least in management costs. In particular, the arrangement will enhance the resilience of the service.
93. The Audit Charter 2021/22 for the Internal Audit Shared Service was approved and its Quality Assurance and Improvement Process noted at the July 2021 Audit Committee.

Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit

94. A review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal audit was carried out by Middlesbrough Council Internal Audit Service as agreed by Audit Committee in March 2018. The findings of the review were considered by the Audit Committee in July 2018.
95. The review team concluded that the Council has an effective system of internal audit.
96. The internal review was concluded on a self-assessment basis and concluded that the service complies with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Xentrall-Shared Service Partnership

97. Xentrall Shared Services, the Stockton and Darlington partnership, was established in May 2008 and is now in its thirteenth year. The Xentrall services are:
- (a) ICT (strategy and operations)
 - (b) Transactional HR (payroll, recruitment, sickness absence)
 - (c) Transactional Finance (creditors, debtors, banking, schools finance)
 - (d) Design & Print (professional buyer, in-house design and print)

98. The original business case identified a number of efficiencies and benefits to be delivered resulting in initial savings of £7.4m over the original ten-year period of the partnership. The successful partnership has delivered all these plus additional efficiencies and benefits and significant additional savings. At the same time the quality and performance of services have improved, with both customer and staff satisfaction increasing over the life of the partnership.
99. This significant achievement for a public/public partnership and it compares very well to other private sector partnerships many of which have failed over the same period or been brought back in-house for a variety of reasons. Both Councils have benefited both financially and through a continued programme of service improvements brought throughout the lifetime of the partnership.
100. In recognition the on-going success of this public/public partnership, Members will recall that in 2015 they agreed to amend the original ten-year period into an on-going rolling agreement, which continues to this day.

Partnership Working

101. In March 2007, Cabinet adopted a partnership working toolkit to provide a means to ensure that the Council's resources were effectively employed, the performance of each partnership was monitored and adequate governance arrangements were in place. As part of the toolkit, a clear definition of a partnership and those classed as significant was documented and this included whether the arrangement was a major contributor towards achieving the Community Strategy objectives. The toolkit that comprises a questionnaire is completed by the Council Lead Officer for each partnership.
102. In July 2021 Council considered a report on changes made to partnership working in Darlington. It detailed that it had been agreed by partners that the Partnership Board cease and be replaced by a Public Sector Executive Group (PSEG), with other partnership arrangements to be developed. Also, the report recommended as a result of the change in circumstances that the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) cease to be used as a strategic lead for the Borough and that the lead is provided to partners by the Council Plan. PSEG constitutes a significant partnership and will be subject to the governance arrangements set out in the Partnership Toolkit.
103. There are annual reviews of significant partnerships led by the Darlington Partnerships Director based upon the completion of an annual review form and the provision of evidence demonstrating the governance arrangements have been adhered to. The outcomes from the latest review were reported to the Audit Committee in July 2022.
104. The report summarised the range of partnership working undertaken by the Council and all significant partnerships in Darlington have provided evidence that they are performing well and that they are adhering to the governance arrangements are in place.
105. Partnership Lead Officers recognise and accept that ensuring governance arrangements remain relevant is an ongoing process. For example, Terms of Reference are reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and risk registers are regularly updated to reflect emerging risks and changes in circumstances.

106. The toolkit has been effective in identifying high level concerns of the significant partnerships. Reduction in funding and the consequent effect on capacity are the predominant issues raised by Lead Officers that have potential implications for the effective operation of the partnerships. Each partnership which has indicated this as an issue is monitoring closely.

Commissioning

107. The Commissioning and contracts team continue to support the delivery of a sustainable and diverse care market across Adults and Children's Social Care, ensuring services are safe, affordable and sufficient to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in the community. This was a particular focus during the COVID-19 emergency period, and was tested and assured nationally and regionally through: the NHS England Capacity Tracker; the regional ADASS (Association of Directors of Adults Services) group; the regional ADCS (Association of Director for Children's Services) group, and the North East Commissioning groups for both Children and Adults.
108. During the COVID-19 pandemic, commissioning and contract officers have worked with health and public health partners to support providers with implementing Government Guidance around infection control, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) usage, testing regimes, visiting arrangements and the vaccination programme.
109. Officers have also continued to work with safeguarding and CQC colleagues to ensure services remained safe and provided good outcomes for people.
110. Providers have been well supported during this challenging year through: the development of the Care Home Support Plan; frequent contact calls and provider forums, and timely allocation of additional financial support including the Infection Control Fund, Workforce Capacity Fund, Rapid Testing Fund and local sustainability support arrangements .
111. Local commissioning arrangements have proven to be effective. Hospital discharges have been well supported with no delayed transfers of care being experienced, none of our locally commissioned care homes have closed, providers have continued to deliver care and support services throughout the emergency period (albeit using different innovative approaches where necessary) and children's commissioned provision continues to be resilient.

Joint Ventures

112. The Council is investor and shareholder of a number of joint venture companies delivering small housing developments within Darlington and the wider North East region.
113. The Council has entered into six joint venture companies approved by Cabinet (on the dates shown) at Eastbourne (November 2016), Stag House Farm (April 2018), Heighington (June 2018), Middleton St George (January 2019), ESH/DBC (December 2019) and Neasham Road (September 2020).
114. Three of the joint ventures being Eastbourne, Heighington and Middleton St George have now been completed with the loans fully repaid and profits realised. In regard to Stag House Farm, Neasham Road and Springwell, the first development via the ESH/DBC company, all sales are above target and the 2022 allocations all sold.

115. The risks and governance safeguards in place with respect to joint venture working include internal and company audits, restriction on banking facilities, monthly progress reports and quarterly board meetings. Further details are contained in the Assurance Framework at **Appendix B** of this report.

Member Standards

116. In 2021/22 10 complaints were received about Members of the Council (no complaints received about parish councillors).
117. The total number of complaints is a relatively low number given the number of councillors, the range of matters that Members are involved with and the impact that their decisions can have on the public. The number of complaints is not out of line with the average of complaints received in previous years, which is about 9.5 per year.
118. During the year one complaint proceeded to a full hearing before the Member Standards hearing Committee. In the event the Member was not found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct.
119. The Independent Person continues to be involved at the assessment stage of complaints handling and the process of liaison between her and the Monitoring Officer in considering the initial assessment of complaints is working well.
120. The Audit Committee has responsibility for ethical values as part of its remit. This includes reviewing Ethical Health Indicators across a range of activities in order to identify any peaks in activity that could indicate areas of possible concern. An update report about member standards issues and also ethical indicators was presented to the Audit Committee in September 2021. No particular issues of concern arose from variations in the indicators. General information was also presented on the work of the Committee on Standards in Public Life and the Local Government Association.
121. The Audit Committee also considered the LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct for Members and in September 2021 recommended that the Council adopt this Code in place of the former code of conduct. After engagement with Members and parish councils in November 2021 Council approved the adoption of a replacement Code of Conduct modelled on the LGA Code of Conduct (effective from 1 January 2022). Liaison also took place with parish councils to help them to adopt a similar replacement Code of Conduct.
122. The Constitution has been updated and relevant webpages. A number of Member training sessions have been held on the replacement Code of Conduct for borough Councillors and also separately for parish council Members.
123. In preparation for the adoption of the replacement Code of Conduct towards the end of 2021 Members were advised to review their register of interests forms in readiness for the revised Code of Conduct which was coming into force in January 2022. Updates to Register of Interest entries have been published on the website.
124. The Monitoring Officer continues to provide advice to Members on interests on an ongoing basis and Members do self-identify their concerns. The Monitoring Officer also raises issues with individual Members ahead of meetings as required. Compliance with the advice given by

the Monitoring Officer is good.

Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

125. Scrutiny forms an important part of the Council's governance arrangements by providing independent examination of executive roles. The Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee has responsibilities for examining the Council's arrangements for financial planning, performance and service delivery, project and asset management and procurement and contracts. The Committee develops and implements an annual work programme to manage its continuing oversight role and undertake specific pieces of work.
126. During 2021/22 the Committee was involved in scrutinising the annual review of the MTFP and held a number of special meetings to consider the proposals made, both for its own areas of responsibility and also responses and detailed work from all other scrutiny committees, from which it made recommendations to Cabinet in February 2022 to inform their deliberations. Economy and Resources Scrutiny will continue to lead on monitoring and scrutinising the budget and MTFP and assist with the implementation and development of the required savings.

Public Health (COVID-19)

127. The pandemic emerged in the early part of 2020 with the first lockdown implemented on 23 March by the Government. Throughout the past years there have been different waves of infection with different restrictions and lockdowns being applied at different times in response to the way that the infection was spreading and affecting our communities.
128. The Council has been making decisions day by day and also strategic decisions to respond to and implement national guidance and legislation. Throughout this pandemic the Council has continually worked to reduce transmission and protect staff and residents and maintained a broad range of essential services to provide support to those who needed our help.
129. With the publication of the Government's Living with COVID-19 plan and the ending of the Coronavirus Act 2021, from April 2022 the Local Authority put into place working arrangements for UKHSA and local partners for living with COVID-19, including a local COVID-19 outbreak management plan. The Local Authority, through the Director of Public Health provides the local leadership in ensuring appropriate local outbreak management plans for COVID-19, alongside other respiratory infections are in place for their Local Authority area. This supports and compliments the statutory duty in planning for, and responding to, emergencies that present a risk to the public's health in the longer term.

Business Continuity

130. The Council's Business Continuity Management System ensures that the Council can manage the response to a business interruption. Examples of this include the loss of buildings, loss of IT function, loss of utilities, loss of communication and loss of staff. Through a process of Business Impact Analysis a series of Business Continuity Plans are maintained to ensure the Council's essential services are prepared for a business interruption. Business continuity has been implemented during the pandemic and has worked successfully with the Council still being able to deliver services to the public despite the restrictions in place.

131. The Business Continuity Management System is now embedded into the Council. Business Continuity Plans are monitored as part of the Local Code of Corporate Governance and are a regular agenda item at Chief Officers Board (COB) Meetings. Individual Business Continuity Plans are regularly updated to take into account business changes and the response to actual business interruptions and are available to view on the Council's intranet. A regime of testing was underway in which all plans were to be tested to improve their effectiveness when the global pandemic hit.

Home working

132. Prior to the pandemic the Council already had an established Agile Working Policy with a significant number of staff working on laptops and mobile devices. The Council has always worked on an outcome/output basis and productivity is not measured on where the employee is based but on what they deliver. In fact, during the pandemic in some areas productivity increased with reduced travel time to and from work and to and from meetings. Regular supervisor and team meetings continued to be held to ensure work kept on track and to support employee wellbeing. The rapid rollout of Microsoft Teams made this task far easier and given the success, home working will certainly be more prolific in our conversations on our estate moving forward. There was also a significant amount of support for employees in regard to their wellbeing with regular communications, signposting and FAQ's available.

External Audit

133. The Council's external auditors Ernst and Young LLP (EY) are expected to give an unqualified opinion on the Council's 2021/22 accounts by the target date of 30 September 2022 or 30 November 2022, pending the outcome of the Department or Levelling Up, Housing and Communities consultation to further amend the Account and Audit Regulations 2015.
134. The external auditors are expected to issue an unqualified value for money conclusion on the adequacy of the Council's arrangements for ensuring economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
135. EY review the AGS to consider whether it complies with the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance and whether it might be misleading or inconsistent with other information known to them. They are expected to confirm that they found no areas of concern in this context.
136. The auditors are also required to report to management and the Audit Committee any significant deficiencies in internal control identified during their audit. EY have not raised any significant matters in this regard.

Action Plan 2022/23

137.

No.	Action	Responsible Officers
1	Growing Darlington's Economy.	Chief Executive Assistant Director, Economic Growth Group Director of Services
2	Maximise the potential of our young people.	Group Director of People Assistant Director, Children's Services Head of Education and Inclusion
3	Supporting the most vulnerable in the borough.	Group Director of People Assistant Director, Children's Services Assistant Director, Adult Services Darlington Partnership Director
4	Working with communities to maximise their potential.	Chief Executive Assistant Director, Economic Growth Darlington Partnership Director
5	Ensure we have an engaged motivated workforce who are proud to serve the borough and an accessible, effective and engaged Council.	Chief Executive Group Director of Operations Assistant Director Resources Assistant Director Housing and Revenues
6	Work towards delivering the Council's commitment to becoming Carbon neutral by 2050.	Chief Executive Assistant Director, Economic Growth

138. An update on the 2021/22 action plan is contained in Appendix C.

Conclusion

139. We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Audit Committee. In conclusion, we are satisfied the Council has robust governance arrangements in place and while there are currently no governance issues we are committed to the continuous improvement of the system.

Signed

Leader of the Council

Signed

Chief Executive

APPENDIX A

Document/Function	Core Principles of Corporate Governance						
	Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law	Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit, to deliver effective accountability
Council Plan		ü	ü	ü			ü
Constitution	ü	ü					ü
Corporate/Service Planning and Performance Management Framework		ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
Communications and Engagement Strategy	ü	ü	ü	ü			ü
ICT Strategy			ü		ü		
Workforce Strategy	ü				ü		
Schedule of Council Meetings		ü					ü
Council Procedure Rules	ü	ü					ü
Record of Decisions	ü	ü	ü	ü			ü
Partnership Working Toolkit	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
Code of Conduct for Members	ü	ü					ü

Document/Function	Core Principles of Corporate Governance						
	Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law	Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit, to deliver effective accountability
Members Induction and Training Programme	ü	ü			ü	ü	ü
Code of Conduct for Employees	ü	ü					
Officer and Member Protocols	ü				ü		
Confidential Reporting Policy	ü					ü	ü
Code of Corporate Governance	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü
Risk Management Approach				ü		ü	ü
Anti-fraud and Corruption Policies	ü					ü	ü
Capital Projects Methodology		ü	ü			ü	
Information Governance Policies	ü	ü				ü	ü
Procurement Strategy	ü	ü	ü			ü	

Document/Function	Core Principles of Corporate Governance						
	Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law	Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit, to deliver effective accountability
Contract and Property Procedure Rules	ü	ü	ü			ü	
Medium Term Financial Plan/Budgets		ü	ü	ü		ü	ü
Treasury Management Framework						ü	
Annual Statement of Accounts		ü				ü	ü
Financial Procedure Rules	ü	ü				ü	ü
Scheme of Delegation		ü			ü		ü
Complaints Process	ü	ü					ü
Equalities Policy		ü	ü	ü			
Business Continuity Plans		ü				ü	
Health and Safety Policy		ü				ü	ü

Assurance Framework

Risk	Assurance Provider	Sources of Assurance	Links to Internal Audit Work Plan	Reporting to Members
<p>Corporate Planning and Performance Management Framework inadequate/ineffective</p>	<p>Chief Officers Executive</p>	<p>Performance clinics held between the Chief Executive, Director and Assistant Directors are arranged at regular intervals.</p> <p>Performance data is gathered from various sources and reviewed by the Assistant Director and relevant Director in advance of the clinics.</p> <p>Clear definitions for indicators are in the process of being established.</p>	<p>Performance indicators are reviewed by Internal Audit when individual service areas are audited.</p>	<p>Baskets of performance indicators reported to Cabinet and scrutiny groups twice a year (Q2 and Q4)</p>
<p>Equalities Policy inadequate/ineffective</p>	<p>Chief Officers Board</p>	<p>Indicators relating to equalities are regularly reported to Chief Officers Board.</p> <p>Corporate Equalities Group consisting of equalities advisors (appointed by Assistant Directors) and chaired by Head of Strategy, Performance and Communications meet quarterly</p>	<p>Where appropriate, equalities related performance indicators are reviewed by Internal Audit when individual service areas are audited.</p>	<p>Equalities report to be produced quarterly and presented to Chief Officers Board.</p> <p>Equalities updates discussed with the portfolio holder for Stronger Communities on a regular basis.</p>

Risk	Assurance Provider	Sources of Assurance	Links to Internal Audit Work Plan	Reporting to Members
		to monitor and report on equalities related performance indicators.		
Internal Control environment inadequate/ineffective.	Internal Audit	Internal Audit Strategy. Internal Audit's Role and Terms of Reference. Risk based Annual Internal Audit Plan. Internal Audit Reports/opinions and outcomes from consultancy work undertaken.	Internal Audit Strategy. Internal Audit's Role and Terms of Reference. Risk based Annual Internal Audit Plan. Internal Audit reports/opinions and outcomes from consultancy work undertaken.	Internal Audit's Strategy, Role and Terms of reference and Annual Audit Plan approved by the Audit Committee. Quarterly/Annual Reports to the Audit Committee on progress/outcomes against the Annual Audit Plan. Annual Report includes an overall opinion on the Council's control environment.
The financial position of the Council not presented fairly in the Financial Statements; the Annual Governance Statement not presented in accordance with relevant requirements; and proper arrangements are not	External Audit	Risk based External Audit Plan. External Audit Reports/opinions.	Internal Audit's Annual Audit Plan discussed with External Audit to facilitate External audit planning and minimise the duplication of audit effort wherever possible.	External Audit Plan and External Audit Reports, including the Annual Audit Letter, considered by the Audit Committee. Annual Audit Letter considered by Cabinet.

Risk	Assurance Provider	Sources of Assurance	Links to Internal Audit Work Plan	Reporting to Members
in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.				
Inadequate provision of services to the people of Darlington.	External Inspection Agencies	External Inspection Agencies' reports.	External Inspection reports reflected upon in the Internal Audit planning process.	External Inspection reports and progress on improvement action plans considered by relevant Scrutiny Committee/Audit Committee/Cabinet/Council.
Business risk processes inadequate/ineffective	Law and Governance	Risk Management Approach Corporate/Group Risk Registers.	Annual Audit Plan developed with reference to Corporate/Group Risk Registers. Risk Management function subject to periodic Internal Audit review as part of the cyclical audit process.	Risk Management Approach endorsed by the Audit Committee and approved by Cabinet. Six-monthly/Annual Reports to the Audit Committee on the outcomes from the Council's risk management processes.
Fraud and corruption arrangements inadequate/ineffective.	Internal Audit and DWP.	Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, Policy, Fraud Response Plan, Anti-Money Laundering Policy and Anti-Bribery Policy and Procedures. Confidential Reporting Policy. Internal Audit reviews of arrangements.	Anti-Fraud and Corruption arrangements, including National Fraud Initiative exercises, administered by Internal Audit. The potential for a service to be susceptible to fraud reflected within Internal Audit's risk assessment model	Fraud related Policies and Strategies approved by the Audit Committee/Council Confidential Reporting Policy approved by Council. Annual Reports to the Audit Committee on the outcomes from the Council's anti-

Risk	Assurance Provider	Sources of Assurance	Links to Internal Audit Work Plan	Reporting to Members
		<p>Outcomes from bi-annual National Fraud Initiative exercises.</p> <p>Internal Audit/Housing Benefits case files.</p>	<p>that underpins the annual audit planning process.</p> <p>Internal Audit review of Housing Benefits conducted on an annual basis.</p>	<p>fraud and corruption arrangements.</p>
<p>Information governance arrangements inadequate/ineffective.</p>	<p>Systems and Information Governance Group (SIGG), Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO), Caldicott Guardian, Data Protection Officer (DPO), Complaints and Information Governance Team, Xentrall and External Audit.</p>	<p>Corporate policies, processes, procedures and guidance in place.</p> <p>SIGG Minutes.</p> <p>Officer/Member Training.</p> <p>Data Quality reflected upon by External Audit in their VFM assessment.</p>	<p>Information Governance/Sensitivity of data is reflected within Internal Audit’s risk assessment that underpins the annual audit planning process.</p> <p>Information Governance subject to periodic Internal Audit review as part of the cyclical audit process.</p>	<p>Six-monthly reports to the Audit Committee on progress with implementation of the information governance work programme.</p> <p>External Audit VFM assessment considered by the Audit Committee and Cabinet.</p>
<p>Internal control environment of relevant areas of Xentrall inadequate/ineffective.</p>	<p>Stockton BC Internal Audit</p>	<p>Risk based Annual Internal Audit Plan.</p> <p>Internal Audit reports/opinions and outcomes from consultancy work undertaken.</p>	<p>Joint working protocol agreed between the Internal Audit Services of Stockton and Darlington to cover Xentrall audits.</p> <p>Copies of all relevant Stockton BC Internal Audit Reports on Xentrall forwarded to Darlington Internal Audit for information.</p>	<p>Stockton BC’s Annual Audit Plan related to Xentrall considered by the Audit Committee.</p> <p>Quarterly Reports to the Audit Committee on progress/outcomes against the Plan.</p>

Risk	Assurance Provider	Sources of Assurance	Links to Internal Audit Work Plan	Reporting to Members
Local Code of Corporate Governance not implemented.	Corporate Group with responsibility for overseeing the drafting of the Annual Governance Statement.	Local Code of Corporate Governance Local Code individual key documents/functions matrices updated quarterly by relevant Lead Officers, covering awareness, monitoring and review actions.	Internal Audit direct effort annually to validate a sample of evidence to support delivery of awareness, monitoring and review actions detailed on the Local Code individual key documents/functions matrices.	Local Code endorsed by the Audit Committee and approved by Council. Annual Governance Statement considered by the Audit Committee prior to approval.
Grant processes inadequate.	External Audit Internal Audit	External Audit Report on audited Grant Claims. Internal Audit sign-off of relevant Grant Claims.	Grant process arrangements subject to annual review by Internal audit.	External Audit Report on Grant Claims considered by the Audit Committee. Internal Audit Grant Claims work referenced in Quarterly Reports to the Audit Committee on progress/outcomes against the Annual Audit Plan.
Health and Safety practices and processes inadequate/ineffective	Health and Safety Unit	Corporate Health and Safety Policy. Heads of Service Health and Safety Management self-assessments and action plans. Risk Assessments Reportable Accident Statistics	Health and Safety function subject to periodic Internal Audit review as part of the cyclical audit process.	Corporate Health and Safety Policy approved by Cabinet. Council's performance on health and safety reported annually to the Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Risk	Assurance Provider	Sources of Assurance	Links to Internal Audit Work Plan	Reporting to Members
		Outcomes from audits undertaken by the Health and Safety Unit. Officer/Member Training.		
Property management arrangements inadequate	Corporate Landlord Function	Corporate Premises Database System and supporting documentation.	Corporate Landlord Function subject to periodic Internal Audit review as part of the cyclical audit process.	Property management arrangements included in Council Risk Registers and, as such, included within member reporting arrangements for business risk processes.
Management control in respect of operational aspects of the business inadequate.	Chief Officers Board	Annual signed Assurance Statements from Assistant Directors.	Arrangements administered and outputs scrutinised by Internal Audit.	Annual report to the Audit Committee on the outcomes from the Assurance Statement process.
Capital Project management arrangements inadequate/ineffective.	Asset Management and Capital Programme Review Board	Asset Management and Capital Programme Review Board Agendas/Minutes and supporting documentation.	Project Office function subject to periodic Internal Audit review as part of the cyclical audit process.	Project Position Statement reported regularly to Cabinet.
Partnership governance arrangements inadequate.	Partnership Lead Officers	Annual Partnership Toolkit questionnaires completed by relevant Council Partnership Lead Officers and supporting documentation provided.	Partnership Governance Arrangements subject to periodic Internal Audit review as part of the cyclical audit process.	Partnership Toolkit approved by Cabinet. Annual report to the Audit Committee on the operations of significant partnerships.
Joint Venture Housing Investment	Internal Audit DBC Directors	Copies of Company Audit reports Access to Banking facilities	Joint Venture Arrangements subject to periodic internal	Joint Venture Arrangements included in the Council's risk

Risk	Assurance Provider	Sources of Assurance	Links to Internal Audit Work Plan	Reporting to Members
	Legal Services advice as required	Restriction on Banking Facilities without approval of 2 Directors Weekly Sales Report Monthly Progress Report Quarterly Board meeting attended by DBC Directors with Legal, Finance and Housing expertise. Shareholders Reserved Matters	audit review and reviewed as part of cyclical audit process	register and as such included within member reporting arrangements for business risk processes.
Treasury management arrangements inadequate.	Financial Services	Treasury Management Policy Statement, Strategy, Prudential Indicators and Procedures.	Treasury Management function subject to periodic Internal Audit review as part of the cyclical audit process.	Treasury Management Policy Statement, Strategy and Prudential Indicators considered by the Audit Committee and approved by Council. Treasury Management Procedures approved by the Audit Committee. Regular/Annual Reports to the Audit Committee and Cabinet on the performance of the Treasury Management function.
Financial management arrangements inadequate/ineffective.	Financial Services	Medium Term Financial Plan. Corporate Budget Setting/Monitoring processes and supporting documentation.	Financial management arrangements subject to periodic Internal Audit review	Medium Term Financial Plan approved by Council. Quarterly Reports to

Risk	Assurance Provider	Sources of Assurance	Links to Internal Audit Work Plan	Reporting to Members
		Officer/Member Training.	as part of the cyclical audit process.	Cabinet on Financial Performance.
Financial management arrangements in local authority maintained schools inadequate/ineffective.	School Governing Bodies	Schools annual self-assessment returns against the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS).	Financial arrangements in schools subject to periodic Internal Audit review as part of the cyclic audit process.	School balances reported to Cabinet quarterly.
Ineffective management of the transformation agenda.	Chief Officers Executive	Chief Officer Executive Agendas/Minutes and supporting documentation.	Internal Audit support/contribute to delivery of the Transformation Programme as relevant.	Reports to Cabinet and Scrutiny as appropriate.
Ineffective challenge to the procurement process.	Procurement Board	Procurement Board Agendas/Minutes and supporting documentation.	Procurement process subject to periodic Internal Audit review as part of the cyclical audit process.	Annual Procurement Plan approved by Cabinet.
Ethical health arrangements inadequate.	Law and Governance	Member Code of Conduct. Officer Code of Conduct. Member/Officer Training.	Audit Committee reports on ethical indicators reflected upon in the audit planning process.	Members and Officers Codes of Conduct approved by Council. Audit Committee receives reports on ethical indicators.
Lessons not learned from complaints received.	Complaints and Information Governance Team	Corporate, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Housing and Public Health Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedures. Complaints Records. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Housing Ombudsman	Complaints and Ombudsman reports reflected upon in the audit planning process.	Complaints Procedures approved by Cabinet. Annual report to Cabinet on complaints received and the resultant organisational learning. Regular reports to Cabinet on Ombudsman complaints and outcomes.

Risk	Assurance Provider	Sources of Assurance	Links to Internal Audit Work Plan	Reporting to Members
		Annual reports to COB. Regular reporting to senior management. Quarterly reporting via PMF. External Inspection Agencies' reports.		
Inadequate arrangements for the delivery of the Public Health function and responsibilities.	Director of Public Health	Public Health Work Plan. Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Director of Public Health's Annual Report.	Public Health function subject to periodic Internal Audit review as part of the cyclical audit process.	Regular reports to Health and Wellbeing Board and Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.
Ineffective system of internal audit	Senior Group of Officers	Annual Review of the system of internal audit and supporting documentation.	Internal Audit direct effort annually to support the review process.	Annual Review of the system of internal audit considered by the Audit Committee.

APPENDIX C

No.	Action	Responsible Officers	Update
1	Growing Darlington's Economy.	Chief Executive Assistant Director, Economic Growth Group Director of Services	<p>The Treasury and other Government Departments relocation to Darlington continues to progress. In June 2022 Treasury officials began to populate Feethams House which should be completely occupied by October 2022. Council planning officers are working with GPA and developers on the permanent location at Brunswick Street.</p> <p>The Town Fund continues to deliver its various interventions with improvements to the Town Centre specifically in the heritage heart of the town. The Northern Echo has been acquired which will be the location for the new Adult Skills Hub and will provide 27,000 sq. Ft of quality office accommodation. Marketing of Faverdale Industrial Park has commenced with Ingenium Park being brought to the market in autumn 2022.</p>
2	Maximise the potential of our young people.	Group Director of People Assistant Director, Children's Services Head of Education and Inclusion	<p>As part of Darlington's partnership arrangements, the Education Strategy Group supports and oversees the work of the Primary Headteachers Forum and the 11-19 Partnership. It provides overall strategic direction and approves any partnership work programmes. The membership involves headteachers and CEOs representing the primary, secondary, FE and special school sectors. The service support to schools has contributed to an improved Ofsted profile. 82% of Darlington pupils now attend a "Good" or "Outstanding" school.</p> <p>The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) supports unemployed 16-29 year olds into employment. Job vacancies, including those advertised as result of COVID-19, are circulated regularly and</p>

			<p>followed up with suitable clients. The teams' role has expanded to providing support and signposting on the wider issues created by COVID-19 and the lock-down. The team have already exceeded the majority end of project targets with the exception of 6 month sustained outcomes where they need a further 28 more before 31 July 2023. DBC YEI are one of the most successful delivery partners across the Tees Valley. To date the programme had supported 1060 young people with 92.8% moving into employment or training and 49.7% still in that setting at the 6-month point.</p> <p>The YEI programme has contributed to a fall in youth unemployment. The 18-24 claimant count continues to fall. It dropped from a high of 13.8% (1,005) in March 2021 to 6.2% (450) in May 2022, this is the lowest it has been since September 2016 and the lowest in the Tees Valley.</p>
3	Supporting the most vulnerable in the borough.	<p>Group Director of People Assistant Director, Children's Services Assistant Director, Adult Services Darlington Partnership Director</p>	<p>We aim to work together with residents, partners, and communities to ensure we enable the citizens of Darlington to have the support and assistance they require to maximise their independence, their wellbeing, to have care and support when they need it and to empower them to contribute to and feel valued in their communities.</p> <p>As part of the "Strengthening Families" approach we work with families to ensure that there is co-production of plans and interventions, and that we maximise family led decision making. We have a dedicated Family Group Conference team who facilitate families to conduct family led meeting which identify their own solutions to the challenges they face. Research indicates that family led planning leads to more sustainable long</p>

term plans to effectively meet children's needs and ensure they are safeguarded.

Adult Social Care provides care and support to the most vulnerable adults in the community. This includes adults with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, sensory impairments, and older people with long term conditions. The majority of what we do is governed by the Care Act 2014 and associated regulations and guidance. We actively seek to promote the well-being of the people that we work with and take a personalised approach to providing support. We also work closely with the NHS and other partners.

As a service we take a 'Strength Based' approach to practice and assessment. This means that we support people to become more resilient in meeting their care needs by developing their networks and personal strengths. We take this approach because it is the right thing to do and it is also consistent with our duty to 'prevent, delay or reduce ' the need for formal support.

The Council continues to work with The Bread and Butter Thing which began operating in Darlington in March 2020 after funding was secured to allow them to provide their service in Darlington. Struggling families are able to buy food at a fraction of its full retail value. Where foodbanks can provide mainly ambient food for those in crisis. The Bread and Butter Thing provides fresh foods and fruit and vegetables. The model has proved sustainable, funded through the modest charge customers pay.

			Having recognised that parents were struggling with the cost of school uniforms, a school uniform exchange scheme has been established. Quality checked and laundered items are made available free of charge to families that need them. Since 2020 2,000 families have benefited with over 7,500 items of uniform having been handed out.
4	Working with communities to maximise their potential.	Chief Executive Assistant Director, Economic Growth Darlington Partnership Director	A range of initiatives are being delivered supporting communities to thrive. The Northgate Initiative is a geographically targeted programme delivering a range of workstreams from environment to childhood and education. A Levelling Up Darlington Plan is in development with three focuses, helping young people access opportunities, helping people into quality jobs and improving community health. To these ends a Youth Friendly Darlington programme will be launched in September 2022, plans are at an advanced stage to open an Adult Skills Centre in the centre of town and work is underway to work with colleagues in primary and secondary health care to address disparities in ill health which worsened as a consequence of Covid.
5	Ensure we have an engaged motivated workforce who are proud to serve the borough and an accessible, effective and engaged Council.	Chief Executive Group Director of Operations Assistant Director Resources Assistant Director Housing and Revenues	We have a proud and dedicated workforce, who want the borough to flourish and grow, with over 64% of the workforce living in Darlington. We employ over 2,000 people across a vast range of services and welcome approximately 200 new starters each year. It is important that we ensure that all staff are motivated, have the right skills and are flexible and customer focused. The workforce strategy and plan, 'Working Together to Deliver Success' was rolled out from the autumn and outlines how the Council will develop, support and motivate our staff to meet our business and community priorities. Priorities within the plan that have been delivered include commencement of the new agile working processes, supporting staff's wellbeing and

			mental health. The Council has now published its Customer Services and Digital Strategy 2021 – 2024 following its approval at the Cabinet meeting of 11 January 2022.
6	Work towards delivering the Council’s commitment to becoming Carbon neutral by 2050.	Chief Executive Assistant Director, Economic Growth	An action plan which has been populated by officers from across the council is now in place. Progress against this plan will be reported to Council on a 6 monthly basis.
7	COVID-19 – plan the Council’s contribution to economic and social recovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilise lessons learnt from the pandemic response to help shape future responses and service delivery. 	Chief Executive Directors	<p>The Director of Public Health provides a local system leadership role in health protection and ensures appropriate local outbreak management and health protection arrangements through a local Health Protection Partnership, including the development of a Local Outbreak Management and Infection Prevention Control Plan for the borough.</p> <p>The Director of Public Health and the Public Health Team is using the lessons learned from how communities and services responded to and were affected by the pandemic to inform the planning and delivery of Public Health commissioned services. The Director of Public Health is engaging with internal and external stakeholders to identify changes to strategy, policy and how services are planned and delivered to mitigate the health effects of the pandemic.</p>

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**AUDIT COMMITTEE
8 APRIL 2024**

ACCOUNTING POLICIES TO BE APPLIED TO THE 2023/24 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members on the accounting policies to be applied in the preparation of the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts (SoA).

Summary

2. This report confirms that the majority of the Accounting Policies used in the preparation of the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts still remain appropriate.

Recommendation

3. The Committee reviews the accounting policies and approves their use in the preparation of the 2023/24 financial statements.

Reasons

4. The recommendations are supported to provide the Audit Committee with evidence to reflect on progress in delivery of the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts.

**Elizabeth Davison
Group Director of Operations**

Background Papers

Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting In the UK 2023/24

Judith Murray: Extension 5401

S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no specific crime and disorder impact.
Health and Well Being	There is no specific health and well being impact.
Carbon Impact	There is no specific carbon impact.
Diversity	There is no specific diversity impact.
Wards Affected	All wards are affected equally.
Groups Affected	All groups are affected equally.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not affect the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
Council Plan	This report has no particular implications for the Council Plan.
Efficiency	There is no specific efficiency impact.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The report does not impact upon Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

MAIN REPORT

5. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Local Government Act 2003 require that the Statement of Accounts is produced in accordance with proper accounting practices.
6. One of the responsibilities of the Audit Committee is:
7. *'To review the annual statement of accounts prior to approval. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council'.*
8. Accounting policies are defined in the CIPFA Code of Practice for Local Authority Accounting in the UK 2023/24 as the 'specific principles, bases, conventions, rules and practices applied by an authority in preparing and presenting financial statements'.
9. We are currently awaiting the CIPFA Code of Practice Guidance Notes and therefore the majority of the proposed accounting policies for 2023/24 are in line with those used in the preparation of the 2022/23 accounts. It should be noted that we do not expect any significant changes to the accounting policies.
10. CIPFA have recently concluded a consultation on changes to the 2023/24 and 2024/25 Codes of Practice in response to the significant backlog in local financial reporting and audit in England and the proposed backstop dates and recovery processes for local government audits.
11. The proposed changes to the Code relate to options to simplify measurement of operational Plant, Property and Equipment using specified indexation and reduced disclosures for pensions reporting by aligning that reporting with FRS102 The Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and The Republic of Ireland.

12. The results of this consultation by CIPFA are as of yet not known but should they be implemented and the Code changed the appropriate Accounting Policies will be disclosed in the Statement of Accounts.
13. The full current list of accounting policies the Council proposes to disclose in its Statement of Accounts notes are detailed in **Appendix 1**.

Statement of Accounting Policies

a) General principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2023/24 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2024. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, which those Regulations require to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. The principal accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the year.

These practices under Section 21 of the 2003 Act primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and statutory guidance issued under section 12 of the 2003 Act.

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.

The Statement of Accounts has been prepared on a 'going concern' basis, which assumes that the functions of the Council will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The provisions in the Code in respect of going concern reporting requirements reflect the economic and statutory environment in which the Council operates. As a result of this, it would not therefore be appropriate for the financial statements to be provided on anything other than a going concern basis.

b) Accruals of income and expenditure

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

- Revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods, is recognised when (or as) the goods or services 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 received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.
- Interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure on the basis of the effective interest rate for

the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.

- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where debts may not be settled, the balance is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected. The Council has adopted a de minimis level of £500 for year-end accruals which means that they are not included in the accounting statements.
- Income and expenditure are credited and debited to the relevant service revenue account, unless they properly represent capital receipts or capital expenditure.

The only exceptions to these principles where costs are not apportioned between years are:

- housing rents are shown in whole weeks
- quarterly accounts e.g. electricity are reflected on the basis of four payments per year.

This policy is consistently applied each year and does not materially affect the accounts.

c) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions, including on-call accounts and deposits with Money Market Funds, repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours held to meet short-term cash commitments. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that mature in no more than three months or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

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

d) Prior period adjustments, changes in accounting policies and estimates and errors

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policies 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 financial performance. Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively (unless stated otherwise) by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period as if the new policy had always been applied.

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

e) Charges to revenue for non-current assets

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

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

The Council is not required to raise council tax to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisation. However, it is required to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Council in accordance with statutory guidance.

Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisation are therefore replaced by the contribution in the general fund balance (Minimum Revenue Provision), by way of an adjusting transaction with the capital adjustment account in the movement in reserves statement for the difference between the two.

f) Council tax and non-domestic rates

Billing authorities act as agents, collecting council tax and non-domestic rates (NDR) on behalf of major preceptors (including government for NDR) and, as principals, collecting council tax and NDR for themselves. Billing authorities are required by statute to maintain a separate fund (i.e. the Collection Fund) for the collection and distribution of amounts due in respect of council tax and NDR. Under the legislative framework for the collection fund, billing authorities, major preceptors and central government share proportionately the risks and rewards that the amount of council tax and NDR collected could be less or more than predicted.

Accounting for council tax and NDR

The council tax and NDR income included in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement (CIES) is the Council's share of accrued income for the year. However, regulations determine the amount of council tax and NDR that must be included in the Council's general fund. Therefore, the difference between the income included in the CIES and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the general fund is taken to the collection fund

adjustment account and included as a reconciling item in the movement in reserves statement.

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

Where debtor balances for the above are identified as impaired because of a likelihood arising from a past event that payments due under the statutory arrangements will not be made (fixed or determinable payments), the asset is written down and a charge made to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the CIES. The impairment loss is measured as the difference between the carrying amount and the revised future cash flows.

g) Employee benefits

Benefits payable during employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled wholly within 12 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 entitlements (or any form of leave, e.g. flexi time or time off in lieu) earned by employees but not taken before the year-end which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the wage and salary rates applicable in the following accounting year, being the period in which the employee takes the benefit. The accrual is charged to surplus or deficit on the provision of services, but then reversed out through the movement in reserves statement so that holiday entitlements are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday 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 in exchange for those benefits and are charged on an accruals basis to the relevant service line or, where applicable, to a corporate service line at the earlier of when the Council can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the Council recognises costs for a restructuring.

Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require the General Fund to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or pensioner in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards although it is the Council's policy not to award any such enhancements.

Post-employment benefits

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

- The Teachers' Pension Scheme, administered by Capita Teachers' Pensions on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).
- The NHS Pension Scheme, administered by NHS Pensions
- The Local Government Pensions Scheme, administered by Durham County Council.

The schemes provide defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions) earned as employees of the Council.

However, the arrangements for the teachers' and the NHS schemes mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot ordinarily be identified specifically to the Council. The schemes are therefore accounted for as if they were a defined contribution scheme and no liability for future payments of benefits is recognised in the balance sheet. The Peoples Services line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement is charged with the employer's contributions payable to Teachers' Pensions in the year as is the employer's contributions payable to the NHS Pension scheme in the year.

The Local Government Pension Scheme

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

- The liabilities of the Durham County Council pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the balance sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method - i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc, and projected earnings for current employees.
- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate of 2.7% (based on the indicative rate of return on high quality corporate bonds).
- The assets of Durham County Council pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the balance sheet at their fair value:
 - quoted securities – current bid price
 - unquoted securities – professional estimate
 - unitised securities – current bid price
 - property – market value.

The change in the net pensions liability is analysed into the following components:

- Service cost comprising:
 - current service cost - the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year - allocated in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement to the services for which the employees worked;

- past service cost - the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years, debited to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement.
 - net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset), i.e. net interest expense for the Council – the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability (asset) that arises from the passage of time charged to the financing and investment income and expenditure line of the comprehensive income and expenditure statement - this is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability (asset) at the beginning of the period - taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability (asset) during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.
- Remeasurements comprising
 - the return on plan assets - excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined liability (asset) charged to the pensions reserve as other comprehensive income and expenditure.
 - actuarial gains and losses - changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions - charged to the pensions reserve as other comprehensive income and expenditure.
 - Contributions paid to the Durham County Council pension fund - cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

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

Discretionary benefits

The Council also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff (including teachers) are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award

and accounted for using the same policies as are applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

h) Events after the reporting period

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; and
- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period - the statement of accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events, but where a category of events would have a material effect, disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and their estimated financial effect.

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the statement of accounts.

i) 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 fair value and are carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments over the life of the instrument to the amount at which it was originally recognised.

For most of the borrowings that the Council has, this means that the amount presented in the balance sheet is the outstanding principal repayable (plus accrued interest); and interest charged to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

Gains and losses on the repurchase or early settlement of borrowing are credited and debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement in the year of repurchase/settlement. However, where repurchase has taken place as part of a restructuring of the loan portfolio that involves the modification or exchange of existing instruments, the premium or discount is respectively deducted from or added to the amortised cost of the new or modified loan and the write-down to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement is spread over the life of the loan by an

adjustment to the effective interest rate.

Where premiums and discounts have been charged to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement, regulations allow the impact on the general fund balance to be spread over future years. The Council has a policy of spreading the gain or loss over the term that was remaining on the loan against which the premium was payable or discount receivable when it was repaid. The reconciliation of amounts charged to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement to the net charge required against the general fund balance is managed by a transfer to or from the financial instrument adjustment account in the Movement in Reserves statement.

Financial assets

Financial assets are classified based on a classification and measurement approach that reflects the business model for holding the financial assets and their cash flow characteristics.

There are three main classes of financial assets measured at:

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

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

Financial assets measured at amortised cost

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

The Council has the facility to make loans at less than market rates (soft loans). When soft loans are made, a loss is recorded in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement (debited to the appropriate service) for the present value of the interest that will be foregone over the life of the instrument, resulting in a lower amortised cost than the outstanding principal.

Interest is credited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement at a marginally higher effective rate of interest than the rate receivable from the recipients of the loans, with the difference serving to increase the amortised cost of the loan in the balance sheet. Statutory provisions require that the impact of soft loans on the general fund balance is the interest receivable for the financial year - the reconciliation of amounts debited and credited to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement to the net gain required against the general fund balance is managed by a transfer to or from the financial instrument adjustment account in the movement in reserves statement.

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 of the comprehensive income and expenditure statement.

Expected credit loss model

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

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

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

Financial assets measured at fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI)

Financial assets that are measured at FVOCI 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 other comprehensive income.

Financial assets measured at fair value through profit and loss (FVPL)

Financial assets that are measured at FVPL are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured and carried at fair value. Fair Value gains and losses are recognised as they arise in the surplus or deficit on the provision of services.

Fair value measurements of financial assets

Fair value of an asset is the price that would be received to sell an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. The fair value measurements of the Council's financial assets are based on the following techniques:

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

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

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

Any gains or 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.

An equity instrument can be elected into a FVOCI treatment rather than a FVPL treatment if it is not held for trading. The Council has reviewed its assets that would be measured at FVPL on the basis of the business model and has elected to classify instruments as either FVPL or FVOCI on an instrument by instrument basis based on the assessed benefit to the Council from the chosen classification.

As far as Durham Tees Valley Airport shares are concerned the Council has elected to treat them as an equity instrument which is not held for trading and therefore will be utilising the FVOCI treatment.

Instruments entered into before 1st April 2006

The Council has a financial guarantee that is not required to be accounted for as a financial instrument. This guarantee is reflected in the Statement of Accounts to the extent that it is shown in contingent liabilities (note 27).

j) 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 or contributions will be received.

Amounts recognised as due to the Council are not credited to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement until conditions attached to the grant or contribution have been satisfied. Conditions are stipulations that specify that the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset received in the form of the grant or contribution are required to be consumed by the recipient as specified, or future economic benefits or service potential must be returned to the transferor.

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the balance sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (attributable revenue grants and contributions) or taxation and non-specific grant Income and expenditure (non-ringfenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement, they are reversed out of the general fund balance in the movement in reserves statement.

Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the capital adjustment account. Amounts in the capital grants unapplied reserve are transferred to the capital adjustment account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

k) Heritage Assets

A heritage asset is defined as an asset with 'historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that is held and maintained principally for its contribution to knowledge and culture'.

Heritage assets are accounted for in accordance with the Council's accounting policies on property, plant and equipment except 'where it is not practical to obtain a valuation at a cost which is commensurate with the benefits to users of the financial statements, heritage assets shall be measured at historic cost.' Valuations may also be made by any method that is appropriate and relevant.

The carrying amounts of heritage assets are reviewed where there is evidence of impairment for heritage assets e.g. where an item has suffered physical deterioration or breakage or where doubts arise as to its authenticity. Any impairment is recognised and measured in accordance with the Council's general policies on impairment. If any heritage assets are disposed of then

the proceeds are accounted for in accordance with the Council's general provisions relating to the disposal of property, plant and equipment. Disposal proceeds are disclosed separately in the notes to the financial statements and are accounted for in accordance with statutory accounting requirements relating to capital expenditure and capital receipts.

l) Interests in companies and other entities

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2022/23 requires local authorities to produce group accounts to reflect significant activities provided to council taxpayers by other organisations in which an authority has an interest. The Council has interests in companies and other entities that have the nature of subsidiaries, associates and joint ventures and require it to prepare group accounts. In the Council's own single-entity accounts, the interest in companies and other entities are recorded as financial assets at cost, less any provision for losses.

m) Inventories and long-term contracts

Inventories are included in the balance sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value, with the exception of stores held at Allington Way Depot, which are valued at last price paid. This is a departure from the Code of Practice but the effect of the different treatment is not material. Work in progress is subject to an interim valuation at the year-end and recorded in the balance sheet at cost plus any profit reasonably attributable to the works.

Long-term contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the surplus or deficit on the provision of services with the consideration allocated to the performance obligations satisfied based on the goods or services transferred to the service recipient during the financial year.

n) Investment properties

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

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, being the price that would be received to sell such an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. As a non-financial asset, investment properties are measured at highest and best use. Properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually according to market conditions at year-end. Gains and losses on revaluation are posted to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

Rentals received in relation to investment properties are credited to the financing and investment income line and result in a gain for the general fund balance. However, revaluation and disposal gains and losses are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the general fund balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the general fund balance in the movement in reserves statement and posted to the capital adjustment

account and (for any sale proceeds greater than £10,000) the capital receipts reserve.

o) 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.

Arrangements that do not have the legal status of a lease but convey a right to use an asset in return for payment are accounted for under this policy where fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent upon the use of specific assets.

The Council as lessee

Finance leases

Property, plant and equipment held under finance leases is recognised on the balance sheet at the commencement of the lease at its fair value measured at the lease's inception (or the present value of the minimum lease payments, if lower). The asset recognised is matched by a liability for the obligation to pay the lessor. Initial direct costs of the Council are added to the carrying amount of the asset. Premiums paid on entry into a lease are applied to writing down the lease liability. Contingent rents are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

Lease payments are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property, plant or equipment - 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 and expenditure statement).

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

Operating Leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement as an expense of the services benefitting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment. 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).

The Council as lessor

Finance leases

Where the Council grants a finance lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the relevant asset is written out of the balance sheet as a disposal. At the commencement of the lease, the carrying amount of the asset in the balance sheet (whether property, plant and equipment or assets held for sale) is written off to the other operating expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. A gain, representing the Council's net investment in the lease, is credited to the same line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal), matched by a lease (long term debtor) asset in the Balance Sheet.

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property - applied to write down the lease debtor (together with any premiums received); and
- finance income (credited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement).

The gain credited to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement on disposal is not permitted by statute to increase the general fund balance and is required to be treated as a capital receipt. Where a premium has been received, this is posted out of the general fund balance to the capital receipts reserve in the movement in reserves statement. Where the amount due in relation to the lease asset is to be settled by the payment of rentals in future financial years, this is posted out of the general fund balance to the deferred capital receipts reserve in the movement in reserves statement. When the future rentals are received, the element for the capital receipt for the disposal of the asset is used to write down the lease debtor. At this point, the deferred capital receipts are transferred to the capital receipts reserve.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are therefore appropriated to the capital adjustment account from the general fund balance in the movement in reserves statement.

Operating Leases

Where the Council grants an operating lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the asset is retained in the balance sheet. Rental income is credited to the other operating expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement. Credits are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a premium paid at the commencement of the lease). Initial direct costs incurred in negotiating and arranging the lease are added to the carrying amount of the relevant asset and charged as an expense over the lease term on the same basis as rental income.

p) Overheads and support services

The costs of overheads and support services are charged to service segments in accordance with the Council's arrangements for accountability and financial performance.

q) Property, plant and equipment

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

Capital expenditure under £5,000 is classified as de-minimis and is charged to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement. The de-minimis expenditure is financed using existing capital resources or by borrowing, this is posted out of the general fund balance to the capital adjustment account in the movement in reserves statement so there is no impact on the levels of council tax.

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of property, plant and equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Council and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but that does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

- the purchase price
- any costs attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management
- the initial estimate of the costs of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located.

The Council does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred whilst assets are under construction.

The cost of assets acquired other than by purchase is deemed to be its fair value, unless the acquisition does not have commercial substance (i.e. it will not lead to a variation in the cash flows of the Council). In the latter case, where an asset is acquired via an exchange, the cost of the acquisition is the carrying amount of the asset given up by the Council.

Donated assets are measured initially at fair value. The difference between fair value and any consideration paid is credited to the taxation and non-specific grant income line of the comprehensive income and expenditure statement, unless the donation has been made conditionally. Until conditions are satisfied, the gain is held in the donated assets account. Where gains are credited to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement, they are reversed out of the general fund balance to the capital adjustment account in the movement in reserves statement.

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

- infrastructure, community assets and assets under construction - depreciated historical cost;
- dwellings - current value, determined using the basis of existing use value for social housing (EUV - SH);
- school buildings - current value, but because of their specialised nature, are measured at depreciated replacement cost which is used as an estimate of current value;
- surplus assets - the current value measurement basis is fair value, estimated at highest and best use from a market participant's perspective.
- all other assets - current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value - EUV).

For infrastructure assets, the Authority has determined the carrying value of any components replaced during the accounting period to be nil, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Amendment) Regulations 2022. Further detail

regarding the accounting arrangements for infrastructure assets is provided at Note 16 Property, Plant and Equipment.

Where there is no market-based evidence of current value because of the specialised nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost (DRC) is used as an estimate of current value.

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

Assets included in the balance sheet at current value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their current value at the year-end, but as a minimum 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 surplus or deficit on the provision of services in the comprehensive income and 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 by:

- where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains);
- where there is no balance in the revaluation reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement.

The revaluation reserve contains revaluation gains recognised since 1 April 2007 only, the date of its formal implementation. Gains arising before that date have been consolidated into the capital adjustment account.

Impairment

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 line(s) in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement.

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

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all property, plant and equipment 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) and assets that are not yet available for use (i.e. assets under construction).

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

- dwellings and other buildings - straight-line allocation over the useful life of the property as estimated by the valuer;
- vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment - a percentage of the value of each class of assets in the balance sheet, as advised by a suitably qualified officer;
- infrastructure - straight-line allocation over 30 years.

Where an item of property, plant and equipment has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately. Assets valued higher than £1m that are made up from different components and whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item are depreciated on a component by component basis. The components used are host (structure), externals, services and roof. Once separated, depreciation is charged across each components useful life as appropriate.

Revaluations 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 general fund.

Disposals and non-current assets held for sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an asset held for sale. The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and fair value less costs to sell. Where there is a subsequent decrease to fair value less costs to sell, the loss is posted to the other operating expenditure line in the

comprehensive income & expenditure statement. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any previously recognised losses in the surplus or deficit on the provision of services. Depreciation is not charged on assets held for sale.

If assets no longer meet the criteria to be classified as assets held for sale, they are reclassified back to non-current assets and valued at the lower of their carrying amount before they were classified as held for sale; adjusted for depreciation, amortisation or revaluations that would have been recognised had they not been classified as held for sale, and their recoverable amount at the date of the decision not to sell.

Assets that are to be abandoned or scrapped are not reclassified as assets held for sale.

When an asset is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the balance sheet (whether property, plant and equipment or assets held for sale) is written off to the other operating expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited to the same line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the revaluation reserve are transferred to the capital adjustment account.

Amounts received for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. A proportion of capital receipts relating to housing disposals is payable to the Government. The balance of receipts remains within the capital receipts reserve, and can then only be used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the Council's underlying need to borrow (the capital financing requirement). Receipts are appropriated to the reserve from the general fund balance in the movement in reserves statement.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are appropriated to the capital adjustment account from the general fund balance in the movement in reserves statement.

r) Private finance initiative (PFI) and similar contracts

PFI and similar contracts are agreements to receive services, where the responsibility for making available the property, plant and equipment needed to provide the services passes to the PFI contractor. As the Council is deemed to control the services that are provided under its PFI schemes, and as ownership of the property, plant and equipment will pass to the Council at the end of the contract for no additional charge, the Council carries the assets used under the contract on its balance sheet as part of property, plant and equipment (unless the PFI scheme is a school that has subsequently transferred to Academy status and then it will be removed from the Council's balance sheet).

The original recognition of these assets at fair value (based on the cost to purchase the property, plant and equipment) was balanced by the recognition of a liability for amounts due to the scheme operator to pay for the capital investment.

Non-current assets recognised on the balance sheet are revalued and depreciated in the same way as property, plant and equipment owned by the Council.

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

- fair value of the services received during the year - debited to the relevant service in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement,
- finance cost - an interest charge of 4.77% on the outstanding balance sheet liability, debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement,
- payment towards liability - applied to write down the balance sheet liability towards the PFI operator (the profile of write-downs is calculated using the same principles as for a finance lease).

s) 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 or service potential, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. For instance, the Council may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or the payment of compensation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement when the Council has an obligation, and are measured at the best estimate at the balance sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the balance sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year - where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

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

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

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the balance sheet but disclosed in note 27 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 although at present the Council doesn't have any contingent assets.

t) Reserves

The Council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by transferring amounts out of the general fund balance. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in that year to score against the surplus or deficit on provision of services in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement. The reserve is then transferred back into the general fund balance so that there is no net charge against council tax for the expenditure.

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

u) 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 and expenditure statement in the year. Where the Council has determined to meet the cost of this expenditure from existing capital resources or by borrowing, a transfer in the movement in reserves statement from the general fund balance to the capital adjustment account then reverses out the amounts charged so that there is no impact on the level of council tax.

v) Value Added Tax (VAT)

VAT payable is included as an expense only to the extent that it is not recoverable from Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC). VAT receivable is excluded from income.

If the Council was unable to recover exempt input tax it would be included as an expense in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement.

w) Schools

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom confirms that the balance of control for local authority maintained schools (i.e. those categories of school identified in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended) lies with the local authority.

The Code also stipulates that those schools' assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows are recognised in the local authority financial statements. Therefore schools' transactions, cash flows and balances are recognised in each of the financial statements of the Council as if they were the transactions, cash flows and balances of the Council.

x) 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 shareholdings 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 the asset in highest or best use.

The Council uses valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data is available, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs.

Inputs to the valuation techniques in respect of assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the Council's financial statements are categorised within the fair value hierarchy, as follows:

- Level 1 - quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets 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.

y) Exceptional Items

When items of income and expense are material, their nature and amount is disclosed separately, either on the face of the comprehensive income and expenditure statement or in the notes to the financial statements, depending on how significant the items are to an understanding of the Council's financial performance.