



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

An Extraordinary Meeting of the **AUDIT COMMITTEE** will be held in David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **MONDAY 13 MARCH 2023 AT 7.00 PM**

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive

Published on 3 March 2023

Note: Non-Committee Members and members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting or participate in the meeting virtually, in line with the Council's Constitution. If you wish to participate either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams please contact Democratic Services. The meeting can also be watched live using the following link: <https://youtube.com/live/YV1wta-e0Mo?feature=sharev>

Please note that other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting. The use of these images or recordings is not under the Council's control.

Our Vision
<i>A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business</i>
Enriching Lives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion excellent education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background. • Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to enable healthy choices for everyone. • Engage and empower our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity for the Borough which people feel part of. • Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.
Providing Safe and Strong Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people. • Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to reduce the need for long term care. • Nurture our communities: enabling them to thrive and families to flourish. • Ensure our Borough and communities remain safe for all.
Enjoying a Clean and Green Borough
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play as full a role as possible to achieve a carbon neutral Borough, sustainable for the future. • Protect our Borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas for people to enjoy. • Reduce our waste, promote re-use, increase recycling and improve biodiversity. • Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.
Delivering the Right Homes in the Right Places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future. • Ensure the right infrastructure is in place, early, to support and enable our Borough to grow. • Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment. • Help with your housing needs and support people, where it is needed most, to live independently in their own homes.
Keeping the Borough Moving
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways. • Tackle traffic congestion and minimise delays and disruptions. • Enable safe and sustainable travel around the Borough with good transport infrastructure. • Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners in offering affordable, accessible public transport with good transport links.
Changing the Way We Work for You
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be relentlessly customer focussed. • Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around our customers. • Communicate better with customers, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough. • Drive innovative, digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.
Be the Best We Can Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an organisation that values and invests in all our colleagues and is seen as an employer of choice. • Embed a culture that supports ambition, promotes empowerment and develops new ways of working. • Use our governance and scrutiny structures to support a learning and continuous improvement approach to the way we do business. • Be a commercial council that is innovative, whilst being inclusive, in its approach with a clear focus on being financially resilient. • Maximise opportunities to secure funding and investment for the Borough. • Establish a renewed vision for the Borough with clear aspirations.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

Councillors

Rachel Burgess (Chair)
Peter Harper
Mike Smith

Maria Gee (Vice-Chair)
John Kaiser

David Davies
Tahir Maher

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
50.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence	
51.		DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest	
52.		PUBLIC QUESTION TIME To answer any public questions A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice. The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of this committee. Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Committee or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions	
53.		MEMBER QUESTION TIME To answer any member questions	
54.	None Specific	WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL AUDIT RESULTS REPORT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021 To consider the Wokingham Borough Council Audit results report Year ended 31 March 2021.	5 - 70
55.	None Specific	STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2020-2021 To consider the Statement of Accounts 2020-21.	71 - 224
56.	None Specific	FORMAL COMPLAINTS REPORT – 9 MONTH SUMMARY APRIL – DECEMBER 2022 To receive the Formal Complaints Report – 9 month summary April – December 2022	225 - 240
57.	None Specific	2022/23 INTERNAL AUDIT AND INVESTIGATION Q3 PROGRESS REPORT	241 - 262

To consider the 2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Q3 Progress Report.

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|------------|---------------|--|------------------|
| 58. | None Specific | 2023/24 DRAFT INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN, STRATEGY AND INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER
To consider the 2023/24 Draft Internal Audit Plan, Strategy and Internal Audit Charter. | 263 - 294 |
| 59. | None Specific | CIPFA MANAGEMENT CODE
To consider a report regarding the CIPFA Management Code. | 295 - 326 |
| 60. | None Specific | AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23
To consider the Audit Committee Annual Report 2022-23. | 327 - 338 |

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading

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**Wokingham Borough
Council**

Audit results report

Year ended 31 March 2021

March 2023

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EY

Building a better
working world

Agenda Item 54.

1 March 2023



Wokingham Borough Council
Audit Committee
Civic Offices,
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1BN

Dear Audit Committee Members

We are pleased to attach our audit results report, updating the status of our audit for the forthcoming meeting of the Audit Committee. We presented an earlier draft of this report to the Committee in March 2022, at which point we had two significant outstanding issues: accounting for infrastructure assets and a delay in receiving assurances from the auditor of Berkshire Pension Fund. These were both outside the Council's control.

Our work is now complete, other than the ongoing delay in receiving the final assurance letter from the auditor of Berkshire Pension Fund (see page 23) and the final checks required once we have completed our work on the pension liability following receipt of the letter. We will update the Audit Committee at its meeting scheduled for 13 March 2023 on further progress to that date and explain the remaining steps to the issue of our final opinion.

The audit is designed to express an opinion on the 2020/21 financial statements and address current statutory and regulatory requirements. This report contains our findings related to the areas of audit emphasis, our views on Wokingham 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 13 March 2023.

Yours faithfully

Helen Thompson, Partner

For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

Encl

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Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) issued the "Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies". It is available from the PSAA website (<https://www.psa.co.uk/audit-quality/statement-of-responsibilities/>). The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The "Terms of Appointment and further guidance (updated April 2018)" issued by the PSAA sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and in legislation, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This report is made solely to the Audit Committee and management of Wokingham 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 Wokingham 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 Wokingham 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.



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01 Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Scope update

In our audit planning report and updated planning report presented to the 15 September 2021 and 30 November 2021 Audit Committee meetings respectively, 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 exceptions:

Changes in materiality:

- ▶ We updated our planning materiality assessment using the updated draft financial statements and also reconsidered our risk assessment. Due to the net impact of the misstatements identified in the accounting for Covid-19 grant income as detailed in section 2, we were required to revisit our materiality considerations and calculation for both the Council's single entity statements and for the Group. Based on our 2% materiality measure of adjusted gross expenditure on provision of services, we updated our overall materiality assessment for the Council to £7.68m (£8.15m in the Audit Planning Report). This results in updated performance materiality, at 75% of overall materiality, of £5.76m (£6.13m in the Audit Planning Report), and an updated threshold for reporting misstatements of £384k (£408k in the Audit Planning Report). Details of the impact on the both the Council and Group's materiality are set out in the table below.

	Group Materiality Original-Year End	Group Materiality Revised (after C-19 grant adjustment)	Council Materiality Original -Year End	Council Materiality Revise(after C-19 grant adjustment)
Planning Materiality	£9.09m	£8.60m	£8.15m	£7.68m
Performance Materiality	£6.81m	£6.45m	£6.13m	£5.76m
Reporting Threshold	£454k	£430k	£408k	£384k

Additional audit procedures as a result of Covid-19

Other changes in the entity and regulatory environment as a result of Covid-19 that have not resulted in an additional risk, but result in the following impacts on our audit strategy for all local authorities were as follows:

- **Information Produced by the Entity (IPE):** We identified an increased risk around the completeness, accuracy, and appropriateness of information produced by the entity due to the inability of the audit team to verify original documents or re-run reports on-site from the Council's systems. We undertook the following to address this risk:
 - Used the screen sharing function of Microsoft Teams to evidence re-running of reports used to generate the IPE we audited; and
 - Agreed IPE to scanned documents or other system screenshots.
- ▶ Changes in risk:

In our draft audit results report presented to the Audit Committee in March 2022, we reported a national issue associated with the accounting treatment for infrastructure assets. We provided updates at subsequent Audit Committees, including our audit progress update in September 2022. We have included this as a significant risk within this report (see page 20).



Executive Summary

Status of the audit

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

Detailed audit procedures:

- ▶ Final completion of our work on the net pension liability valuation as indicated on page 2. Should this extend beyond the end of March 2023, we will also need to work with the Council to update our work on going concern disclosures

Standard conclusion procedures:

- ▶ Final check of the updated financial statements and adjustments after completion of all outstanding procedures.
- ▶ Receipt of the signed letter of representation and financial statements.
- ▶ Completion of our subsequent procedures.

Executive Summary

Auditor responsibilities under the new Code of Audit Practice 2020

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

The specified reporting criteria are:

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

Status of the audit - value for money

In the updated audit planning report presented to the Audit Committee on 30 November 2021, we reported that we had completed our value for money (VFM) risk assessment and 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 revisited our assessment as part of our completion of the audit of the financial statements and we remain satisfied that we have not identified a risk of significant weakness. As part of this assessment, we have considered the conclusions from our work undertaken following receipt of a whistle-blower allegation (see Section 06). We have provisionally concluded (subject to internal consultation) there is no evidence to substantiate the allegation made, and whilst the Council could improve its governance arrangements to oversee working with charities, there is no evidence of a significant weakness in the proper arrangements. As a result, we have completed our planned VFM procedures and have no matters to report by exception in the auditor's report (see Section 03).

We plan to issue the VFM commentary as part of issuing the Auditor's Annual Report within three months of issuing the auditor's report.

Executive Summary

Audit differences

Unadjusted misstatements:


- ▶ There are three unadjusted differences at 1 March 2023. Two of these relate to judgemental differences within the valuation of land and buildings in Property, Plant and Equipment and Investment Property. The third difference is a projected difference relating to the classification of capital receipts in advance.

Adjusted misstatements

- ▶ There are six misstatements greater than £5,756k that have been corrected by management; one of which also impacted the prior year period and has been restated in the revised financial statements.
- ▶ Throughout the audit eight further misstatements were identified which were greater than our SAD nominal amount but below our performance materiality threshold of £5,756k which have been corrected by management.

We have set out these in more detail in Section 4 - Audit Differences.

Further adjustments have been made to the draft financial statements by the Council to account for infrastructure assets in accordance with the new statutory instrument issued in this area.

 A small number of other amendments were made to disclosures appearing in the financial statements as a result of our work.

Other reporting issues

We have reviewed the information presented in the Annual Governance Statement for consistency with our knowledge of the Council.

We have performed the procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts submission. We had no issues to report.

We have no other matters to report as at 1 March 2023.

Executive Summary

Areas of audit focus

In our audit planning report, and subsequent update, we identified a number of key areas of focus for our audit of the financial report of the 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.

Fraud/Significant Risk	Findings & Conclusions
<p>Misstatements due to fraud or error (management override)</p> <p>Fraud risk</p> <p>Applicable to Council and Group</p> <p>(All entities)</p>	<p>We have not identified any material weaknesses in controls or evidence of material management override, instances of inappropriate judgements being applied; or any other transactions during our audit which appear unusual or outside the Council's normal course of business.</p>
<p>Risk of fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition, through inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure</p> <p>Fraud risk</p> <p>Applicable to Council and Group</p> <p>(Berry Brook Homes Ltd and Loddon Homes Ltd)</p>	<p>Our work in this area is complete. From our sample testing of additions to PPE, we have:</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 review of judgements taken by management found them to be reasonable. Further details are set out in Section 2 of this report.</p>
<p>Valuation of Land & Buildings in Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE) and Investment Properties (IP)</p> <p>Significant risk</p> <p>Applicable to Council and Group</p> <p>(Berry Brook Homes Ltd and Loddon Homes Ltd)</p>	<p>From our work performed, we have identified unadjusted judgemental differences in the value of two properties included in PPE and one property in IP.</p> <p>Further details are set out in Sections 2 and 4 of this report.</p>
<p>Accounting for infrastructure assets</p> <p>Significant risk</p> <p>Applicable to Council</p>	<p>Changes have been made to the Local Authority Accounting Code by CIPFA and DLUHC has issued a Statutory Instrument to temporarily change accounting rules in this area. The Council has chosen to adopt the statutory override and has changed its approach and disclosure in the financial statements to comply with the revised requirements. A Local Authority Accounting Panel (LAAP) bulletin has also been issued by CIPFA which covers how infrastructure assets should be depreciated. Management has provided revised disclosures and supporting evidence, which we have audited. We are satisfied the Council has applied the Code amendment appropriately. We will provide an update of progress in this area to the 1 March 2023 meeting of the Committee.</p>

Executive Summary

Areas of audit focus

In our audit planning report, and subsequent update, we identified a number of key areas of focus for our audit of the financial report of the 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 & Conclusions
Accounting for Covid-19 related government grants (Inherent risk) Applicable to Council	<p>From our work performed we have identified a number of grants that were incorrectly accounted as either the Council acting as principal instead of agent or vice versa. Further details are set out in Sections 2 and 4 of this report.</p>
Pension Liability and Asset Valuation (Inherent risk) Applicable to Council and Group <small>(Optalis)</small>	<p>Our work in this area has not changed significantly from the position reported in March 2022. Further details are set out in Section 2 of this report.</p> <p>We have liaised with the auditors of the Berkshire Pension Fund and have identified their assurance letter contained a caveat stating that their work was ongoing at the time of its issuing and that there remained a risk of material matters arising. We have continued to discuss this regularly with the auditor throughout 2022. At our most recent meeting (February 2023), the auditor has indicated the letter will be updated in March 2023, and confirmed the delay relates to the completion of the administering authority audit, not the audit of the Pension Fund.</p> <p>Further details are set out in Section 2 of this report.</p>
Going Concern (Area of audit focus) Applicable to Council and Group <small>(All entities)</small>	<p>We have reviewed management's going concern assessment and confirm their conclusion that the Council remains a going concern is based on reasonable and supportable assumptions.</p> <p>We have also reviewed management's going concern disclosure and confirmed it is sufficiently detailed, transparent and accurately reflects management's underlying going concern assessment.</p>
Accounting for Public Finance Initiative (PFI) Applicable to Council	<p>We reviewed the PFI entries and disclosures in the Council's accounts and concluded they are appropriately reported.</p>
Cash and cash equivalents Applicable to Council	<p>We have completed our work and concluded that limited progress had been made to ensure that the Council's imprest bank accounts within its portfolio were reconciled on a regular basis. Further details are set out in Section 2 of this report.</p>
Group Accounting Applicable to Council and Group	<p>Group consolidation was reviewed by the audit team and no material issues were identified in the audit field work.</p>



Executive Summary

Areas of audit focus (cont.)

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.

Control observations

We have adopted a fully substantive approach, and so have not tested the operation of controls. We have, however, updated our understanding of the key processes and the controls which are in place to detect or prevent error. Through this work, we have not identified any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of an internal control that might result in a material misstatement in your financial statements and which is unknown to you.

However, we have reported on a number of control observations in Section 6 of this report.

Independence

Please refer to Section 7 for our update on Independence.



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02 Areas of Audit Focus

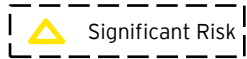


Areas of Audit Focus

We have set out the significant risks (including fraud risks denoted by*) identified for the current year audit along with the audit procedures performed and conclusions formed for each risk.

Misstatements due to fraud or error*

Applicable to Council and Group



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What is the risk?

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

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

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

What judgements are we focused on?

Our assessment of risk led us to create a series of criteria for the testing of journals, focusing specifically on areas that could be open to management manipulation. We have also focused specifically on capitalisation of assets as a potential area of manipulation, which is recorded as a separately identified significant risk - Inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure.

Our work on estimates focussed on the valuation of land & buildings in Property Plant and Equipment (PPE) and Investment Property (IP) as significant risk and IAS19 pension estimates as areas of higher inherent risk and are reported further in this report.

What did we do?

We have performed the procedures described in our original audit plan. Please see the following page for full details.

What are our conclusions?

Our audit work has not identified any material issues, inappropriate judgements or unusual transactions which indicated that there had been any misreporting of the Council's financial position, or that management had overridden control.

We have completed our journals testing. We are satisfied that journal entries had been posted properly and for genuine business reasons.

We have reviewed material estimates, such as the valuation of land & buildings in PPE and IP and the IAS19 pension estimate. Our work in these areas has resulted in amendment to the financial statements, but no indication of fraud was identified.

There were no unusual transactions identified.



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk



Further details on procedures/work performed

We identified the key fraud risks at the planning stage of the audit and considered the effectiveness of management's controls that are designed to address the risk of fraud. We updated our understanding of the risks of fraud and the controls put in place to address them and made enquiries of Internal Audit, management and those charged with governance to support our understanding.

We have:

- ▶ Determined an appropriate strategy to address those identified risks of fraud which have been reflected in the significant risks in this document.
- ▶ 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.

We have performed mandatory procedures regardless of specifically identified fraud risks, including:

- 18 Testing the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements.
 - ▶ Undertaking a detailed review of accounting estimates for evidence of bias (such as the valuation of land, buildings and investment property) 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.
 - ▶ Evaluating the business rationale for significant unusual transactions.

We utilised our data analytics capabilities to assist with our work.

Having re-evaluated this risk we have considered whether we need to perform other audit procedures not referred to above. We continued to conclude that only those procedures included under 'Inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure' were required - See the next page for further details.

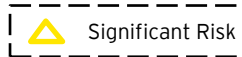


Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Risk of misstatements due to fraud or error – specifically in inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure*

Applicable to Council and Group



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What is the risk?

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

From our risk assessment, we have assessed that the risk manifests itself solely through the inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure to improve the financial position of the general fund.

Capitalised revenue expenditure can be funded through borrowing with only minimal MRP charges recorded in the general fund, deferring the expenditure for 30+ years when the borrowing is repaid.

What judgements are we focused on?

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?

Our approach focussed on:

- ▶ Testing a sample of PPE and IP additions to ensure that the expenditure incurred and capitalised is clearly capital in nature and that the transaction was supported by sufficient evidence to verify its value and the period it related to.
- ▶ Identifying and testing significant journals transferring expenditure from revenue to capital codes on the general ledger at the end of the year. This provided assurance that the transactions were adequate, supported by evidence and valid.
- ▶ Testing 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 ensured these items were supported by sufficient evidence to verify the value and the period it related to.



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

What are our conclusions?

Based on the work performed:

- ▶ Our sample testing of additions to property, plant and equipment found that they had been correctly classified as capital and included at the correct value.
- ▶ Our sample testing of additions to property, plant and equipment did not identify any revenue items that were incorrectly classified.
- ▶ Our data analytical procedures did not identify any journal entries that incorrectly moved expenditure into capital codes

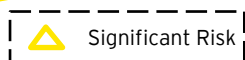


Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Valuation of Land & Buildings in Property Plant and Equipment (PPE) and Investment Property (IP)

Applicable to Council and Group



What is the risk?

The value of land & buildings in PPE and in IP represent significant balances in the Council's accounts and are subject to valuation changes and impairment reviews. Management is required to make a high degree of material judgemental inputs and apply estimation techniques to calculate the year-end balances recorded in the balance sheet.

Given the nature of Covid-19 and the fact that 2020/21 was predominantly influenced by local and national lockdowns, we anticipate that the valuer will not be able to conduct site visits due to the restrictions that are in place and that the valuer will have to perform a remote approach to valuing the properties which will further increase the risk around these valuations.

Several misstatements were furthermore identified in property valuations during the prior year's audit that required subsequent material adjustments to PPE and IP balances.

What judgements are we focused on?

We focused on those assumptions that directly impact the valuation of these assets - such as the use of information based on areas of the economy under stress (such as retail), location factors, useful lives and estimation of year on year valuation movements.

What did we do?

Our approach focused on:

- ▶ Considering the work performed by the Council's internal valuer and confirmed that the scope of the work performed is adequate, they had the appropriate professional capabilities to complete the work and the results of their work is in line with our expectations.
- ▶ Consider the Council's asset base by type of asset and valuation methodology, as impacts are likely to be more significant for assets valued on the basis of data from market transactions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- ▶ Challenging the assumptions used by the Council's valuer by reference to external evidence and our valuation specialists. This included considering significant or unusual movements in valuation and investments in areas of the economy under stress, such as retail.
- ▶ Sample testing key asset information used by the valuer in performing their valuation (e.g. building areas to support valuations based on price per square metre).
- ▶ Confirming that the valuation was undertaken to ensure all assets required to be valued in line with the Council's five year rolling programme had been completed, and that all investment property had been revalued in year as required by the Code.
- ▶ Assessing those assets not subject to valuation in 2020/21 to confirm that the remaining asset base is not materially misstated;
- ▶ Considering changes to the useful economic lives as a result of the most recent valuations and
- ▶ Tested the accounting entries posted via journal to ensure they have been correctly processed in the financial statements.



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk



What are our findings?

From our work performed, we have:

- ▶ Considered the work performed by the Authority's internal valuer and confirmed that the scope of the work performed is adequate, they had the appropriate professional capabilities to complete the work and the results of their work is largely in line with our expectations.
- ▶ Challenged the assumptions used by the Authority's valuer by reference to external evidence and our valuation specialists. This included considering significant or unusual movements in valuation and investments in areas of the economy under stress, such as retail.
- ▶ Sample tested key asset information used by the valuer in performing their valuation (e.g. building areas to support valuations based on price per square metre).
- ▶ Confirmed that the valuation was undertaken to ensure all assets required to be valued in line with the Authority's five year rolling programme had been completed, and that all investment property had been revalued in year as required by the Code.
- ▶ Assessed those assets not subject to valuation in 2020/21 to confirm that the remaining asset base is not materially misstated.

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From our work, we are satisfied with the valuation of Land and Buildings in PPE and IP, with the exception of:

1. PPE:
 - i. Valuation indexation incorrectly applied to properties already disposed of:

The Shinfield Infant School, Westende Junior School and Keep Hatch Primary School were incorrectly included as part of the valuation indexation applied to properties after they had been disposed of. This resulted in an overstatement of £6,332k in PPE which has been corrected by management.
 - ii. Classification of residential properties in the Elms Field Development:

Through our testing of the property valuations within the Elms Field Development, we identified a number of residential properties that had been classified as operational land and buildings. These properties were constructed with the aim of being sold at market value and should therefore fall under the scope of IAS2, *Inventory*, rather than IAS16, *Property, Plant and Equipment*. These construction costs were consequently capitalised as Assets Under Construction in the current and prior years and subsequently require adjustments in both the current and prior periods to reclassify these as inventories.
 - iii. Missed posting for the revaluation gain of Arborfield Gym Land :

Arborfield Gym land and building were revalued in year by the Council's internal valuer. However it was noted that the valuation of the land was not updated in the fixed asset register, this resulted in an understatement of property, plant and equipment by £820k. Management have adjusted the fixed asset register and accounts to reflect our findings.



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk



What are our findings?

iv. Council Dwelling Disclosure:

- Through testing of the Council Dwelling disclosure in Note 24 it was identified that the disclosure of both the cost and the accumulated depreciation was over stated in both the current year and the prior year. Under the CIPFA Code all accumulated depreciation should be written out on revaluation. The adjustment to the accounts results in a prior period adjustment and an adjustment to the current year draft accounts to reset the accumulated depreciation balance. There is no impact on the net book value of the Council Dwellings.

v. Use of EY Real Estate:

We asked our specialist to review 10 properties, selected from those assets revalued in 2020/21 within PPE. We challenged the valuation for 2 properties where the value fell outside a reasonable range of valuations established by EYRE for each asset:

- EYRE challenged several assumptions underpinning the Carnival Pool Multi Storey Car Park property valuation of £6.88m and disagreed with the methodology used in determining the property valuation. This valuation has not been adjusted as management is of the opinion that their valuation best reflects the value of this property at year end and their local knowledge. This valuation consequently remains above our range as determined by EYRE. As this is a difference of opinion between two professional experts, we have reported an unadjusted judgemental difference of £1.85m.
- EYRE challenged several assumptions underpinning the Civic Centre property valuation of £10.57m and disagreed with the length of void periods used in determining the property valuation. This valuation has not been adjusted as management is of the opinion that their valuation best reflects the value of this property at year end and their local knowledge. This valuation consequently remains above our range as determined by EYRE. As this is a difference of opinion between two professional experts, we have reported an unadjusted judgemental difference of £1.51m

vi. Landmark Square

Through our testing of disposals we identified that the Council had recognised capital receipts in respect of land sold during the year, but we noted that no asset value had been derecognised on disposal of the land. We enquired with management and discussed the accounting treatment for these transactions. It was noted that the land was previously held in community assets at nil value before the Council entered into an agreement with a developer to develop the land. We challenged that Council's treatment of the disposals and requested a paper outlining the Council's accounting treatment. On review of this paper, we agreed with management's judgement that the asset should be treated as inventory until such time as the plots are sold and with management's judgement on how to account for the sale of each plot. Given that the asset is held at nil value, the transfer to inventory from community assets has not impacted on the face of the financial statements.



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk



What are our findings?

2. IP:

i. Use of EY Real Estate:

We asked our specialist to review 2 assets. We challenged the valuation for 1 asset where the value fell outside a reasonable range established by EYRE for each asset:

- EYRE challenged several assumptions underpinning the Wickes Retail Unit property valuation of £12.00m and disagreed with the yield applied in determining the property valuation. This valuation has not been adjusted as management is of the opinion that their valuation best reflects the value of this property at year end. This valuation consequently remains above our range determined by EYRE. As this is a difference of opinion between two professional experts, we have reported an unadjusted judgemental difference of £2.40m.

We assessed whether any of these differences had a wider impact on the valuation of PPE and IP, and in each case we concluded the assets had unique characteristics which allows us to conclude these judgemental differences are specific/unique to these assets.

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What are our conclusions?

We are satisfied that the valuations of land and buildings in property plant and equipment and investment property are not materially misstated.



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Accounting for infrastructure assets

Applicable to Council

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What is the risk?

Where management incur subsequent expenditure to replace part of an asset, the CIPFA Code requires management to write out the value of the old part being replaced.

Nationally, audit firms have identified an issue with applying this accounting treatment to infrastructure assets. Across the country authorities are not keeping sufficient detailed records of infrastructure spend to allow the value of the part being replaced to be written out.

As reported in our Audit Progress Report, based on our initial review of the accounting treatment adopted by the Council in this area we were unable to gain assurance that all infrastructure assets accounted for in the financial statements continue to exist. This is because the Council is unable to show that assets, or components of assets, are derecognised from accounting records when they are replaced. Subsequent to this changes have been made to the Local Authority Accounting Code by CIPFA and DLUHC has issued a Statutory Instrument to temporarily change accounting rules in this area. A Local Authority Accounting Panel (LAAP) bulletin has also been issued by CIPFA which covers how infrastructure assets should be depreciated.

We have judged this to be a significant risk.

What judgements are we focused on?

The risk is that the gross cost and gross accumulated depreciation of the Council's infrastructure assets are materially overstated, as assets or components that have been replaced are no longer recognised. This may have no impact on the net book value if the assets were fully depreciated at the point of replacement, but if not then the net book value may also be materially misstated.

Furthermore, the Council needs to be able to demonstrate that it can associate the recorded values to specific identifiable assets; that they exist at the balance sheet date and are held at an appropriate value.

What did we do?

- We have reviewed the draft financial statements to identify prima facie whether the Council is recording disposals of infrastructure assets, or components.
- We have made enquiries to understand management's current processes, including bringing forward our knowledge from previous year's audits.
- We identified whether the process is compliant with the Code.



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

What are our provisional conclusions?

We provisionally concluded that the accounting of the Council for Infrastructure Assets was not in line with the current CIPFA Local Authority Accounting Code.

- The Council records some infrastructure asset within the fixed asset register split out between types of infrastructure, i.e carriageways, footways, street furniture structure and highways lighting. The Council has confirmed that there is no write out of the old historic asset upon replacement.
- This means the Council does not have sufficient records to show that all assets accounted for actually continue to exist and that the gross cost and accumulated depreciation of infrastructure assets are not materially overstated.
- The Council concluded it was impracticable for it to make a correction.

Changes have been made to the Local Authority Accounting Code by CIPFA and DLUHC has issued a Statutory Instrument to temporarily change accounting rules in this area. The Statutory Instrument and Code update temporarily resolve the derecognition and existence issues identified above, and the Council has chosen to adopt the statutory override, and amended the disclosures in its financial statements to comply with the revised requirements. We are satisfied the changes made, following further minor amendments to disclosure as a result of our work, are in line with the revised Code. A LAAP bulletin has also been issued by CIPFA which covers how infrastructure assets should be depreciated. Management produced an assessment of the approach taken by the Council to depreciating infrastructure assets against this guidance. We are satisfied that the approach taken by management is reasonable.

The Statutory Instrument and Accounting Code are only expected to provide a temporary solution to this issue, with the Code update only currently extending to 31 March 2025. We therefore recommend the Council should develop more granular accounting records and/or further supportable estimation techniques to allow for infrastructure assets and components to be derecognised when they are replaced, and to demonstrate the continued existence of assets accounted for.

Audit risks

Other areas of audit focus

What is the area of focus?	What did we do?	What are our conclusions?
<p>Accounting for Covid-19 related government grants</p> <p>Applicable to Council</p> <p>The Council has received a significant level of government funding in relation to Covid-19. Whilst there is no change in the CIPFA Code or accounting standard (IFRS 15) in respect of accounting for grant funding, the emergency nature of some of the grants received and in some cases the lack of clarity on any associated restrictions and conditions, means that the Council will need to apply a greater degree of assessment and judgement to determine the appropriate accounting treatment in the 2020/21 statements.</p>	<p>We considered the Council's judgement on material grants received in relation to whether it is acting as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Agent, where it has determined that it is acting as an intermediary; or▶ Principal, where the Council has determined that it is acting on its own behalf. <p>For grants received where the Council acted as principal, we have further considered whether any associated restrictions and conditions have been met and that grants have been claimed and recognised in accordance with the scheme rules.</p>	<p>From our work performed we identified a number of grants that were incorrectly accounted as either the Council acting as principal instead of agent or vice versa.</p> <p>The net impact of this adjustment reduced gross revenue expenditure and income by £23,799k which consequently led to the revision of our materiality calculation as detailed in section 1 of this report. These adjustments however had no impact on the General Fund balance itself. Further details are set out in sections 4 of this report.</p> <p>Following these adjustments, we are satisfied that the accounting treatment adopted for Covid-19 related government grants was correct and accorded with the Council's assessment of whether it was acting as agent or principal, the underlying conditions of the grant and whether those conditions had been met.</p>

Audit risks

Other areas of audit focus (continued)

What is the area of focus?

Net Pension Liability Valuation

Applicable to Council and Group (Optalis)

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 Berkshire Pension Fund, administered by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM).

The Council's pension fund liability is a material estimated balance and the Code requires that this liability be disclosed on the Council's balance sheet. At 31 March 2021 this totalled £358.0m.

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 experts and the assumptions underlying fair value estimates.

What did we do?

We have:

- ▶ Liaised with the auditors of the Berkshire Pension Fund, to obtain assurances over the information supplied to the actuary in relation to Wokingham Borough Council;
- ▶ Assessed the work of the Pension Fund actuary 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; and
- ▶ Reviewed and test the accounting entries and disclosures made within the Council's financial statements in relation to IAS19.
- ▶ Engaged our EY Pensions team to create a point estimate range based on their experience and understanding of defined benefit pension schemes.

We also considered outturn information available at the time we undertook our work after production of the Council's draft financial statements, for example the year-end actual valuation of pension fund assets. We used this to inform our assessment of the accuracy of estimated information included in the financial statements and whether any adjustments were required.

Other areas of audit focus (continued)

What are our conclusions?

As at 1 March 2023 our work in this area is well progressed with one remaining issue with the audit team to conclude.

- ▶ We liaised with the auditors of the Berkshire Pension Fund and reviewed the audit assurances received from them in mid January 2022. From these assurances we identified the following:
 - ▶ Their assurance letter contained a caveat stating that their work was ongoing at the time of issue and there remained a risk of material matters arising. We have continued to discuss this regularly with the auditor throughout 2022. At our most recent meeting (February 2023), the auditor has indicated the letter will be updated in March 2023, and confirmed the delay relates to the completion of the administering authority audit, not the audit of the Pension Fund.
 - ▶ The Council requested an updated IAS19 report from the Berkshire Pension Fund actuary following the identification of a material adjustment to the Fund's Statement of Accounts. We assessed the work of the Pension Fund actuary, including the assumptions they used, by relying on the work of PWC - Consulting Actuaries commissioned by the National Audit Office for all local government sector auditors. We have also considered the relevant reviews by the EY actuarial team and have not identified any issues.
- 29 We completed our review and testing the accounting entries and disclosures made within the financial statements in relation to IAS19 with no issues arising.
- ▶ The outcome from the EY Pension team's analysis was a difference between the actuary and EY Pensions Consulting of less than 1.5% for the Council's pension fund liability and less than 1.0% for Optalis Holdings Ltd. These both fell within our acceptable range, and provided us with corroborative assurance that the input control for the Council's actuarial model was working appropriately.

We will provide an update at the Audit Committee on 13 March 2023.

Audit risks

Other areas of audit focus (continued)

What is the area of focus?	What did we do?	What are our conclusions?
<p>Going Concern</p> <p>Applicable to Council and Group</p> <p>Covid-19 has created a number of financial pressures throughout local government, increasing service demand and expenditure. The Council has incurred additional expenditure in a number of areas of its operations and has experienced some income losses. The extent of support from MHCLG has developed over time, but does not include all financial consequences of Covid-19.</p> <p>CPA's Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 sets out that organisations that can only be discontinued under statutory prescription shall prepare their accounts on a going concern basis.</p> <p>However, International Auditing Standard 570 Going Concern, as applied by Practice Note 10: Audit of financial statements of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom, still requires auditors to undertake sufficient and appropriate audit procedures to consider whether there is a material uncertainty on going concern that requires reporting by management within the financial statements, and within the auditor's report. We are obliged to report on such matters within the section of our audit report 'Conclusions relating to Going Concern'.</p> <p>To do this, the auditor must review management's assessment of the going concern basis applying IAS1 Presentation of Financial Statements.</p>	<p>We have considered the adequacy of the Council's going concern assessment and its disclosure in the accounts by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Challenging management's identification of events or conditions impacting going concern. ▶ Testing management's resulting assessment of going concern by evaluating supporting evidence (including consideration of the risk of management bias). ▶ Reviewing the cashflow forecast covering the foreseeable future, to ensure that it has sufficient liquidity to continue to operate as a going concern. ▶ Undertaking a 'stand back' review to consider all of the evidence obtained, whether corroborative or contradictory, when we draw our conclusions on going concern. ▶ Challenging the disclosure made in the accounts in respect of going concern and any material uncertainties. 	<p>Management's going concern assessment covers the period up to 31 March 2024. We have reviewed management's going concern assessments and confirm that their conclusion that the Council remains a going concern is based on reasonable and supportable assumptions.</p> <p>From our initial review of the going concern disclosure we identified areas for improvement which were addressed by management in its subsequent disclosure of the going concern. Based on our work performed the revised going concern disclosure is sufficiently detailed, transparent and accurately reflects management's underlying going concern assessment.</p>

Audit risks

Other areas of audit focus

What is the area of focus?	What did we do?	What are our conclusions?
<p>Accounting for Public Finance Initiative (PFI)</p> <p>Applicable to Council</p> <p>The Council has one waste PFI arrangement with the Waste Recycling Group RE3 Limited. This is a joint PFI contract entered into with Reading and Bracknell Forest Councils in 2006/07 for the disposal of waste.</p> <p>The total outstanding value of the contract is estimated to be £101.5m as at 31 March 2021, to be shared between the Councils based on usage.</p> <p>Actual payments are based on the contractor's performance as well as that of the individual councils in waste collection. Estimated payments to be made by Wokingham Borough Council under the contract are £37.8m over the next 15 years of the contract.</p> <p>As part of the contract, the contractor built a transfer station, materials recycling facility, civic amenity site and offices. The Council's share of the assets, valued at £6.4m as at 31 March 2021, are recognised as Property, Plant and Equipment on the Council's Balance Sheet. The liability resulting from the contract, at the end of March 2021, was reported as £5.3m.</p>	<p>PFI is a complex area and we commissioned a detailed review of the RE3 arrangements, for the three councils involved, namely Bracknell Forest, Reading and Wokingham Borough Councils as part of the 2018/19 audit.</p> <p>Work conducted by our PFI specialist in 2018/19, included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ a review of the assumptions used in the RE3 PFI accounting model; and ▶ comment on local adjustments, if any, by Wokingham Council, made to the output from the RE3 model held by the host council, Reading Borough Council. <p>For the 2020/21 audit, our work focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ reviewing of the assumptions used in the Waste PFI accounting model; ▶ commenting on local adjustments, made by the Council, following any changes to the accounting model held by the host council, Reading Borough Council; ▶ reviewing the planned entries and disclosures for the Council's 2020/21 accounts. 	<p>Based on our work performed we have no issues to report as we found that the PFI entries and disclosures for the Council's 2020/21 accounts are appropriate.</p>

Audit risks

Other areas of audit focus

What is the area of focus?

Cash and cash equivalents

Applicable to Council

There are a number of imprest bank accounts to the value of £1.5m within the Council's current portfolio included in Cash and Cash Equivalents of £131.3m as at 31 March 2021.

In the prior year these imprest bank accounts contained a number of unreconciled differences between the Council's accounting records and statements from the relevant financial institutions.

Although these differences were not material, there is a risk relating to appropriate record keeping and prevention of undetected irregularities in the absence of these reconciliations performed on a regular basis.

What did we do?

We have increased our focus on these imprest bank accounts to confirm that regular bank reconciliations are performed to ensure that there are no unexplained differences between the Council's accounting records and statements from the relevant financial institutions.

What are our conclusions?

Based on our work, limited progress has been made by the Council to ensure that regular bank reconciliations are performed and that there are no unexplained differences between the Council's accounting records and statements from the relevant institutions. Although the unexplained differences remained in 2020/21 the difference of £145k remains below our reporting thresholds.

We have repeated our control finding from last year on this in Section 7.

Audit risks

Other areas of audit focus

What is the area of focus?	What did we do?	What are our conclusions?
<p>Group Accounting</p> <p>Applicable to Council and Group</p> <p>IFRS 10, 11 and 12 set out the requirements which must be followed when assessing and disclosing group and joint arrangements. Where the Council has interests in other entities, it needs to undertake qualitative and quantitative assessments to inform its decisions as to whether group accounts are required.</p> <p>The Council is therefore required to prepare group accounts which involves consolidating the financial statements of its following subsidiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Optalis Holdings Ltd that provides Adult Social Care Services; ▶ WBC Holdings (WBCH) Ltd that provides social and affordable housing. (WBCH also includes Wokingham Housing Ltd, Loddon Homes Ltd and Berry Brook Homes Ltd as its subsidiaries) <p>These subsidiaries contain accounting entries and balances that can be considered material or significant to the group, and will be classified as either full or specific scope audits.</p> <p>During the prior year, misstatements in group consolidation entries and workings, group cash flow calculations, and the misalignment of accounting policies between the group accounts and those of the subsidiaries required numerous corrections to the consolidated group accounts.</p> <p>This is consequently an area of potential complexity and judgment requiring regular review.</p>	<p>Our approach focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Considering if these subsidiaries are individually material or significant to the group, and classify them either full or specific scope audits; ▶ Requesting that the auditors of these subsidiaries (Hazlewoods Ltd for Optalis Holdings Ltd; and Haslers for WBCH Ltd and its subsidiaries) undertake a programme of work; ▶ Seeking assurances from the auditors of these subsidiaries to ensure their 2020/21 financial statements do not contain material misstatements which may impact the consolidated group financial statements; ▶ Reviewing consolidation entries and workings to ensure that financial performances and balances of the four subsidiaries have been appropriately consolidated into the Council's financial statements; and ▶ Reviewing the Group Cash Flow Statement in the consolidated group financial statements and its workings to ensure appropriate disclosure in accordance with IAS 7. 	<p>From our completed work, we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <u>Optalis:</u> We have reviewed the work carried out by Hazlewoods Ltd and have no issues to report. ▶ <u>WBC Holdings Ltd:</u> We have reviewed the work carried out by Haslers Ltd and have no issues to report. ▶ <u>Group Consolidation:</u> We note that in the first draft of the accounts the group statements and disclosures were not included. Management have subsequently provided workings for the consolidation entries. We have reviewed the consolidation entries and underlying workings and have not identified any amendments to the workings provided by management.



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03 Audit Report



Audit Report

Draft audit report

Our draft opinion on the financial statements

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

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Wokingham Borough Council ('the Council') and its subsidiaries (the 'Group') for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The financial statements comprise the Authority Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Authority and Group Movement in Reserves Statement, Authority and Group Balance Sheet, Authority and Group Cash Flow Statement and the related notes 1 to 48; Housing Revenue Account Income and Expenditure Statement, Movement on the HRA Statement and the related notes 1 to 13; the Collection Fund and the related notes 1 to 3; and the Authority and Group Statement of Accounting Policies.

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 2020/21 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 Wokingham Borough Council and the Group as at 31 March 2021 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 2020/21 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 and 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 Deputy Chief Executive's (S151 Officer) 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 of 12 months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer) with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report. However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this statement is not a guarantee as to the Council and 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 2021 other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer) is responsible for the other information contained within the other information.

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.



Audit Report

Draft audit report (cont.)

Our draft opinion on the financial statements

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
- ▶ we make written recommendations to the audited body under Section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014
- ▶ 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
- ▶ we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014
- ▶ we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014
- ▶ 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 2021.

We have nothing to report in these respects.

Responsibility of the Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer)

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Deputy Chief Executive's (S151 Officer) Responsibilities set out on page 15, the Deputy Chief Executive is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the Group and Council, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 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 Deputy Chief Executive determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material

In preparing the financial statements, the Deputy Chief Executive 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.

The Council 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.

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Audit Report

Draft audit report (cont.)

Our draft opinion on the financial statements

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

- ▶ Local Government Act 1972,
- ▶ Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 1992),
- ▶ 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 2021,
- ▶ Planning Act 2008 and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (SI 2010/948),
- ▶ The Local Government Finance Act 2012
- ▶ The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, 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 Wokingham Borough Council is complying with those frameworks by understanding the incentive, opportunities and motives for non-compliance, including inquiring head of internal audit, those charged with governance, the monitoring officer 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.

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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), inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure and management override of controls to be our fraud risks.

To address our fraud risk of inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure we tested the 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. In addition, we assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates were indicative of a potential bias and evaluated the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside of the normal course of business.

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 April 2021, as to whether the Wokingham 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 Wokingham Borough Council put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2021.



Audit Report

Draft audit report (cont.)

Our draft opinion on the financial statements

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 Wokingham 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 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.

Certificate

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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 2021. 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 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 Wokingham Borough Council as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 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 Council and the Group and Council's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Helen Thompson (Key Audit Partner)
Ernst & Young LLP (Local Auditor)
Southampton

Date]



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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 adjusted differences

We highlight the following misstatements greater than £5.76m as at 1 March 2023 which will be corrected by management that were identified during the course of our audit:

Corrected misstatements 31 March 2021 (£'000)	Effect on the current period:		Net assets (Decrease)/Increase			
	OCI Debit/(Credit)	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Debit/(Credit)	Assets current Debit/ (Credit)	Assets non current Debit/ (Credit)	Liabilities current Debit/ (Credit)	Liabilities non- current Debit/ (Credit)
Errors						
Known differences:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Incorrect accounting treatment of the Grants received The following grants were incorrectly recognised either the Council being the principal instead of agent or vice versa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Business support Grant (Recognised as principal instead of agent) ▶ LRS Grant (Recognised as principal instead of agent) ▶ Infectious Control Grant (Recognised as agent instead of principal) 		Income 19,205 Expenditure (19,205) Income 7,278 Expenditure (7,278) Income (2,684) Expenditure 2,684				

(Continued on next page)



Audit Differences

Summary of adjusted differences (Cont.)

We highlight the following misstatements greater than £5.76m which have been corrected by management that were identified during the course of our audit:

Corrected misstatements 31 March 2021 (£'000)	Effect on the current period:		Net assets (Decrease)/Increase				Equity Components 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)	
4 Errors							
Known differences:							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valuation indexation incorrectly applied to properties already disposed of The Shinfield Infant School, Westende Junior School and Keep Hatch Primary School were incorrectly included in the valuation indexation applied to properties after their disposal. 	4,178	2,154		(6,332)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorrect classification of properties developed to be sold at market value: Construction costs pertaining to the development of the Elms Field Development has been incorrectly classified as Assets Under Construction in PPE instead of Inventories 	10,776	10,326	(5,340)	(15,762)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reclassification of the dedicated schools reserve deficit from usable to unusable reserves in line with the statutory instrument 							Unusable 5,826 Usable (5,826)
Total	14,954	£12,480k	(5,340)	(22,096)			

We note that although the impact of these adjustments affects the comprehensive income and expenditure statement, there is no impact on the general fund as the entries are reversed through the movement in reverses, as part of the adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations.



Audit Differences

Summary of adjusted differences (Cont.)-Prior Period impact

We highlight the following misstatements greater than £5.76m which have been corrected by management that were identified during the course of our audit:

Corrected misstatements 31 March 2021 (£'000)	Effect on the Prior Period:		Net assets (Decrease)/Increase			
	OCI Debit/(Credit)	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Debit/(Credit)	Assets current Debit/ (Credit)	Assets non current Debit/ (Credit)	Liabilities current Debit/ (Credit)	Liabilities non- current Debit/ (Credit)
Errors						
Known differences:						
42 Reclassification of properties developed to be sold at market value: Construction costs pertaining to the development of the Elms Field Development were classified as Assets Under Construction in PPE rather than as Inventories.		98	14,895	(14,797)		



Audit Differences

Summary of adjusted differences (Cont.)

We highlight below the corrected misstatements identified throughout the audit which are greater than our SAD nominal amount but below £5.76m

- Reclassification of revaluation entries between other comprehensive income and other expenditure of £2.9m
- Reclassification of council tax receipts in advance from debtors to creditors of £2.7m
- Reversal of a schools adjustment between income and expenditure of £2.0m
- Reclassification of credit balances included in debtors to creditors of £1.1m
- Reclassification of HRA income to expenditure of £1.4m
- Adjustment to account for the valuation gain in Arborfield Gym Land of £0.8m
- Revaluation downwards of PPE due to double counting of council dwellings of £0.7m
- Overstatement of cash and creditors balances as a result of imprest accounts of £0.26m

Further adjustments have been made to the draft financial statements by the Council to account for infrastructure assets in accordance with the new statutory instrument issued in this area.

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A small number of other amendments were made to disclosures appearing in the financial statements as a result of our work.



Audit Differences

Summary of unadjusted differences

In addition we highlight the following misstatements to the financial statements and/or disclosures which were not corrected by management. 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:

Uncorrected differences 31 March 2021 (£'000)		Effect on the current period:		Net assets (Decrease)/Increase		
		OCI Debit/(Credit)	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Debit/(Credit)		Assets non current Debit/ (Credit)	Liabilities current Debit/ (Credit)
Projected differences:						
44 Capital Receipts in Advance Projected difference in the incorrect classification of receipts during the financial year under review.			(1,415)			1,415
Judgemental differences:						
▶ Land and Buildings included in PPE Judgemental differences identified in the valuation of Land and Buildings included in PPE		3,360			(3,360)	
▶ Land and Buildings included in IP Judgemental differences identified in the valuation of Land and Buildings included in PPE			2,400		(2,400)	
▶ Goodwin Impact		1,200				(1,200)



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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.

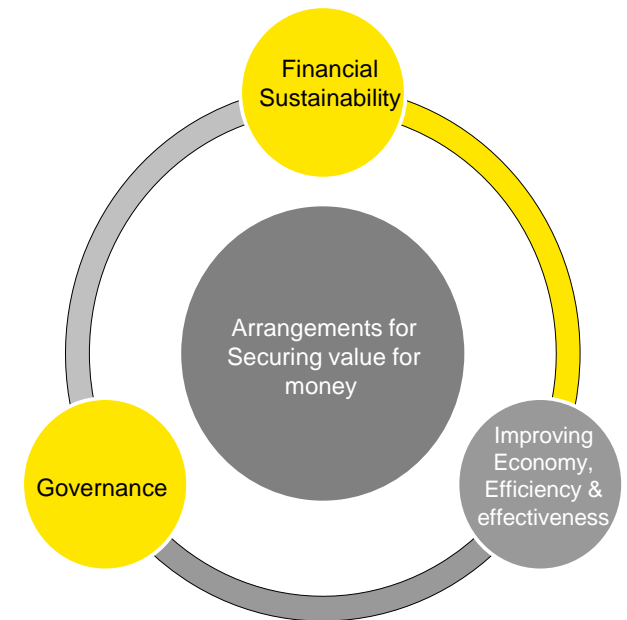
As part of the material published with its financial statements, the Council is required to bring together commentary on its governance framework and how this has operated during the period in a governance statement. In preparing its governance statement, the Council tailors the content to reflect its 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.

Risk assessment

We have previously reported to the Audit Committee the outcome of our assessment of the risk of significant weaknesses in the Council's VFM arrangements - that we had not identified any risks. We have revisited our risk assessment and have not identified any additional risks. As part of this assessment, we have considered the conclusions from our work undertaken following receipt of a whistle-blower allegation (see Section 06). We have provisionally concluded (subject to internal consultation) there is no evidence to substantiate the allegation made, and whilst the Council could improve its governance arrangements to oversee working with charities, there is no evidence of a significant weakness in the proper arrangements. As a result, we have completed our planned VFM procedures and have no matters to report by exception in the auditor's report (see Section 03).

Status of our VFM work

We have 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 as part of issuing the Auditor's Annual Report. This will be within three months of issuing the auditor's report.





06 Other reporting issues

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 2020/21 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 2020/21 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.

48 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 no issues to raise.

Other reporting issues

Other reporting issues

Other powers and duties

We have a duty under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to consider whether to report on any matter that comes to our attention in the course of the audit, either for the Council to consider it or to bring it to the attention of the public (i.e. “a report in the public interest”).

We did not identify any issues which required us to issue a report in the public interest.

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:

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- 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;
 - Related parties;
 - External confirmations;
 - Going concern; and
 - Consideration of laws and regulations.

Any significant difficulties encountered during the audit:

- The 2020/21 financial statements audit has taken longer than anticipated due to issues arising from our work on the valuation of Land & Buildings in PPE and IP and Pension Liability and Asset Valuation as detailed in section 2 and 4 above, as well as the sector-wide impact by the Covid-19 pandemic and working offsite. We have reported our findings to date with all necessary adjustments affected to the financial statements. We recognise this has been an very challenging year for the Council and its finance team as they have continued to be stretched in their response to Covid-19 issues.
- The auditors of the Berkshire Pension Fund provided the Council’s IAS19 employee benefit local government Pension Fund assurances in mid-January 2022. As detailed in section 2 above, these assurances contained a caveat stating that their work was ongoing at the time of its issuing and that there is still a risk of material matters arising. We have continued to liaise regularly with the auditor of the Pension Fund, but as at the date of issuing our updated audit results report, we have not yet received an updated letter. We expect this issue to impact the 2021/22 and 2022/23 audits, and we will continue to hold regular meetings with the Pension Fund auditor.

Other issues

The issue and what did we do?

Any significant matters arising from the audit that were discussed with management:

Related party transactions:

Our testing of related party transactions identified errors in the disclosures which have been corrected by management in the revised financial statements. We noted that 10 Council members and 19 officers did not complete a related party return. We carried out extended testing, including a search of Companies House, for all missing declarations and did not identify any issues. However, we recommend the Council puts improved quality assurance checks in place to ensure the completeness of related party returns.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP):

Wokingham Borough Council are required, under the 2003 Local Government Act, to charge Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) to its revenue account in each financial year. In calculating a prudent provision, local authorities are required to have regard to statutory guidance issued periodically by DLUHC.

DLUHC consider that the methods of making prudent provision include the options set out in its guidance but does not rule out or preclude a local authority from using alternative methods of making prudent provision should it decide that is more appropriate. Whilst the Council has accounted for MRP in line with its own policy, this is not fully aligned to the suggested approach outlined in the regulations as:

1. The Council's policy does not require a charge for MRP on capital loans.
2. Only 10% of the investment property expenditure is being repaid through its MRP charge.
3. No charge is applied to capital expenditure for which funding is expected in future years.

The policy has been agreed by Council with delegation to the Section 151 Officer, and Regulation 28 states it is for the Council to determine what constitutes a minimum revenue provision. However, in the light of expected revised guidance from DLUHC, the Council will need to review its current policy to ensure it meets future legislative requirements and good practice.

Capital Receipts in Advance:

Wokingham Borough Council recognises Section 106 grants and contributions in accordance with the Code requirements as either revenue or receipts in advance depending on conditions and restrictions attached to it. During our testing of the section 106 grants that were accounted for as Capital Receipts in Advance in the Council's Statement of Accounts, we identified two representative items incorrectly recognised as capital receipts in advance instead of revenue. We extended our testing on this balance to assess the extent to which this could indicate a misstatement within the untested population, the uncorrected projected difference of £1.4m identified from our audit procedures is shown in section 4 of this report.

Whistle-blower allegation:

In October 2022, we received an anonymous whistle-blowing allegation. In agreement with the Council, we engaged a specialist to assist the audit team in evaluating and investigating the allegations made. Our work is in its final stages and we expect to complete this, subject to internal consultation, before the Audit Committee on 13 March 2023. Based on our work to date, we have not identified a significant weakness in the proper arrangements to secure value for money. However, we expect to report areas for improvement in our Auditor's Annual Report which will be completed within three months of issuing the auditor report on the financial statements.



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.

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

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

However, we have the following issues to bring to your attention.

Quality of the Statement of Accounts:

Although the Council published its Statement of Accounts published by the 30 July 2021, these had gaps in disclosed information due to the ongoing audit and finalisation of the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts at that stage. The finance department further continued to experience capacity constraints during the year with finance officers stretched during the preparation of these accounts. We are aware the Council has reviewed finance staff capacity and is recruiting new staff to improve resilience within the finance team. We have also agreed that we will carry out a review of the 2020/21 audit to assess what worked well, and what we can jointly improve, to ensure a smoother and more timely audit. Taken together, these measures should reduce the amount of time required for the audit.

Amendment to the cyclical PPE valuation programme

Following on from the 2020/21 audit, we understand that management still propose to employ an external valuer to value the Council's PPE assets for the 2021/22 financial statements, as it does for its annual valuation of its investment properties. The intention will be that the Council's internal valuer will provide an initial challenge of the external specialist's assumptions, and provide greater assurance to the finance team preparing the financial statements. We agree this will provide the opportunity for additional challenge as set out above. We recommend that the valuer values a proportion of all the Council's asset types each year (rather than by category type every 5 years) so that the Council has a benchmark for indexation should it need it.

Bank reconciliations of imprest bank accounts

Improvements to the processing and reconciliation of imprest bank accounts in the Council's portfolio were limited as these reconciliations were not performed on a regular basis which resulted in unexplained differences between the Council's accounting records and statements from the relevant financial institutions. Whilst appreciating that these differences are not material, reconciliations should be performed on a regular basis to ensure appropriate record keeping and prevent any undetected irregularities.



Assessment of Control Environment

Financial controls

Accounting for Capital Projects

In recent years the Council has undertaken significant capital projects within Wokingham Town Centre, some of these projects consist of construction of multiple individual assets with a range of purposes. As noted on slide 34, an amendment was required in the 2020/21 and 2019/20 accounts, this was due to residential units being incorrectly classified as property, plant and equipment. We would recommend that the Council considers specific accounting treatment and classification for each asset constructed of part of a wider capital project; and where necessary the Council should seek external guidance/consultation to support the proposed accounting treatment.

Infrastructure Assets and Maintaining Records

CIPFA provided an update to the Code and specifications for future Codes for Infrastructure Assets in November 2022. The publication is an update to the 2021/22 Code, but it also updates the 2022/23 Code and will apply to subsequent years until the 2024/25 Code. Amendments to Section 4.1 of the Code include a temporary relief so that local authorities are not required to report the gross book value and accumulated depreciation for infrastructure assets. This temporary relief is applied from the 2021/22 Code up to and including the Code applicable to the 2024/25 financial year.

As this is only a temporary relief we recommend the Council utilise the time available to review the underlying records it holds for infrastructure assets to be able to support the gross book value and accumulated depreciation balances going forward.



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07

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 Fund, 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 2020 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 table below sets out a summary of the fees that are due to us for the year ended 31 March 2021 in line with the disclosures set out in FRC Ethical Standard and in statute.

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.

	Final fee 2020/21	Planned fee 2020/21	Final Fee 2019/20
55	£	£	£
PSAA Scale Fee - Code work	81,325	81,325	81,325
Scale Fee Rebasing: Changes in work required to address professional and regulatory requirements and scope associated with risk (Note 1)	73,319	73,319	
Revised Proposed Scale Fee	154,644	154,644	
2019/20 fee variation approved by PSAA (Note 2)	-	-	68,541
2020/21 PSAA expected additional minimal core fees (Note 3):			
• VFM	TBC	10,000	-
• ISA 540 accounting estimates		11,500	
2020/21 proposed fee variation - other (Note 4)	TBC	-	-
Total Scale Fee Variation	TBC	167,144	149,866
Non-audit work - Housing Benefit Subsidy claim	67,326	51,236 (est)	47,000
Total fees	TBC	218,380	196,866

Continued over

Relationships, services and related threats and safeguards

Note 1:

We outlined in our 2019/20 Annual Audit Letter (AAL) the basis on which the scale fees are set by PSAA. We also outlined a combination of factors which mean that we do not believe the existing scale fees provide a clear link with both a public sector organisation's risk and complexity and therefore it endangers the sustainability of local audit in the future.

Based on these factors, and in light of requests from PSAA to provide further detailed analysis we have estimated the impact on the Council, which has been shared with management but we did not reach agreement on that rebasing. The 2019/20 estimated fee increase of £58,655 has been uplifted by 25% to reflect the change in PSAA charge rates. For 2020/21, this proposed fee is £73,319 and it will be submitted to PSAA for review, alongside the proposed in-year fee variation for the work completed in 2020/21.

Note 2:

In order to meet regulatory and compliance audit requirements not present in the market at the time of our most recent bid to PSAA, we undertook additional work at a fee of £56,411 to deliver the audit in 2019/20. These additional fees were accepted by the Deputy Section 151 Officer in October 2021. PSAA determined the total fee variation across both elements (ie the rebasing fee of £58,655 plus the in year variation of £56,411) for 2019/20 as £68,541. We expect similar costs in nature in 2020/21 and subsequent years. PSAA has stated that this will need to be determined each year.

Note 3:

In August 2021, PSAA published 'Additional information for 2020/21 audit fees'. PSAA commissioned external independent technical research for setting standardised fee variations to assess the expected impact on audit work programmes of a range of new and updated audit requirements. The figures included here are the minimum additional fee ranges set out in this document.

Note 4:

Any further additional fees (over and above VFM and ISA540) for 2020/21 will be communicated to the Section 151 Officer following the completion of the audit.

Other communications

EY Transparency Report 2022

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

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

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







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08 Appendices

Appendix A

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
59 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 presented to the Audit Committee on 15 September 2021.
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 presented to the Audit Committee on 15 September 2021.
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 	Draft Audit Results Report presented to the Audit Committee on 30 March 2022, and this Report presented on 13 March 2023.



Appendix A

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
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 	No conditions or events were identified, either individually or together to raise any doubt about Wokingham Borough Council's ability to continue for the 12 months from the date of our audit report.
Misstatements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion, unless prohibited by law or regulation ▶ The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods ▶ A request that any uncorrected misstatement be corrected ▶ Material misstatements corrected by management 	Draft Audit Results Report presented to the Audit Committee on 30 March 2022, and this Report presented on 13 March 2023.
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. 	Draft Audit Results Report presented to the Audit Committee on 30 March 2022, and this Report presented on 13 March 2023.
Fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enquiries of the Audit Committee to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity ▶ Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that a fraud may exist ▶ Unless all of those charged with governance are involved in managing the entity, any identified or suspected fraud involving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Management; b. Employees who have significant roles in internal control; or c. Others where the fraud results in a material misstatement in the financial statements. ▶ The nature, timing and extent of audit procedures necessary to complete the audit when fraud involving management is suspected ▶ Any other matters related to fraud, relevant to Audit Committee responsibility. 	Draft Audit Results Report presented to the Audit Committee on 30 March 2022, and this Report presented on 13 March 2023.

Appendix A

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
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 	Draft Audit Results Report presented to the Audit Committee on 30 March 2022, and this Report presented on 13 March 2023.
Independence 61	<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>Communications whenever significant judgements are made about threats to objectivity and independence and the appropriateness of safeguards put in place.</p>	<p>Audit Planning Report presented to the Audit Committee on 15 September 2021.</p> <p>Draft Audit Results Report presented to the Audit Committee on 30 March 2022, and this Report presented on 13 March 2023.</p>
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. 	Draft Audit Results Report presented to the Audit Committee on 30 March 2022, and this Report presented on 13 March 2023.
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. 	Draft Audit Results Report presented to the Audit Committee on 30 March 2022, and this Report presented on 13 March 2023.

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. 	Draft Audit Results Report presented to the Audit Committee on 30 March 2022, and this Report presented on 13 March 2023.
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 	Draft Audit Results Report presented to the Audit Committee on 30 March 2022, and this Report presented on 13 March 2023.
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 	Draft Audit Results Report presented to the Audit Committee on 30 March 2022, and this Report presented on 13 March 2023.
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 	Draft Audit Results Report presented to the Audit Committee on 30 March 2022, and this Report presented on 13 March 2023.
Fee Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Breakdown of fee information when the audit planning report is agreed ▶ Breakdown of fee information at the completion of the audit ▶ Any non-audit work 	<p>Audit Planning Report presented to the Audit Committee on 15 September 2021.</p> <p>Draft Audit Results Report presented to the Audit Committee on 30 March 2022, and this Report presented on 13 March 2023.</p>

Management representation letter

Management Representation Letter

[To be prepared on the entity's letterhead]

[Date]

Helen Thompson
Ernst & Young LLP
Grosvenor House
Grosvenor Square
Southampton
SO15 2BE

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This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the consolidated and Council financial statements of Wokingham Borough Council ("the Group and Council") for the year ended 31 March 2021. 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 Wokingham Borough Council as of 31 March 2021 and of its financial performance (or operations) and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with, for the Group CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 and the Council, the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

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 the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 and for the Council the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.
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 in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 and for the Council, the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 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 2020/21 for the Group and the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 for the Council that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Management representation letter

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].

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 disclosed to you, and provided you full access to information and any internal investigations relating to, all instances of identified or suspected non-compliance with law and regulations, including fraud, known to us that may have affected the Group or Council (regardless of the source or form and including, without limitation, 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.
3. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of the Council, the Executive Committee and the Audit Committees (or summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared) held through the year to the most recent meeting of the Council on 16 February 2023; Executive Committee on 26 January 2023; and Audit Committee on 13 March 2023.

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

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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 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 CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.
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 the date of our last management representation letter 6 August 2021 through the date of this letter we have disclosed to you any (1) 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 Note 33 to the consolidated and Council financial statements all guarantees that we have given to third parties.

E. Going Concern

1. Section 11, Note 1 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 subsequent events to the consolidated and Council financial statements, there have been no events, including events related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and including events related to the conflict and related sanctions in Ukraine, Russia and/or Belarus, subsequent to year end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the consolidated and Council financial statements or notes thereto.

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

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, subsidiary undertakings and associated undertakings.

H. Other information

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

I. Comparative information - comparative financial statements

1. In connection with your audit of the comparative consolidated and Council financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2020, we represent, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the following:

The following prior period adjustments have been identified during the preparation of the 2020/21 financial accounts. These adjustments relate to the following and have been adjusted in the financial statements.

The areas of adjustments relate to:

- Town centre regeneration development, Elms Field and Rose Street assets. Any assets which have been constructed solely for market sale had been recognised as property, plant and equipment however under the accounting code, these assets should be treated as current assets, inventories. Any costs, depreciation and revaluations associated with these assets have been reversed in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement (CIES), movement in reserves statement (MIRS) and the balance sheet with the assets now being shown under inventories (see note 49).

- Treatment of accumulated depreciation and impairments on the housing revenue account assets. On revaluation of assets, accumulated balances need to also be written out as part of the revaluation movement. This had previously not been completed and has been corrected. There is no impact on the comprehensive income and expenditure statement (CIES), movement in reserves statement (MIRS) and the balance sheet. The net book value of the assets are unchanged. The only adjustment is within note 24 between the "cost / valuation" and "accumulated depreciation and impairment balances".

The comparative amounts have been correctly restated to reflect the above matter(s) and appropriate note disclosure of this (these) restatement(s) has (have) also been included in the current year's consolidated and Council financial statements.

J. Ownership of Assets

1. Except for assets recognised as right-of-use assets in accordance with IFRS 16 Leases, the Group and Council has satisfactory title to all assets appearing in the balance sheet(s), and there are no liens or encumbrances on the Group and Council's assets, nor has any asset been pledged as collateral, other than those that are disclosed in Note 28 to the financial statements. All assets to which the Group and Council has satisfactory title appear in the balance sheet(s).

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

K. Reserves

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

L. 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, plant and equipment, investment property, HRA properties and IAS19 pension fund 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.

M. Estimates

i. Valuation of Land & Buildings in Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE) and Investment Properties (IP)

ii. Pension liability and asset valuation

1. We confirm that the significant judgments made in making the valuation of land and buildings in Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE) and Investment Properties (IP) and Pension Liability and asset valuation, we have taken into account all relevant information and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on 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 and buildings in Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE) and Investment Properties (IP) and Pension Liability and asset valuation.

3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the valuation of land and buildings in Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE) and Investment Properties (IP) and Pension Liability and asset valuation appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out these valuation on behalf of the entity.

4. We confirm that the disclosures made in the consolidated and Council entity financial statements with respect to the accounting estimate(s), including those describing estimation uncertainty and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are complete and are reasonable in the context of the context of CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 We confirm that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in making the valuation of land and buildings in Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE) and Investment Properties (IP) and Pension Liability and asset valuation We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimate(s) and disclosures in the consolidated and parent entity financial statements , including due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

N. 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,

Graham Ebers

(Deputy Chief Executive & S151 Officer)


Councillor Rachel Burgess


(Chair of the Audit Committee)

Appendix F

Implementation of IFRS 16 Leases

In previous reports to the Audit Committee, we have highlighted the issue of new accounting standards and regulatory developments. IFRS 16 introduces a number of significant changes which go beyond accounting technicalities. For example, the changes have the potential to impact on procurement processes as more information becomes available on the real cost of leases. The key accounting impact is that assets and liabilities in relation to significant lease arrangements previously accounted for as operating leases will need to be recognised on the balance sheet. IFRS 16 requires all substantial leases to be accounted for using the acquisition approach, recognising the rights acquired to use an asset.

IFRS 16 does not come into effect for the Council until 1 April 2024, unless the Council chooses to apply the standard early. However, officers should be acting now to assess the Council's leasing positions and secure the required information to ensure the council will be fully compliance with the 2024/25 Code. The following table  summarises some key areas officers should be progressing.

IFRS 16 theme	Summary of key measures
Data collection 	Management should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Put in place a robust process to identify all arrangements that convey the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time. The adequacy of this process should be discussed with auditors. ▶ Classify all such leases into low value; short-term; peppercorn; portfolio and individual leases ▶ Identify, collect, log and check all significant data points that affect lease accounting including: the term of the lease; reasonably certain judgements on extension or termination; dates of rent reviews; variable payments; grandfathered decisions; non-lease components; and discount rate to be applied.
Policy Choices	The Council needs to agree on certain policy choices. In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Whether to adopt a portfolio approach ▶ What low value threshold to set and agree with auditors ▶ Which asset classes, if any, are management adopting the practical expedient in relation to non-lease components ▶ What is managements policy in relation to discount rates to be used?
Code adaptations for the public sector	Finance teams should understand the Code adaptations for the public sector. The Code contains general adaptations, (e.g. the definition of a lease); transitional interpretations (e.g. no restatement of prior periods) and adaptations that apply post transition (e.g. use of short-term lease exemption).
Transitional accounting arrangements	Finance teams should understand the accounting required on first implementation of IFRS 16. The main impact is on former operating leases where the council is lessee. However, there can be implications for some finance leases where the Council is lessee; and potentially for sub-leases, where the council is a lessor, that were operating leases under the old standard.
Ongoing accounting arrangements	Finance teams need to develop models to be able to properly account for initial recognition and subsequent measurement of right of use assets and associated liabilities. This is more complex than the previous standard due to more regular remeasurements and possible modifications after certain trigger events.
Remeasurements and modifications	Finance teams need to familiarise themselves with when the 'remeasurement' or 'modification' of a lease is required and what to do under each circumstance. A modification can lead to an additional lease being recognised. It is also important to know when remeasurements require a new discount rate is to be applied to the lease.

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ED None

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TITLE	Statement of Accounts 2020-2021
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Audit Committee on 13 March 2023
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

The production and completion of audited financial statement of accounts is a key requirement for strong financial management and value for money.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee are asked to;

- 1) Note the latest statement of accounts for 2020-21 (Appendix A). These should be considered alongside the audit results report presented by our External Auditors, Ernst & Young (EY).
- 2) Approve delegation for the signing of the 2020-21 accounts to the chair of the audit committee, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, on the basis of the remaining assurances from the auditor of Berkshire Pension Fund being received with no further significant impact on the accounts.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Council to produce Statement of Accounts for each financial year giving certain specified information as set out in the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. These accounts are subject to an external audit by Ernst & Young (EY).

Appendix A are the statement of accounts for 2020-21. These have been audited by EY. The results of the audit are presented to the committee as part of the Audit Results Report produced by EY.

It is therefore important that this agenda item is considered alongside EY's audit results report.

The committee are asked to approve the delegation for the signing of the 2020-21 accounts to the chair of the audit committee, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer. This will be completed once the final assurances are received from the auditor of the Berkshire Pension Fund, providing there are no further significant amendments required of the accounts.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	See audit fees contained in audit results report	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
None

Cross-Council Implications
None

Public Sector Equality Duty
None

Climate Emergency – <i>This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030</i>
None

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
None

List of Background Papers
Appendix A – Statement of Accounts 2020-21

Contact Mark Thompson	Service Business Services
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WOKINGHAM

Borough Council

Statement of Accounts

For the Year Ended 31 March 2021

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1. NARRATIVE REPORT

Organisational Structure

Wokingham Borough Council delivers a wide range of services for the residents and businesses in Wokingham including education, environmental health, highways, housing, leisure, libraries, planning, social care, transport and waste collection and disposal. The Council is made up of 54 elected Councillors representing 25 wards across the borough, one of whom is elected as Leader. The Leader appoints up to 10 Councillors who make up the Executive which is responsible for the development and implementation of policy on behalf of the Council. Decisions made by the Executive are scrutinised by a number of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Officers are employees of the Council, and give advice to elected Councillors, implement decisions and manage the day to day delivery of services. The Corporate Leadership Team is made up of the Chief Executive, and other senior employees, as shown in note 14. The Directors report to the Chief Executive and have responsibility for delivering services.

Financial Context

Heading into the 2021/22 financial year, the financial standing of the Council remains robust. This has been achieved through good financial management, through which the Council has built up financial resilience and sustainability, despite years of austerity resulting in reductions in Central Government funding.

Following the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council have reacted quickly to enhance financial management during the crisis. The Council's finance staff have worked closely with Directors and key stakeholders to challenge and update forecasts based on a continually changing climate.

Enhanced financial management arrangements have included:

- Ensuring there is clarity with regards to genuine expenditure decisions with regard to Covid-19 related spend (as opposed to the necessity to discharge our statutory responsibilities).
- Seeking to maximise opportunities to deliver on MTFP savings plans, recognising that staff remain significantly diverted to the Covid response phase.
- Exploring reduced expenditure opportunities arising as a result of Covid-19 or otherwise, including a review of Special Items.
- Maintaining a weekly financial review of the Covid-19 impact including collection rates and Direct Debit failure rates on major income streams.
- Initiating an early MTFP review process tailored to identify areas of relative financial certainty and high-risk areas of greater ambiguity.
- Reviewing non-General Fund balances to assess risks and potential options to transfer balances to the General Fund reserve (if the General Fund position becomes perilously low).
- Continuing to make representations for additional funding through Government Returns, Regional Conference calls and MPs.

As the financial impact from the pandemic continues, monitoring and reporting remains an important financial control. Further work is underway to understand the longer term financial implications

beyond the 21/22 financial year. Where known, implications were considered as part of budget setting for the 21/22 financial year and will also be considered in future budget setting rounds.

Further information regarding the financial impact from Covid-19 can be found in the quarter one Executive monitoring reports available on the Council's website,

[Q1 Executive Monitoring Reports](#)

General Fund Service Expenditure 2020/21

The Council approved a revenue budget of £143.5m (£129.7m expenditure plus £13.8m depreciation) at its meeting on 20 February 2020. The approved budget figures shown below include agreed carry forwards from 2019/20 as well as supplementary estimates totalling c£1.8m approved during 2020/21. The following table analyses Wokingham Borough Council's actual outturn compared to its budgeted net expenditure by directorate, as at 31 March 2021, and reported to the Council's Executive on 24 June 2021 (see link below). The actual spend for 2020/21 was £0.8m favourable variance to budget.

For more information, see the Council's revenue monitoring outturn report:

[Revenue Monitoring Outturn Report](#)

Directorate	End of year position			(Favourable) / Adverse Variance split into:	
	Approved budget	Actual spend	(Favourable) / adverse variance	BAU Variance	Covid Impact
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Adult Social Care	53,346	53,338	(8)	(1,484)	1,476
Chief Executive	9,215	9,226	11	11	0
Children's Services	36,004	37,266	1,262	(124)	1,386
Community, Insight & Change	8,774	9,270	496	(52)	548
Place & Growth	38,553	40,836	2,283	531	1,752
Resources & Assets	2,118	4,928	2,810	(102)	2,912
COVID – Other	0	1,714	1,714	0	1,714
COVID - Grant funding from Government	0	(9,356)	(9,356)	0	(9,356)
Net Expenditure (including carry forwards to 2021/22)	148,010	147,222	(788)	(1,220)	432

BAU – Business as Usual

Material areas of favourable / adverse variances include:

- Adult Social Care – Underspend of £1.5m. As a result of the expert determination there is a reduction in the central management costs to the Council from Optalis of c£0.3m in 20/21. This efficiency has been achieved earlier than anticipated as this is built into the savings

assumptions for 21/22 and beyond. Negotiations surrounding any further changes to central management costs in Optalis is ongoing. The £1.2m in relation the BAU budgets relates to good work from the staff in Adult Social Care in achieving higher than previously forecast delivery against the services savings targets and a reduction in the number of people receiving care in older people's services. Covid-19 has had a significant impact on Adult Social Care services specifically relating to hospital discharges and supporting the vulnerable in our community. The £1.5m reflects the financial impact of supporting our customers and care market during the pandemic.

- Children's Services – Underspend of £0.1m for the year on BAU. Continued focus on social care placements has allowed earlier risks identified in the forecast to be well managed which, taken alongside reduced Home to School Transport costs during the spring term, has provided for a small underspend in year. The £1.4m covid pressure reflects the impact on the service in supporting and safeguarding vulnerable children and families during the pandemic.
- Communities, Insight & Change - Underspend of £0.1m, relates to savings in Library stock purchases, project costs and general operational spend. Covid pressures resulting in a net full year actual of c£0.6m. This includes lost income of c£0.3m across some facilities and land charges. Other cost pressures include support service costs such as IT, HR and benefit assessments and additional resources for Covid Communications.
- Place and Growth - Additional essential drainage work has resulted in £100k overspend with a further additional £620k in essential reactive highway maintenance, compounded by uplifts in the maintenance contract rates, this has in part been offset by lower than expected winter maintenance cost to the tune of £170k. These rate increases have been reflected in next year's budget (21/22) and agreed as growth through the MTFP. £1.8m Covid pressures consists mainly of lost income across car parking, licensing, planning and street works income.
- Resources and Assets - BAU – Over-achievement of income from Solar investments has been greater than anticipated. Across the directorate various smaller pressures have been contained by efficiencies. £2.9m Covid pressures include costs pressures of c£2.0m relating to our Leisure Services offset by £0.3m leisure grant. c£0.8m relating to our property portfolio including commercial, operational and regeneration. Other costs include c£0.4m on additional temporary accommodation provided during covid, a £0.07m contribution to a Berkshire wide temporary place of rest and smaller costs relating to additional cleaning, staff support, lost income, etc.
- Covid – Other - These costs include direct covid costs such as PPE, resources and other support over the past 12 months. Also included is provision for the impact on collection fund of Council Tax and Business Rates.
- Covid - Grant funding from Government - This includes the four tranches of emergency government grant received to support all covid costs incurred within each directorate.

Capital Expenditure in 2020/21

The Council continues to invest in its asset base in order to improve services to residents and to support the financial sustainability of the organisation. Capital expenditure in the year totalled £123.5m (2019/20 £171.3m) as set out in report to the Council's Executive on 24 June 2021.

See the capital programme outturn report for more information:

[Capital Programme Outturn Report](#)

During 2020/21 the Council has invested in the following key areas.

MTFP category	Expenditure 2020/21 £m
Roads & Transport	£58.3m
Investment and Regeneration	£38.1m
Children Services and Schools	£14.7m
Climate Emergency	£5.3m
Environment	£5.0m
Internal Services	£1.1m
Adult Social Care	£1.0m
Total	£123.5m

The Council's capital expenditure was financed through a mixture of capital receipts, developer contributions, third party contributions and grant income, contributions from revenue, a mix of internal and external borrowing. In addition, the Council also financed previous year's capital expenditure through minimum revenue provision and HRA debt repayment. See Note 27 for further analysis of capital expenditure.

Wider Council performance

The Council's wider performance can be read about in the quarterly performance management report. A selection of information from the report is provided below.

- 87% of children who attend a Wokingham state-funded school (Primary, Secondary or Special) which is Good or better
- 98% of early year's settings have a current Ofsted rating of good or better.
- The percentage of housing stock that meets the decent homes standard remains is 100%
- The council tax collection rate was 99.0%.
- 83% of residents were satisfied with their new homes.

Further information can be found on the Council's website.

[Wider Council Performance](#)

Pension fund

The Council records costs related to its pension schemes when they are earned by employees. However, the charge that the Council is required to make to the General Fund is based on the cash payable in the year. In accordance with International Accounting Standard (IAS) 19, the Council's balance sheet recognises a liability of £357m at 31 March 2021 (£259.6m at 31 March 2020). More information about the costs and accounting treatment for the Council's pension schemes is set out below and in Note 19.

Treasury management

Long term borrowing reduced from £216m to £192m during the year and short term borrowing increased from £64m to £339m. This planned increase in total borrowing is used to fund additional capital expenditure to support investment and development in the borough. The Council have taken advantage of low interest rates to secure some borrowing needed to fund the capital expenditure planned for 2021/22. The Council also received developer contributions earlier than expected which also increased the short term investment balances shown below.

The Council maintains cash reserves arising from grants received in advance, general fund and other reserves, and from cash flow management. Short term investments at 31 March 2021 were £195m (£41m at 31 March 2020). Cash and Cash Equivalents were £130m (£59m at 31 March 2020).

Further information regarding treasury management can be found in the Treasury Management outturn report:

[Treasury Management Outturn Report](#)

Balance sheet

The Council's balance sheet at 31 March 2021 had long term assets of £1.157b, current assets (including cash and short term investments) of £390m, current liabilities of £416m, long-term liabilities of £660m (which includes net pension liabilities of £357m and the Council's long-term borrowing of £192m). In addition, the Council had usable reserves of £163m.

The net assets of the Council have reduced slightly from £499m at 31 March 2020 to £471m at 31 March 2021.

Housing revenue account (HRA)

The Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) achieved an operating surplus of £2.0m compared to a surplus of £1.8m in 2019/20. There was an increase in the surplus in 2020/21 due an increase in rental income, an increase in net gain on disposals and a reduction in interest costs. The surplus was used to fund capital expenditure and to repay debt, and after removing statutory accounting adjustments resulted in an overall decrease in the HRA balance of £0.8m.

HRA rental income was £15.2m in 2020/21, an increase on the £14.2m achieved in 2019/20. Expenditure on repairs and maintenance and housing management totalled £6.4m compared to

£6.2m in 2019/20. Capital expenditure totalled £3.0m in 2020/21, largely on refurbishment and improvement works, compared to £5.1m in 2019/20.

Group accounts

The Council are in the fourth year of joint working with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) through our company, Optalis. Jointly with the Royal Borough, WBC is able to control the operating, governance and financial policies of the organisation, and also able to appoint the board of directors of the company.

The Council's housing companies have continued to grow, with further development work increasing their net assets. Berry Brook Homes Ltd provides affordable, subsidised housing to rent in Wokingham Borough and it has grown substantially this year. Loddon Homes Ltd also provides social and affordable housing and is a for-profit registered provider. Wokingham Housing Limited is a housing developer providing high quality affordable, social and market homes for local people in Wokingham.

Key risks and opportunities

The Council's corporate leadership team (CLT) is responsible for identifying and managing the Council's risks and opportunities. CLT is also responsible for identifying, analysing and profiling high-level strategic and cross-cutting risks on a regular basis. The Council's corporate risk register is considered by the audit committee. A wide range of policies, procedures, training and governance help control this risk, with further detail available in the documentation discussed at that meeting (link below). The other key risk is that the Council fails to deliver key investment priorities. The risks are reviewed and quantified as part of the financial planning processes. This analysis is available within the Council's medium term financial plan (MTFP) approved at annual budget-setting Council in February each year and is available at

[Medium Plan Financial Plan](#)

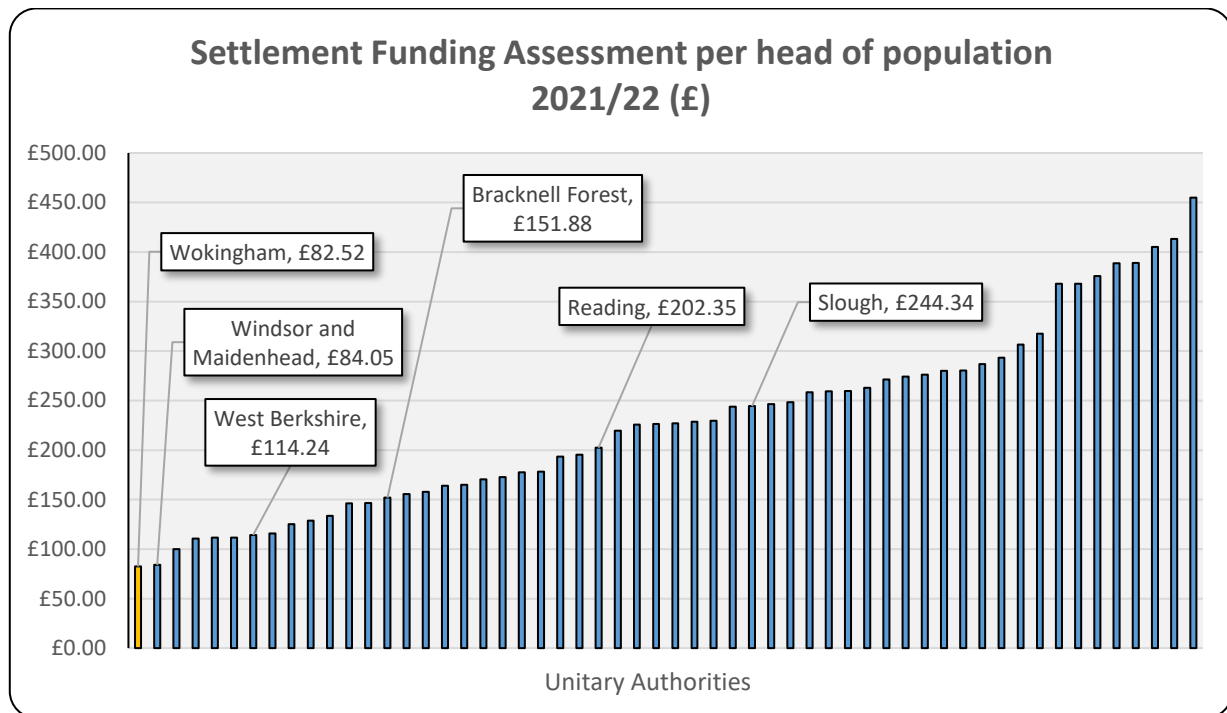
The Council continues to review opportunities for improvement and service development, most recently including the continuous improvement programme, looking to transform the way the Council operates and improve the availability of Council services through digital channels, enable residents to track the progress of their issue as it is resolved more efficiently by the Council, a greater focus on problem-solving and customer responsiveness, and a leaner, more effective and efficient Council costing significantly less to run.

Future financial outlook

The overall financial climate continues to be uncertain and is expected to remain so for a number of years. Wokingham, as one of the lowest funded English unitary authorities, will face a particularly difficult challenge. The Council has pressures arising from reductions in Revenue Support Grant which were forecast to be negative in 2021/22 (i.e.: the Council has to contribute funds back to Central Government), however, it was announced during the finance settlement in December 2020 that there would be no negative grant payments for Councils. This means that there is much uncertainty around future settlements in terms of duration and the actual amount of funding Wokingham will receive. This uncertainty in funding comes at the same time as needing to meet the

cost of extra pressures on statutory services such as adult social care, waste collection and disposal, highways and overall population and demographic growth.

The Council also receives business rates income, which together forms the settlement funding assessment. The chart below compares Wokingham’s settlement funding assessment per head of population in 2021/22 to all other unitary authorities, illustrating the low level of funding received by Wokingham. More detailed analysis of the financial context is available in the latest medium term financial plan (MTFP) which is available on the Councils website.



Regeneration, investment and strategic developments

Although the Council faces significant financial pressures, it is continuing the development of Wokingham Town Centre to ensure that it remains an attractive location for businesses to locate, and for people to live in and visit for shopping and recreational purposes. In addition, the Council has identified four Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) where new housing and employment opportunities will be located. More recently, the Council has invested in commercial assets which generate much needed revenue income for the Council. The Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) provides for considerable investment in these areas in 2021/22 and beyond.

Accounting developments for 2020/21

The most significant accounting developments for 2020/21 were expected to be IFRS 16 Leases. The implementation of the new standard has been delayed further, until 2024/25, and therefore does not impact on the 2020/21 financial accounts.

For 2020/21 the Update to the Code on infrastructure assets offers a temporary relief, 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.

The authority has chosen not to disclose this information as the previously reported practices and resultant information deficits mean that gross cost and accumulated depreciation are not measured accurately and would not provide the basis for the users of the financial statements to take economic or other decisions relating to infrastructure assets.

There are no other significant accounting developments for 2020/21. A full list of the Council's accounting policies is at chapter 11 of these accounts.

2. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020/21

Scope of Responsibility

1. Wokingham Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards. It needs to ensure that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

2. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In meeting this overall responsibility, the Council must put in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.

3. The Council has adopted a code of corporate governance (approved in November 2020) which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting) / IFAC (International Federation of Accountants): International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector.

4. This statement explains how the Council delivers good governance and reviews the effectiveness of these arrangements. It also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015), as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, which require the council to conduct a review, at least once a year, on the effectiveness of its system of internal control and include an Annual Governance Statement reporting on the review with the Statement of Accounts.

The Purpose of the Governance Framework

5. The Governance Framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the Council is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

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 risks of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives, and therefore provides reasonable assurance of effectiveness.

7. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives. The system is designed to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

8. The Council's governance framework has been in place for the year ended 31 March 2021 and up to the date that the statement of accounts was approved.

The Governance Framework

9. At Wokingham Borough Council good governance is everyone's responsibility however the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive acknowledge their leadership role in relation to good governance.

10. The Council's governance framework has evolved over successive years and is defined in its Local Code of Corporate Governance. This is reviewed annually to ensure its continuing effectiveness with regard to the principles of the International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector in delivering good governance, which are:

- 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 Council's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
- Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong financial management.
- Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit, to deliver effective accountability.

Review of Effectiveness

12. Wokingham Borough Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The system of internal control is a significant part of the framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

13. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the senior managers within the council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Chief Audit Executive's (Assistant Director Governance) annual report, and by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

14. The key elements of the review of effectiveness are:

- The council's internal management processes, such as performance monitoring and reporting; the staff performance appraisal framework; internal surveys of awareness of corporate policies; monitoring of policies, such as the corporate complaints and health and safety policies; and the corporate budget challenge process.
- The role of the Executive and committees, including overview & scrutiny panels, the Audit Committee and Standards Committee
- An annual self-assessment and management assurance statement signed by directors, confirming that the Code of Conduct, Financial Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other corporate governance processes, e.g. Health & Safety, equalities duties, have operated as intended within their directorates throughout the year. This also includes the Council's trading companies.

- The work of the Council's overview & scrutiny panels.
- The work of EY, the Council's external auditor.
- The annual report of the Chief Audit Executive provides an opinion to members on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control system and on the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance process
- The work of the audit, governance and standards committee which includes responsibility for monitoring the development and operation of corporate governance in the council.
- Other review agencies and inspectorates, e.g. Ofsted, Care Quality Commission (CQC), etc.

15. The review has been led by the Chief Audit Executive in collaboration with the Chief Executive, the Corporate Leadership Team and Directorate Leadership Teams.

16. The review has considered the following evidence:

- a) Management Assurance Statements – Each Director, in conjunction with their Assistant Directors, has completed a self-assessment covering the effectiveness of governance arrangements in their area. In addition, the review covered the activities of the Council's subsidiaries, Optalis and Wokingham Holdings Ltd. The self-assessments, which have been reviewed by Internal Audit, have been used to identify areas for improvement both at a service level and, where, applicable, corporate level and inclusion in the improvement plan at Appendix 2.
- b) The annual opinion of the Lead Specialist-Audit and Investigation, on the Council's control framework, delivered to the Audit Committee, as the body charged with governance.
- c) Based upon the results of work undertaken during the year, it is the Lead Specialist overall opinion that the Council has an adequate and effective governance, risk management and control framework for 2020/21. Areas for improvement were identified in a number of reviews and action plans agreed with senior management to resolve the control / governance deficiencies identified.
- d) External audit reports issued and reports from other agencies and inspectorates.

17. The review has concluded that arrangements are fit for purpose and working effectively. A small number of governance issues have been identified and in order to further strengthen arrangements, an improvement plan to address these issues has been developed.

Conclusion

The Chief Executive has identified the actions required to strengthen these areas of governance and will monitor their implementation.

Overall, the governance arrangements are substantially complete and generally effective but with some improvements required. This is a reflection of the Council's governance framework and the management assurance statements, together with assurances from the Shared Audit and Investigation work and External Audit, and supported by the systems and procedural controls in place against identified risks and mitigating treatment measures.

The Council therefore concludes that its governance arrangements are fit for purpose.

Signed:

Clive Jones,
Leader of the Council

Date:

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive

Date:

3. STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council's responsibilities

The Council is required:

- To make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to ensure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this authority, that officer is the Deputy Chief Executive.
- To manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.
- To approve the statement of accounts.

The Responsibilities of the Deputy Chief Executive

The Deputy Chief Executive, in his capacity as the S151 Officer, is responsible for the preparation of the Council's Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 in accordance with proper practices as set out in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) 2020/21 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in United Kingdom (the Code).

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, the Deputy Chief Executive has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- made judgments and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- kept proper accounting records which were up to date;
- taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities;
- complied with the Code of Practice.

I hereby certify that the Statement of Accounts presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Wokingham Borough Council at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Signature:

Signature:

Graham Ebers
Deputy Chief Executive
(s.151 officer)

Chairman of the Audit Committee

Date:

Date:

4. DRAFT AUDIT OPINION

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

To be added once the audit has been completed.

5. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The following financial statements include the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES), the Movement in Reserves Statement (MiRS), the Balance Sheet (BS) and the Cash Flow Statement (CFS).

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

	Restated 2019/20			2020/21		
	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
	2,885	(210)	2,675	1,477	(5)	1,471
	48,232	(27,473)	20,759	68,076	(37,167)	30,910
	51,680	(21,932)	29,748	50,505	(12,337)	38,168
	10,643	(15,231)	(4,588)	11,172	(15,764)	(4,592)
	59,109	(9,838)	49,271	83,810	(31,846)	51,964
	-	-	-	18,568	(2,627)	15,941
	58,078	(4,417)	53,661	36,364	(4,493)	31,871
	107,417	(102,981)	4,436	105,652	(101,938)	3,714
	338,044	(182,082)	155,962	375,624	(206,177)	169,447
			18,632			22,310
			13,935			6,599
			(199,788)			(215,001)
			(11,259)			(16,646)
			(40,903)			(37,853)
			(46,585)			82,457
			(87,488)			44,604
			(98,747)			27,958

GROUP COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

	Restated 2019/20			2020/21		
	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
91	2,885	(210)	2,675	1,477	(5)	1,472
	79,950	(66,347)	13,603	57,601	(30,135)	27,466
	51,680	(21,932)	29,748	50,505	(12,337)	38,168
	10,643	(15,231)	(4,588)	11,172	(15,764)	(4,592)
	59,109	(9,838)	49,271	129,553	(77,459)	52,094
	-	-	-	18,568	(2,627)	15,941
	58,078	(4,417)	53,661	36,364	(4,493)	31,871
	107,417	(102,981)	4,436	105,652	(101,938)	3,714
	369,762	(220,956)	148,806	410,892	(244,758)	166,134
			18,498			22,205
			14,638			7,589
			(201,116)			(215,748)
			(19,174)			(19,820)
			(4)			(16)
			(19,178)			(19,836)
			(40,903)			(37,853)
			(48,841)			85,815
			(89,744)			47,962
			(108,922)			28,125

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

	General Fund (GF) Balance £,000	Earmarked GF Reserves £,000	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) £,000	Schools & Dedicated Schools Grant Reserves £,000	Capital Receipts Reserve £,000	Major Repairs Reserve £,000	Capital Grants Unapplied £,000	Total WBC Usable Reserves £,000	WBC Unusable Reserves £,000	Total WBC Reserves £,000
Balance at 31st March, 2020 brought forward										
As previously reported	(12,240)	(91,523)	(2,091)	(381)	(2,386)	(1,558)	(22,254)	(132,433)	(366,178)	(498,611)
Reporting of Schools Budget Deficit to new Adjustment Account at 1 April 2020				(2,993)				(2,993)	2,993	0
Restated Balance at 1 April 2020	(12,240)	(91,523)	(2,091)	(3,374)	(2,386)	(1,558)	(22,254)	(135,426)	(363,185)	(498,611)
Movement in Reserves during 2020/21:										
(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(14,611)	0	(2,035)	0	0	0	0	(16,646)	0	(16,646)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	44,604	44,604
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(14,611)	0	(2,035)	0	0	0	0	(16,646)	44,604	27,958
Adjustments between Accounting Basis & Funding Basis under Regulations (note 5)	(15,578)	0	2,858	0	(2,777)	(1,340)	3,647	(13,190)	13,190	0
Net (Increase) / Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	(30,189)	0	823	0	(2,777)	(1,340)	3,647	(29,836)	57,793	27,958
Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves (Note 6)	30,717	(26,803)	0	(1,974)	0	0	0	1,940	(1,940)	0
(Increase) / Decrease in 2020/21	528	(26,803)	823	(1,974)	(2,777)	(1,340)	3,647	(27,895)	55,853	27,958
Balance at 31st March 2021 carried forward	(11,712)	(118,327)	(1,268)	(5,347)	(5,162)	(2,898)	(18,606)	(163,321)	(307,326)	(470,647)

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT - Restated

	General Fund (GF) Balance	Earmarked GF Reserves	Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	Schools & Dedicated Schools Grant Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Major Repairs Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Total WBC Usable Reserves	WBC Unusable Reserves	Total WBC Reserves
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Balance at 31st March, 2019 brought forward										
As previously reported	(8,828)	(71,024)	(2,783)	(2,257)	(5,379)	(2,227)	(29,614)	(122,112)	(277,751)	(399,863)
Prior year adjustment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
As restated	(8,828)	(71,024)	(2,783)	(2,257)	(5,379)	(2,227)	(29,614)	(122,112)	(277,751)	(399,863)
Movement in Reserves during 2019/20:										
(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(9,452)	-	(1,807)	-	-	-	-	(11,259)	-	(11,259)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(87,488)	(87,488)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(9,452)	-	(1,807)	-	-	-	-	(11,259)	(87,488)	(98,747)
Adjustments between Accounting Basis & Funding Basis under Regulations (note 5)	(13,427)	-	2,368	-	2,993	669	7,360	(36)	36	-
Net (Increase) / Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	(22,878)	-	561	-	2,993	669	7,360	(11,295)	(87,452)	(98,747)
Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves (Note 6)	19,466	(20,499)	131	1,876	-	-	-	974	(974)	-
(Increase) / Decrease in 2019/20	(3,412)	(20,499)	692	1,876	2,993	669	7,360	(10,321)	(88,426)	(98,747)
Balance at 31st March 2020 carried forward	(12,240)	(91,523)	(2,091)	(381)	(2,386)	(1,558)	(22,254)	(132,433)	(366,178)	(498,611)

GROUP MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

	General Fund (GF) Balance	Earmarked GF Reserves	Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	Schools & DSG Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Major Repairs Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Authority Reserves	Authority's Share of Reserves of Subsidiary, Associates and Joint Ventures	Total Reserve
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Balance at 31st March, 2020 brought forward	(12,240)	(91,523)	(2,091)	(381)	(2,386)	(1,558)	(22,254)	(132,433)	(366,178)	(498,611)	(11,649)	(510,260)
<i>Reporting of Schools Budget Deficit to new Adjustment Account at 1 April 2020</i>	-	-	-	(2,993)	-	-	-	(2,993)	2,993	0	-	0
Restated Balance at 1 April 2020	(12,240)	(91,523)	(2,091)	(3,374)	(2,386)	(1,558)	(22,254)	(135,426)	(363,185)	(498,611)	(11,649)	(510,260)
Movement in reserves during 2020/21												
Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services	(29,050)	-	(2,035)	-	-	-	-	(31,085)	-	(31,085)	11,249	(19,836)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	44,604	44,604	3,358	47,962
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(29,050)	-	(2,035)	-	-	-	-	(31,085)	44,604	13,519	14,608	28,126
Adjustments between group accounts and authority accounts	14,439	-	0	-	-	-	-	14,439	-	14,439	(14,439)	0
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	(15,578)	-	2,859	-	(2,777)	(1,340)	3,647	(13,189)	13,189	0	0	0
Net Increase/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	(30,189)	0	824	0	(2,777)	(1,340)	3,647	(29,836)	57,793	27,958	169	28,126
Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves	30,717	(26,803)	0	(1,974)	0	0	0	1,940	(1,940)	0	0	0
Balance at 31st March 2021 carried forward	(11,712)	(118,326)	(1,268)	(5,348)	(5,163)	(2,898)	(18,607)	(163,322)	(307,327)	(470,649)	(11,485)	(482,134)

	General Fund (GF) Balance	Earmarked GF Reserves	Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	Schools & DSG Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Major Repairs Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Authority Reserves	Authority's Share of Reserves of Subsidiaries, Associates and Joint Ventures	Total Reserves
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Balance at 31st March, 2019 brought forward	(8,830)	(71,024)	(2,783)	(2,257)	(5,379)	(2,227)	(29,614)	(122,114)	(277,751)	(399,865)	(1,475)	(401,340)
Movement in reserves during 2019/20												
Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services	(24,315)	-	(1,807)	-	-	-	-	(26,122)	-	(26,122)	6,948	(19,174)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(87,488)	(87,488)	(2,256)	(89,744)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(24,315)	-	(1,807)	-	-	-	-	(26,122)	(87,488)	(113,610)	4,692	(108,918)
95 Adjustments between group accounts and authority accounts	14,865	-	-	-	-	-	-	14,865	-	14,865	(14,865)	-
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	(13,426)	-	2,368	-	2,993	669	7,360	(36)	36	-	-	-
Net Increase/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	(22,878)	-	561	-	2,993	669	7,360	(11,293)	(87,452)	(98,745)	(10,175)	(108,920)
Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves	19,466	(20,499)	131	1,876	-	-	-	974	(974)	-	-	-
Balance at 31st March 2020 carried forward	(12,240)	(91,523)	(2,091)	(381)	(2,386)	(1,558)	(22,254)	(132,433)	(366,177)	(498,610)	(11,650)	(510,260)

BALANCE SHEET

WBC 31st March, 2020 £,000 Restated	Group 31st March, 2020 £,000 Restated		Notes	WBC 31st March, 2021 £,000	Group 31st March, 2021 £,000
977,626	1,003,862	Property, Plant & Equipment	24	1,058,237	1,090,392
32,571	32,571	Investment Property	25	36,074	36,074
6,346	6,346	Intangible Assets	26	6,148	6,148
35,000	35,000	Long Term Investments	36	30,104	30,104
20,045	1,047	Long Term Debtors	30	26,225	1,164
1,071,588	1,078,826	Long Term Assets		1,156,788	1,163,882
40,506	40,506	Short Term Investments	36	195,336	195,336
-	1,039	Assets Held for Sale	35	692	3,260
14,797	16,575	Inventories	49	9,457	11,645
31,080	37,560	Short Term Debtors	30	52,938	59,446
60,603	62,627	Cash and Cash Equivalents	41	131,555	134,381
146,986	158,307	Current Assets		389,978	404,068
(1,995)	(1,995)	Cash and Cash Equivalents	41	(1,651)	(1,651)
(63,781)	(64,762)	Short Term Borrowing	36	(338,711)	(338,711)
(56,886)	(62,922)	Short Term Creditors	31	(66,779)	(72,372)
(7,858)	(7,858)	Provisions	32	(8,929)	(8,929)
(130,520)	(137,537)	Current Liabilities		(416,070)	(421,663)
(216,030)	(216,263)	Long Term Borrowing	36	(191,890)	(191,718)
(6,101)	(71)	Long Term Creditors	31	(5,431)	(404)
(8,149)	(8,149)	PFI and Finance Lease Liabilities	36	(7,604)	(7,604)
(259,601)	(265,143)	Pensions Liability	19	(357,174)	(366,330)
(99,563)	(99,563)	Capital Grants and Contributions Receipts in Advance	20	(97,950)	(97,950)
(589,444)	(589,189)	Long Term Liabilities		(660,049)	(664,006)
498,610	510,407	Net Assets		470,647	482,282
(132,433)	(141,953)	Usable Reserves	22	(163,321)	(169,505)
(366,177)	(368,307)	Unusable Reserves	23	(307,326)	(312,630)
(498,610)	(510,260)	Total Reserves		(470,647)	(482,135)
-	(147)	Minority Interest		-	(147)
(498,610)	(510,407)	Total Reserves Excluding Minority Interest		(470,647)	(482,282)

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

	Notes	Restated WBC 2019/20 £,000	Restated Group 2019/20 £,000	WBC 2020/21 £,000	Group 2020/21 £,000
Net Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services		11,259	19,178	16,646	19,836
Adjustments to Net Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services for Non-cash Movements	38	99,547	91,827	58,326	55,987
Adjustments for Items Included in the Net Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services that are Investing or Financing Activities					
• Proceeds from disposal of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets and other capital receipts		(1,745)	(1,745)	(7,349)	(7,349)
• Capital grants and contributions		(61,446)	(61,445)	(67,061)	(67,808)
Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities		47,615	47,815	562	666
Investing Activities	39	(97,271)	(97,020)	(182,568)	(180,484)
Financing Activities	40	58,422	58,727	253,302	251,916
Net Increase or (Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents		8,766	9,522	71,296	72,098
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Reporting Period		49,842	51,110	58,608	60,632
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the End of the Reporting Period	41	58,608	60,632	129,904	132,730

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NOTE 01 EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS

This note shows the link between the net expenditure chargeable to the general fund and HRA balances and the net expenditure in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement. The net expenditure chargeable to the general fund and HRA balances differs from the outturn figures stated in the explanatory forward, as the outturn figures include carry forwards and depreciation.

			2020/21		
Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund and HRA Balances	2019/20 Restated Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	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
£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
100	5,770	(3,095)	2,675	Chief Executive	639
	(836)	21,594	20,759	Resources and Assets	7,181
	21,706	8,042	29,748	Place and Growth	32,284
	(2,491)	(2,097)	(4,588)	Housing Revenue Account	(1,827)
	50,004	(733)	49,271	Adult Social Care	52,218
	28,964	24,697	53,661	Communities, Insight and Change	14,670
	1,697	2,739	4,436	Children's Services	29,054
	104,814	51,147	155,962	Net Cost of Services	134,584
	(107,534)	(59,687)	(167,221)	Other Income & Expenditure	(133,233)
	(2,720)	(8,540)	(11,259)	Surplus/Deficit on provision of services	1,350
	(11,611)			Opening General Fund and HRA balance	(14,331)
	(2,720)			Less/Plus (Surplus) or Deficit on General Fund and HRA Balance in Year	1,350
	(14,331)			Closing General Fund and HRA balance at 31 March*	(12,980)

* A breakdown between the general fund and HRA balance is available in the movement in reserves statement.
 The adjustments between accounting and funding basis column in the table above is analysed further on the table below.

2019/20				<u>Expenditure and Funding Analysis Detail</u>	2020/21			
Adjustment for Capital Purposes	Net Change for Pensions Adjustments	Other Differences	Total Adjustments		Adjustment for Capital Purposes	Net Change for Pensions Adjustments	Other Differences	Total Adjustments
£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000		£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
2,393	104	(5,592)	(3,095)	Chief Executive	818	25	(11)	832
10,750	1,688	9,156	21,594	Resources and Assets	25,514	1,156	(2,941)	23,729
4,581	1,356	2,105	8,042	Place and Growth	7,166	1,035	(2,317)	5,884
(2,644)	545	2	(2,097)	Housing Revenue Account	(3,028)	205	57	(2,765)
792	623	(2,148)	(733)	Adult Social Care	1,613	1,178	(3,044)	(254)
				Communities, Insight and Change	1,565	1,353	(1,647)	1,271
101 25,828	1,059	(2,190)	24,697	Children's Services	2,981	1,561	(1,725)	2,817
				Children's Services - Schools Block	7	2,940	402	3,350
2	3,076	(339)	2,739					
41,702	8,451	994	51,147	Net Cost of Services	36,636	9,453	(11,226)	34,863
14,253	-	-	14,253	Other Operating Expenditure	18,234	0	0	18,234
1,630	6,462	-	8,092	Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	0	5,663	0	5,663
(66,194)	-	(15,838)	(82,032)	Taxation and Non-specific Grant Income	(66,845)	0	(9,911)	(76,756)
(50,311)	6,462	(15,838)	(59,687)	Other Income & Expenditure	(48,611)	5,663	(9,911)	(52,859)
(8,609)	14,913	(14,844)	(8,540)	Difference between General Fund surplus and deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or deficit on the Provision of services	(11,975)	15,116	(21,137)	(17,996)

NOTE 02 ACCOUNTING STANDARDS THAT HAVE BEEN ISSUED BUT HAVE NOT YET BEEN ADOPTED, AND DISCLOSURE OF A CHANGE IN ACCOUNTING POLICY

The Council should apply changes in accounting policy retrospectively unless transitional arrangements allow for alternative treatments, as well as disclosing accounting standards which have been issued, but not yet adopted in this year's accounts.

At the balance sheet date, the following amendments to existing accounting standards have been published but not included in the 2020/21 Code of Practice of Local Accounting in the United Kingdom:

- Definition of a Business: Amendments to IFRS 3 Business Combinations
- Interest Rate Benchmark Reform: Amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39 and IFRS 7
- Interest Rate Benchmark Reform – Phase 2: Amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39, IFRS 7, IFRS 4 and IFRS 16

All of these amendments to existing standards are unlikely to have a material impact on the Council's 2021/22 financial statements.

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NOTE 03 CRITICAL JUDGEMENTS IN APPLYING ACCOUNTING POLICIES

In applying the accounting policies set out in chapter 11, 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 set out in the following paragraphs.

Future Funding

There is a high degree of uncertainty about future levels of funding for local government. The Council are awaiting a multi year funding settlement in December 2021. This will provide some certainty around funding streams however there still remains some uncertainty on the long term impact on the Council's financial position as a result of the Corona Virus (Covid-19). The Council has determined that this uncertainty is not yet sufficient to provide an indication that the assets of the Council might be impaired as a result of a need to close facilities and reduce levels of service provision.

Group Boundaries

The Council had interests in nine companies at 31 March 2021, and at 31 March 2020. Depending on the Council's ability to influence control different accounting treatments are applied. Details regarding these companies and their assessments are disclosed in note 46 to the financial statements.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

The Council is deemed to jointly control the services provided under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract with WRG (RE3 Ltd) for the disposal of waste. Control of the services is shared with Reading and Bracknell Forest Borough Councils. Wokingham Borough Council has reviewed the application of the control tests within IFRIC 12 to determine whether the assets within the contract should be on-balance sheet. The accounting policies for PFI schemes and similar contracts have been applied to the arrangement and the assets (valued at approximately £6.4m at 31 March 2021) are recognised as Property, Plant and Equipment in the Council's Balance Sheet which amounts to a 37.2% share of the total value of the assets that will revert to the ownership of the RE3 partnership between the three council's at the end of the contract.

Investment Properties

Properties that are held for solely to earn rental income and/or capital appreciation are, in terms of the Code of Practice, to be classified as investment properties. If such properties are used in any way for the provision of services as well as earning rental and/or capital appreciation they do not meet the criteria for classification for investment property and are, accordingly, classified as property, plant and equipment. Properties owned by the Council that are located within the Borough of Wokingham that earn rental income are classified as property, plant and equipment as these properties have an element of economic development or regeneration. Properties owned by the Council that meet the criteria and are located outside the Borough of Wokingham are classified as investment properties.



Schools Non-Current Assets

The Council recognises Schools non-current assets in line with the appropriate accounting standards, and they are recognised on the Balance Sheet only if the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the schools will flow to the Council. The Council considers that the economic benefits or service potential of a school's assets normally flows to the Council where it has the ability to employ the staff and is able to set the admission criteria. There are currently five types of school within the Council as follows:

- Community Schools - The Council both appoints the staff and sets the admission criteria. The assets of these schools are, therefore, recognised on the Council's Balance Sheet.
- Voluntary controlled (VC) and Voluntary aided (VA) Schools - The Council both appoints the staff and sets the admissions criteria, however, the legal ownership of the school land and buildings belong to a charity, normally a religious body. The Council considers that it does not receive the economic benefit/service potential of the school and the assets are not recognised on the Council's Balance Sheet.
- Academy Schools - The staff are appointed by the schools governing body, which also sets the admission criteria, therefore, the Council does not receive the economic benefit or service potential of these schools and does not recognise them on the Council's Balance Sheet. The transfer of school assets are recognised as a disposal from the Council's Balance Sheet on the date the school converts to Academy status. No impairment is recognised by the Council prior to the transfer.
- Foundation Trust Schools - Referred to as either a Foundation Trust School or a Foundation School. The ownership of schools in this category are held within a charitable trust, and the assets are not recognised on the Council's Balance Sheet.

In producing the financial statements the Council makes an assessment of the materiality of transactions and balances when applying its accounting policies. For the purposes of the 2020/21 financial statements the Council has applied a materiality level of £200,000 when recognising assets and liabilities to be disclosed within the financial statements.

NOTE 04 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 different from the assumptions and estimates.

The items in the Council's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2021 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
Valuation of Land & Buildings	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.	<p>If the useful life of assets is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying amount of the assets falls.</p> <p>It is estimated that the annual depreciation charge for buildings would increase by approximately £0.6m for every year that useful lives had to be reduced.</p> <p>Any changes in valuation will impact on the value of the Council assets held on balance sheet. Increases in asset value will lead to an increase in the revaluation reserve and future depreciation charges. Reductions in value will reduce the revaluation reserves and may result in losses posted to the income and expenditure statement.</p>
	Investment properties are subject to changing market conditions, which can lead to some uncertainties within their valuations. These market conditions are monitored closely on a regular basis.	Any changes in fair value of investment properties will impact the value of the assets held on the Balance Sheet, and result in a gain or loss posted to the income and expenditure statement.
Provisions	The Council has made provision for holiday and flexi leave entitlement owing to staff at the end of the financial year. The estimate within the accounts has been based on an assumption of approximately 4.1% of payroll costs. For staff based in schools a formula based on CIPFA guidance has been used.	A 1% change (i.e. using 3.1% or 5.1%) in the estimate of accumulating absences would result in an increase or decrease of approximately £0.6m in the provision required for accumulating absences in relation to non-school staff.
	The Council has made a provision for dilapidation costs for buildings the Council lease, to return them to their original condition at the end of the lease, and to fund any outstanding leasing costs.	There may be other buildings which the Council lease that have been altered, needing significant work to return them to their original condition, which are not presently known.

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if Actual Results Differ from Assumptions
	<p>The Collection Fund includes provisions of £7.2m for appeals against business rates valuations as advised by DCLG guidance.</p>	<p>The provision at 31 March 2021 has been calculated using information provided by a company specialising in business rate calculations including provisions for appeals. Their calculation has been reviewed and is estimated to be reasonable. The Council's share of this provision is £3.5m.</p>
Pension Liability	<p>Estimation of the net liability 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. The actuaries Barnett Waddingham LLP provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.</p>	<p>The effects on the net pension's liability of changes in individual assumptions can be measured and seen in note 19. For example, a 0.1% decrease or increase in the discount rate assumption would result in an increase or decrease in the pension liability of £12.1m.</p>
PFI Liabilities	<p>The value of PFI service charge payable under the contract disclosed in note 29 of the accounts is dependent upon assumptions regarding future inflation and tonnage rates.</p>	<p>A 1% increase in RPI would increase Wokingham's contract charge by £1m. Similarly a 1% increase in tonnages would increase the service charge by £0.2m per annum.</p>
Arrears	<p>At 31 March 2021, the Council had a balance of total short term debtors of £52.9m, of which Council tax debt was £3.2m, and Government and other public sector debtors were £10.3m.</p>	<p>The provision set aside for bad debt increases according to the age of the debt. If collection rates for debtors (excluding public sector debtors) were to deteriorate, a 1% increase in the amount of the impairment of doubtful debts would require an additional allowance for sundry debts from the revenue account of £17k and from the Collection Fund, for council tax, of £49k.</p>

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if Actual Results Differ from Assumptions
<p style="text-align: center;">Corona Virus (Covid-19)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">106</p>	<p>Covid-19 is a worldwide pandemic and, to date, has had a significant impact on the UK economy as well as additional cost pressures on health services and local authorities. The impact on the Council's finances are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional costs primarily in adult social care. ▪ Inability to achieve budget savings due to a change in priorities to deal with the crisis. ▪ Reduction in income mainly in respect of fees and charges and potential reduction in Business rates and Council Tax income. ▪ Potential increase in the non-collectability of debtors ▪ Potential reduction in rental and interest income ▪ Potential reduction in value of properties, including investment properties, particularly those based on rental income. ▪ Reduction in pension fund assets and consequent increase in net pension fund liability. <p>Additional emergency funding has been provided by Central Government and further funding is expected post crisis, however, there is uncertainty as to the amount.</p>	<p>At 31 March 2021 it is clear that the full impact of Covid-19 and any additional funding from Central Government will not be known. It is possible that some of the assumptions referred to above will need to be revised in the next financial year. These are primarily those relating to provisions, arrears and the pension fund liability. Property values, including investment properties, may also be adversely impacted.</p>

NOTE 05 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 arrive at the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Council to meet future capital and revenue expenditure.

Please see the tables on the following pages

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2020-21	General Fund (GF) Balance £,000	Earmarked Reserves £,000	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) £,000	Capital Receipts Reserve £,000	Major Repairs Reserve £,000	Capital Grants Unapplied £,000	Total Movement in Usable Reserves £,000	Movement in Unusable Reserves £,000
Adjustment to 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:								
-Pensions costs (transferred (to) or from the pensions reserve)	(14,787)	-	(329)	-	-	-	(15,116)	15,116
-Financial instruments (Transferred to the financial instruments adjustments account)	135	-	(1)	-	-	-	134	(134)
-Council Tax and NDR (Transferred (to) or from the Collection Fund Adjustment Account)	(5,169)	-	-	-	-	-	(5,169)	5,169
-Accumulated Absences (Transferred (to) or from the Accumulated Absences Account)	(1,656)	-	(56)	-	-	-	(1,712)	1,712
- Transfers (to) or from the Dedicated Schools Grant Adjustment Account	(2,833)	-	-	-	-	-	(2,833)	2,833
-Reversal of entries included in the surplus or deficit on the provision of services in relation to capital expenditure (Charged to the Capital Adjustment Account)	(70,788)	-	(4,464)	-	-	-	(75,252)	75,252
Total Adjustment to Revenue Resources	(95,098)	-	(4,850)	-	-	-	(99,948)	99,948
Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources								
Transfer of non-current asset sale proceeds from revenue to the capital receipts reserve	6,330	-	349	(6,679)	-	-	-	-
Payments to the government housing receipts pool (funded by a transfer from the capital receipts reserve)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Posting of HRA resources from revenue to the major repairs reserve	-	-	4,332	-	(4,332)	-	-	-
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt (transfer from the capital adjustment account)	3,900	-	3,028	-	-	-	6,928	(6,928)
Total adjustments between revenue and capital	10,230	-	7,709	(6,679)	(4,332)	-	6,928	(6,928)
Adjustments to Capital Resources								
Use of the capital receipts reserve to finance capital expenditure	-	-	-	4,912	-	-	4,912	(4,912)
Use of the major repairs reserve to finance capital expenditure	-	-	-	-	2,992	-	2,992	(2,992)
Repayment of long-term loans	-	-	-	(360)	-	-	(360)	360
Application of capital grants to finance capital expenditure	69,289	-	-	(650)	-	3,647	72,286	(72,286)
Total Adjustments to Resources	69,289	-	-	3,902	2,992	3,647	79,830	(79,830)
Total Adjustments 2020-21	(15,578)	-	2,858	(2,777)	(1,340)	3,647	(13,190)	13,190

2019-20 Restated	General Fund (GF) Balance £,000	Earmarked Reserves £,000	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) £,000	Capital Receipts Reserve £,000	Major Repairs Reserve £,000	Capital Grants Unapplied £,000	Total Movement in Usable Reserves £,000	Movement in Unusable Reserves £,000
Adjustment to 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:								
-Pensions costs (transferred (to) or from the pensions reserve)	(14,586)	-	(327)	-	-	-	(14,913)	14,913
-Financial instruments (Transferred to the financial instruments adjustments account)	135	-	1	-	-	-	136	(136)
-Council Tax and NDR (Transferred (to) or from the Collection Fund Adjustment Account)	(4,876)	-	-	-	-	-	(4,876)	4,876
-Accumulated Absences (Transferred (to) or from the Accumulated Absences Account)	(11)	-	(3)	-	-	-	(14)	14
-Reversal of entries included in the surplus or deficit on the provision of services in relation to capital expenditure (Charged to the Capital Adjustment Account)	(58,137)	-	(5,086)	-	-	(812)	(65,035)	65,035
Total Adjustment to Revenue Resources	(78,474)	-	(5,415)	-	-	(812)	(84,701)	84,701
Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources								
Transfer of non-current asset sale proceeds from revenue to the capital receipts reserve								
	49	-	1,696	(1,745)	-	-	-	-
Payments to the government housing receipts pool (funded by a transfer from the capital receipts reserve)								
	-	-	(292)	292	-	-	-	-
Posting of HRA resources from revenue to the major repairs reserve								
	-	-	4,382	-	(4,382)	-	-	-
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt (transfer from the capital adjustment account)								
	3,651	-	1,998	-	-	-	5,649	(5,649)
Total adjustments between revenue and capital	3,700	-	7,784	(1,453)	(4,382)	-	5,649	(5,649)
Adjustments to Capital Resources								
Use of the capital receipts reserve to finance capital expenditure								
	-	-	-	4,578	-	-	4,578	(4,578)
Use of the major repairs reserve to finance capital expenditure								
	-	-	-	-	5,051	-	5,051	(5,051)
Repayment of long-term loans								
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Application of capital grants to finance capital expenditure								
	61,347	-	-	(132)	-	8,172	69,387	(69,387)
Total Adjustments to Resources	61,347	-	-	4,446	5,051	8,172	79,016	(79,016)
Total Adjustments 2019-20	(13,427)	-	2,368	2,993	669	7,360	(36)	36

NOTE 06 TRANSFERS TO/FROM EARMARKED RESERVES

This note details 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 from earmarked reserves to meet General Fund and HRA expenditure in 2020/21

	Transfers Out 2019/20	Transfers In 2019/20	Restated Balance at 31st March, 2020	Transfers Out 2020/21 £,000	Transfers In 2020/21 £,000	Balance at 31st March, 2021 £,000
Balances held by Schools under a Scheme of Delegation	913	(777)	(3,373)	717	(2,691)	(5,347)
Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
Earmarked General Fund Reserves	8,417	(28,917)	(91,524)	11,518	(38,321)	(118,327)
	9,330	(29,694)	(94,897)	12,235	(41,012)	(123,674)

For the 20/21 financial year, the accounting treatment for deficit balances in relation to the dedicated schools grant changed. This change requires any deficit to be shown in unusable reserves rather than earmarked reserves.

NOTE 07 MATERIAL ITEMS OF INCOME AND EXPENSES AND PRIOR YEAR ADJUSTMENTS

Material Items of Income and Expense during 2020/21, which are outside of the normal Council's business are as follows:

- The Council paid £0.4m and owed a further £1.3m in Section 106 receipts to our housing companies in 2020/21, on completion of affordable housing developments at Finch Road, Gorrick Square, Middlefields and Southlake Crescent (£6.7m in 2019/20)
- The Council advanced loans to its subsidiaries WBC Holdings Ltd, Wokingham Housing Ltd and Loddon Homes Ltd totalling £6.5m in 2020/21 (in 2019/20 the advance was £5.3m). The loans are to be used to fund housing developments
- Capital expenditure in the capital programme in 2020/21 was £123.5m (compared to £164.9m in 2019/20) a decrease of £41.4m.

NOTE 08 OTHER OPERATING EXPENDITURE

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Parish Council Precepts	4,379	4,746
Payments to the Government Housing Capital Receipts Pool	292	0
(Gains) / Losses on the Disposal of Non-current Assets	13,961	17,563
Total	18,632	22,310

NOTE 09 FINANCING AND INVESTMENT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Interest Payable and Similar Charges on Debt (note 36)	6,840	7,719
Interest Payable and Similar Charges on Finance Leases (note 36)	107	107
Interest Payable and Similar Charges on Private Finance Initiatives (note 36)	581	531
Pensions Interest Cost and Expected Return on Pensions (note 19)	6,832	5,663
Interest Receivable and Similar Income (note 36)	(1,793)	(2,122)
Income and Expenditure in Relation to Investment Properties and Changes in their Fair Value (note 25)	1,369	(5,297)
Total	13,935	6,599



NOTE 10 TAXATION AND NON-SPECIFIC GRANT INCOME

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Council Tax Income	(110,781)	(117,080)
Retained Business Rates	(50,521)	(22,260)
Retained Business Rates tariff	36,200	20,242
Business Rates Levy	-	1,249
Revenue Support Grant	-	-
Other Non-ringfenced Government Grants	(13,239)	(30,091)
Capital Grants and Contributions	(61,446)	(67,061)
Total	(199,788)	(215,001)

Other non-ringfenced government grants include new home bonus, adult social care grant, business rates reliefs. In addition for 2020/21, covid grants such as Contain Outbreak Management Fund, Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and Hardship Fund.

NOTE 11 EXPENDITURE AND INCOME ANALYSED BY NATURE

This note provides a subjective analysis of the Council's main income and expenditure statement.

	2019/20 Restated £,000	2020/21 £,000
Expenditure		
Employee benefits expenses	109,828	129,342
Other service expenses	185,874	195,042
Support service recharges	(1,378)	1,756
Depreciation, amortisation, impairment	44,991	44,188
Interest payments	14,360	14,019
Precepts & Levies	4,379	4,746
Payments to Housing Capital Receipts Pool	292	0
Gain or Loss on Disposal of Non-Current Assets	14,059	17,563
Total Expenditure	372,405	406,655
Income		
Fees, charges & other service income	(69,324)	(56,124)
Interest and investment income	(1,793)	(2,122)
Income from council tax, NDR, district rate income	(125,103)	(117,849)
Government grants and contributions	(187,444)	(247,204)
Total Income	(383,664)	(423,301)
(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(11,259)	(16,646)

NOTE 11B REVENUE FROM CONTRACTS WITH SERVICE RECIPIENTS

Amounts in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Fees, charges and other service income includes the following revenues from contracts with service recipients;		
Rents	(20,997)	(23,495)
Fees	(7,598)	(6,124)
Charges	(2,610)	(2,300)
Customer/client income	(6,657)	(6,095)
Car Parking income	(2,180)	(1,219)
Sales	(2,978)	(2,757)
Other	(2,135)	(2,386)
Total included in Fees, Charges and Other Service Income	(45,155)	(44,376)

NOTE 12 TRADING OPERATIONS

The Council has established one trading unit where the service manager is required to operate in a commercial environment and balance their budget by generating income from other parts of the Council or other organisations. Details of this unit are as follows:

Building Control Trading Account

The Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 require the disclosure of information regarding the setting of charges for the administration of the building control function. Wokingham Borough Council sets charges for work carried out in relation to building regulations with the aim of covering all costs incurred. However, certain activities performed by the Building Control Unit cannot be charged for, such as providing general advice and liaising with other statutory authorities. The chargeable activities are summarised below:

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Building Control Trading Account		
Turnover	(537)	(460)
Expenditure	541	483
(Surplus) / Deficit on Trading Account	4	23

The chargeable account made a deficit of £23k in 2020/21 compared to a £4k deficit in 2019/20. The account should take one financial year with another and should achieve break-even over a rolling period of three years ending March 2024. The reserves will be used to replace funding gaps over the 3 year period. The balance on the reserve at 31 March 2021 is a surplus of £58k.

NOTE 13 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

The Council paid the following amounts to Members of the Council during the year:

	2019/20	2020/21
	£,000	£,000
Members Remuneration	587	581
	587	581

The amount paid to Members includes allowances, expenses and other remuneration.

NOTE 14 OFFICERS' REMUNERATION

The Council paid the following amounts to its senior employees:

Post Title	Year	Salary, Fees and Allowances £	Performance Related Pay £	Expenses £	Compensation for Loss of Office £	Pension Contribution £	Total £
Chief Executive Susan Parsonage	2020/21	150,000	-	478	-	34,500	184,978
Chief Executive Susan Parsonage	2019/20	150,000	-	5,586	-	29,250	184,836
Chief Executive (up to 30 Apr 19) ¹	2019/20	10,620	3,320	-	51,871	-	65,811
Director, Place & Growth (from 01 Jun 20 to 12 Mar 21)	2020/21	88,349	-	-	16,000	20,276	124,625
Director, Place & Growth (to 30 June 20)	2020/21	28,174	8,452	-	-	8,424	45,050
Director, Place & Growth ²	2019/20	112,695	3,934	160	-	22,703	139,492
Director, Communities, Insight & Change (from 26 May 20) ^a	2020/21	95,730	-	-	-	22,018	117,748
Director, Resources & Assets and Deputy Chief Executive ³	2020/21	120,000	9,000	297	-	29,670	158,967
Director of Corporate Services and Deputy Chief Executive	2019/20	120,000	8,015	502	-	24,883	153,399
Assistant Director, Governance	2020/21	98,386	-	263	-	22,629	121,278
Assistant Director, Governance	2019/20	115,415	-	806	-	18,771	134,992
Director of Adult Social Care & Health	2020/21	112,695	7,804	-	-	27,715	148,213
Director of Adult Social Care & Health ⁵	2019/20	103,930	-	-	-	20,266	124,196
Director, Children's Services	2020/21	112,695	8,452	90	-	27,864	149,101
Director, Children's Services	2019/20	112,695	3,264	379	-	22,579	138,917
Director, Children's Services (from 01 Jul 19 to 26 Jul 19 and 27 Aug 19 to 27 Sept 19) ⁴	2019/20	37,199	-	-	-	-	37,199

2020/21

^a New post from 26 May 2020

2019/20

¹ 0.8 FTE

² Previously Director, Locality and Customer Services, Job Title changed to Director, Place & Growth Mar 2020

³ Previously Director of Corporate Services and Deputy Chief Executive, Job Title changed to Director, Resources & Assets and Deputy Chief Executive Mar 2020

⁴ Total amount paid inclusive of agency costs

Council's other employees (including those employed in schools) receiving more than £50,000 remuneration for the year (excluding employer's pension contributions) were paid the following amounts:

Remuneration Band	2019/20				2020/21			
	No of Employees				No of Employees			
	Council	School	VA School	Total	Council	School	VA School	Total
£50,000 - £54,999	51	24	2	77	40	21	1	62
£55,000 - £59,999	22	10	2	34	34	14	3	51
£60,000 - £64,999	14	11	0	25	21	8	1	30
£65,000 - £69,999	11	7	0	18	11	10	1	22
£70,000 - £74,999	10	8	2	20	8	8	0	16
£75,000 - £79,999	5	5	0	10	7	5	1	13
£80,000 - £84,999	2	1	0	3	5	1	0	6
£85,000 - £89,999	1	2	0	3	3	2	0	5
£90,000 - £94,999	1	2	0	3	0	0	0	0
£95,000 - £99,999	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
Over £100,000	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
	117	70	6	193	132	71	7	210

NOTE 15 TERMINATION BENEFITS

The Council terminated the contracts of a number of employees in 2020/21. These were mainly due to officers who were made redundant as part of the reorganisation of services at the Council.

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

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COUNCIL	Number of Compulsory redundancies		Number of other departures agreed		Total number of exit packages		Total cost of exit packages in each band	
	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
Exit package cost								
£0 - £20,000	5	1	6	8	11	9	£41,233	£74,350
£20,001 - £40,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
£40,001 - £60,000	1	-	-	-	1	-	51,871	-
£60,001 - £80,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SCHOOLS	Number of Compulsory redundancies		Number of other departures agreed		Total number of exit packages		Total cost of exit packages in each band	
	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
Exit package cost								
£0 - £20,000	4	5	4	-	8	5	£52,846	£5,844
£20,001 - £40,000	1	-	1	-	2	-	£60,260	£0

NOTE 16 RELATED PARTIES

The Council is required to disclose material transactions with related parties – bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence 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.

All Councillors, officers in the Corporate Leadership Team, Directors, Assistant Directors, Monitoring and Deputy Monitoring Officers, Borough Solicitor and all employees Tier 4 and above were asked to complete a disclosure statement in respect of themselves and their family members / close relatives, detailing any material transactions with related parties.

Central Government

Central government has a direct influence over the general operations of the Council – it is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Council operates, provides a large amount 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 set out in note 20.

Members

Members of the Council have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies. The total of member's allowances paid in 2020/21 is shown in Note 13. During 2020/21, works and services to the value of £8.8m (£8.2m in 2019/20) were commissioned from companies in which 5 members had an interest (5 in 2019/20). Contracts were entered into in full compliance with the Council's standing orders. In addition, grants and payments totalling £3.4m (£4.1m in 2019/20) were paid to voluntary organisations and charities in which 6 members declared an interest (6 in 2019/20). Payments of £474k (£1.6m in 2019/20) were made to education establishments in which 2 members declared an interest (5 in 2019/20). Payments of £2.6m were made to local council bodies (£2.9m in 2019/20) in which 4 members had interests (5 in 2019/20). The payment to the Berkshire pension fund is in respect of pensions as outlined in note 19; the Council appoints a Councillor as a representative on the Berkshire Pension Fund Advisory Panel. The Council owed £151k to these organisations at 31 March 2021 (£6.3m at 31 March 2020), while £1.2m was owed to Wokingham Borough Council by the relevant organisations at 31 March 2021 (£2.6m at 31 March 2020).

The relevant members did not take part in any discussion or decision relating to the grants and payments. Details of all these transactions are recorded in the Register of Members Interest, open to public inspection at the Council Offices during office hours.

Officers

During 2020/21, works and services to the value of £12.7k (£14k in 2019/20) were commissioned from companies in which 1 officer had an interest (1 in 2019/20). The Council did not owe any amounts to the relevant organisations at 31 March 2021 (£0 at 31 March 2020), while £76k was owed to Wokingham Borough Council at 31 March 2021 (£3.050m at 31 March 2020). No payments were made to were made to education establishments or Local Council Bodies 2020/21 or 2019/20, and no officers declared an interest in either year. Contracts were entered into in full compliance with the Council's standing orders. The relevant officers did not take part in any discussion or decision relating to the grants and payments.

Town and Parish Councils

Certain Members of Wokingham Borough Council are also councillors of the 17 Town and Parish Councils within the Borough. Each Town or Parish Council has the ability to levy a precept upon Wokingham Borough Council for the collection of council tax on behalf of the Town or Parish Councils. In 2020/21 Wokingham Borough Council collected and paid over £4.7m (£4.4m in 2019/20) in precepts and grants to the Town or Parish Councils.

Other Public Bodies

The Council entered into a PFI contract with Waste Recycling Group (re3 Ltd) in 2006/07 for the disposal of waste together with Reading and Bracknell Forest Borough Councils, see note 29 for further details. The Council's contribution for 2020/21 was £10.9m (£10.2m in 2019/20). The Council also operates a number of shared services with other local authorities details of which are set out in note 44.

Local Enterprise Partnership

No long-term loans were raised from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in 2020/21 or 2019/20. During 2019/20 an existing loan of £1m was repaid.

Entities Controlled or Significantly Influenced by the Council

The Council had seven subsidiary companies at 31 March 2021 (seven at 31 March 2020), which are owned in full either directly or through existing subsidiaries apart from Optalis which has a shared ownership with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (see note 46 for more details), and each had a Board of Directors on which Council members serve. Their accounts are incorporated in the main body of the Council's accounts with separate disclosures where material differences occur. See note 46 for more information on the Council's companies.

As at 31st March 2021, the Council had a long term debtor with WBC Holdings Ltd of £21.4m (£16.3m in 2019/20). The Council also held long term debtors with Loddon Homes Ltd of £1.1m (£1.0m in 2019/20) and Wokingham Housing Ltd of £3.6m (£2.7m in 2019/20).

Included within the Councils comprehensive income and expenditure statement for 2020/21 was spend of c£7.5m with Optalis. During 2020/21, the Council also paid £1.7m in grant to Loddon Homes Ltd and granted £6.4m in Capital Loans to Wokingham Holdings Ltd (£5.5m) and Wokingham Housing Ltd (£0.9m). In addition, the Council received c£180k from Loddon Homes Ltd for services provided, £48k from Wokingham Housing Ltd and £211k from Berry Brook Homes Ltd.

NOTE 17 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 statutory inspections provided by the Council's auditors, Ernst & Young LLP:

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
External Audit Services	81	98
Certification of Grants and Returns	20	26
	101	124

NOTE 18 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 retirement, and the Council contributes towards the costs by making contributions based on a percentage of members' pensionable salaries.

The scheme is a multi-employer 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 the performance of the scheme with sufficient reliability for accounting purposes. For the purposes of the Statement of Accounts it is, therefore, accounted for on the same basis as a defined contribution scheme.

In 2020/21, the Council paid £6.404m to the Teachers' Pension Scheme in respect of teachers' retirement benefits representing 23.68% of pensionable pay. The figures for 2019/20 were £5,848m and 16.48% (April to August) and 23.68% (September to March) respectively.

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 19.

NOTE 19 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 the employees retire, the Council has a commitment to make the payments (for those benefits) and to disclose them at the time the employees earn their future entitlement.

The Council participates in two schemes:

- The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), administered by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead – this is a funded defined benefit final salary scheme, meaning that the Council and employees pay contributions into the fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pensions liabilities with investment assets.
- Wokingham Borough Council is also responsible for a share (19.0561%) of the former Berkshire County Council (BCC) Local Government Pension Scheme. The scheme is also administered by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Although now closed, a liability remains amongst the six Berkshire Councils for the pensioners that were in the scheme when BCC ceased to exist. In prior years a separate valuation report was produced annually for this fund and the Council's share of 19.0561% disclosed separately in the tables below. In the year ended 31 March 2020 a single valuation report was produced incorporating the Council's figures and its share of the BCC fund. Accordingly only the combined amounts are reflected in the tables below for both the 2018-19 and 2019-20 years.
- Optalis Ltd (a Group company) is an admitted member of the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS).

The principal risks to the Council of the schemes are the longevity assumptions, statutory changes to the scheme and structural changes to the scheme (i.e. large scale withdrawals from the scheme), changes to inflation, bond yields and the performance of the equity investments held by the scheme. These are mitigated to a certain extent by the statutory requirements to charge to the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account the amounts required by statute as described in the accounting policies note.

Transactions Relating to Post-Employment Benefits

The Council recognises the cost of post-employment 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 the Council is 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. During the year the following transactions for the Wokingham scheme (WBC) including WBC's share of those for Berkshire County Council (BCC), have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the General Fund Balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement. The Optalis Ltd figures which related to Wokingham Borough Council have been added to the total of Wokingham to give the overall Group figures.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	2019/20			2020/21		
	WBC & BCC £,000	Optalis £,000	Total Group £,000	WBC & BCC £,000	Optalis £,000	Total Group £,000
Service cost comprising:						
Current service costs	19,125	455	19,580	22,759	268	23,027
Administration costs	129	9	138	130	8	138
Financing and investment income and expenditure:						
Net interest on the defined liability	6,832	174	7,006	5,663	129	5,792
Total post-employment benefit charged to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services	26,086	638	26,724	28,552	405	28,957
Return on fund assets in excess of interest	16,119	556	16,675	(37,107)	(1,208)	(38,315)
Other actuarial gains/(losses) on assets	(2,573)	684	(1,889)	0	0	0
Change in financial assumptions	(47,722)	(1,895)	(49,617)	131,453	5,242	136,695
Change in demographic assumptions	(5,906)	(229)	(6,135)	(5,253)	(417)	(5,670)
Experience gain/(loss) on defined benefit obligation	(6,502)	(1,372)	(7,874)	(6,636)	(259)	(6,895)
Re-measurements on scheme assets	(46,584)	(2,256)	(48,840)	82,457	3,358	85,815
Total post-employment benefits charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure statement	(20,498)	(1,618)	(22,116)	111,009	3,763	114,772

Current service costs represent the cost to the employer of benefits earned by active members in the accounting year and added to the liabilities. It is calculated using assumptions at the start of the year which is not a fixed percentage of payroll and is expected to vary from year to year as assumptions change.

Movement in Reserves Statement

Reversal of net charges made to the surplus or deficit for the provision of services for post-employment benefits in accordance with the Code Actual amount charged against the general fund balance for pensions in the year for the employer's contributions payable to scheme

	2019/20			2020/21		
	WBC & BCC	Optalis	Total Group	WBC Inc BCC	Optalis	Total Group
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
	(26,086)	(638)	(26,724)	(28,552)	(405)	(28,957)
	11,173	186	11,359	13,436	149	13,585
	(14,913)	(452)	(15,365)	(15,116)	(256)	(15,372)

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The amount included in the balance sheet arising from the Council's obligation in respect of its defined benefit scheme is as follows:

Pension assets and liabilities recognised in the balance sheet

	2019/20			2020/21		
	WBC & BCC	Optalis	Total Group	WBC Inc BCC	Optalis	Total Group
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Present value of the defined benefit obligation	(465,206)	(18,891)	(484,097)	(605,916)	(23,877)	(629,793)
Fair value of plan assets	210,086	13,349	223,435	253,124	14,721	267,845
Sub-total	(255,120)	(5,542)	(260,662)	(352,792)	(9,156)	(361,948)
Present value of unfunded obligation	(4,481)	-	(4,481)	(4,382)	0	(4,382)
Net liability arising from defined benefit obligations	(259,601)	(5,542)	(265,143)	(357,174)	(9,156)	(366,330)

Reconciliation of Opening and Closing Balances of the Fair Value of Scheme assets	2019/20			2020/21		
	WBC & BCC £,000	Optalis £,000	Total Group £,000	WBC Inc BCC £,000	Optalis £,000	Total Group £,000
Opening Fair Value of Scheme Assets	218,163	14,496	232,659	210,086	13,349	223,435
Interest on Assets	5,239	345	5,584	3,462	312	3,774
Return on Assets less Interest	(16,119)	(556)	(16,675)	37,107	1,208	38,315
Other actuarial gains(losses)	2,573	(684)	1,889	0	0	0
Administration Expenses	(129)	(9)	(138)	(130)	(8)	(138)
Contributions by Employer including Unfunded	11,173	186	11,359	13,436	149	13,585
Contributions by Scheme Participants and other Employers	3,480	53	3,533	3,765	44	3,809
Estimated Benefits Paid plus Unfunded Net of Transfers	(14,155)	(482)	(14,637)	(14,363)	(333)	(14,696)
Settlement prices received / (paid)	(139)	-	(139)	(239)	0	(239)
Closing Fair Value of Scheme Assets	210,086	13,349	223,435	253,124	14,721	267,845

	2019/20			2020/21		
	WBC & BCC	Optalis	Total Group	WBC Inc BCC	Optalis	Total Group
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Opening balance at 1 April	509,436	21,843	531,279	469,688	18,891	488,579
Current service cost	20,124	349	20,473	26,911	268	27,179
Interest cost	12,071	519	12,590	9,125	441	9,566
Change in financial assumptions	(47,723)	(1,895)	(49,618)	131,453	5,242	136,695
Change in demographic assumptions	(5,906)	(229)	(6,135)	(5,253)	(417)	(5,670)
Experience gain/(loss) on defined benefit obligation	(6,502)	(1,372)	(7,874)	(6,636)	(259)	(6,895)
Liabilities assumed/(extinguished) on settlements	(1,279)	-	(1,279)	(4,391)	0	(4,391)
Estimated benefits paid net of transfers in	(13,603)	(482)	(14,085)	(13,835)	(333)	(14,168)
Past service costs including curtailments	140	105	245	0	0	0
Contribution by scheme participants and other employers	3,480	53	3,533	3,765	44	3,809
Unfunded pension payments	(551)	-	(551)	(528)	0	(528)
Closing balance at 31 March	469,687	18,891	488,578	610,299	23,877	634,176

	WBC & BCC £,000	2019/20 Optalis £,000	Total Group £,000	WBC Inc BCC £,000	2020/21 Optalis £,000	Total Group £,000
Equities	115,766	7,538	123,304	152,156	8,588	160,744
Other Bonds	26,486	1,243	27,729	41,339	2,484	43,823
Property	30,660	1,834	32,494	31,029	1,893	32,922
Cash and Cash Equivalents	21,217	1,576	22,793	11,310	835	12,145
Target Return Portfolio	9,218	562	9,780	10,224	622	10,846
Commodities	846	79	925	0	0	0
Infrastructure	18,680	1,094	19,774	20,599	1,181	21,780
Longevity Insurance	(12,787)	(577)	(13,364)	(13,533)	(882)	(14,415)
Total Assets	210,086	13,349	223,435	253,124	14,721	267,845

All scheme assets have quoted prices in active markets.

Expected returns on equity investments reflect long-term real rates of return experienced in the respective markets.

Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities

For the year to 31 March 2021, the expected return is based on the discount rate, which was 2% and this rate has been used to determine the profit and loss charge for the year ended 31 March 2021, compared to a rate of 2.35% in the year 31 March 2020. . The discount rate was the same for Optalis Ltd for both years. The discount rate is the annualised yield at the 20 year point. The 12 year point is used for Berkshire scheme due to shorter estimated scheme duration and for Optalis Ltd the annualised yield used is 22 years. The Merrill Lynch AA rated corporate bond yield curve has been chosen to meet the requirements of IAS 19 and with consideration of the duration of the employer's liabilities.

Barnett Waddingham LLP, an independent firm of actuaries, assessed the liabilities as at 31 March 2019. The principal assumptions used by the actuary for the Wokingham scheme are:

	2019/20	2020/21
Expected Return on Assets (Equal to the discount rate)	2.35%	2%
Life Expectancy from age 65 if retiring now:		
Men	21.5	21.2
Women	24.1	23.9
Life expectancy at age 65 retiring in 20 years:		
Men	22.9	22.5
Women	25.5	25.4
Rate of Inflation-RPI	2.70%	3.20%
Rate of Inflation-CPI	1.90%	2.85%
Rate of Increase in Salaries	2.90%	3.85%
Rate of Increase in Pensions	1.90%	2.85%
Rate for Discounting Scheme Liabilities	2.35%	2.00%
Take-up Option to Convert Annual Pension into Retirement Lump Sum	50%	50%
Take-up Option to pay 50% contributions for 50% of benefits	10%	10%

The Local Government Pension Scheme's assets consist of the following categories, by proportion of the total assets held:

	2019/20	2020/21
Equity Investments	54%	60%
Other Bonds	13%	17%
Property	15%	12%
Cash	10%	4%
Target Return	4%	4%
Commodities	1%	0%
Infrastructure	9%	8%
Longevity Insurance	-6%	-5%
Total	100%	100%

The estimation of the defined benefit obligation is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. The sensitivity analysis below has 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 assumptions in longevity, for example, assume that life expectancy increases or decreases for men and women. In practice, this is unlikely to occur, and changes in some of the assumptions may be interrelated. 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. The methods and types of assumptions used in preparing the sensitivity analysis below for the Wokingham scheme did not change from those used in the previous period. The figures include the Berkshire scheme share of 19.0561%.

Impact on the Defined Benefit Obligation in the Scheme

	Increase £,000	Current £,000	Decrease £,000
Adjustment to discount rate	0.10%	0.00%	(0.10%)
Present value of total obligation	598,156	610,298	622,699
Projected service cost	27,460	28,268	29,096
Adjustment to long term salary increase	0.10%	0.00%	(0.10%)
Present value of total obligation	611,070	610,298	609,533
Projected service cost	28,283	28,268	28,252
Adjustment to pension increases and deferred revaluation	0.10%	0.00%	(0.10%)
Present value of total obligation	621,812	610,298	599,009
Projected service cost	29,087	28,268	27,469
Adjustment to life expectancy assumption	+ 1 Year	None	-1 Year
Present value of total obligation	637,448	610,298	584,349
Projected service cost	29,483	28,268	27,096

Impact on the Council's Cash Flows

The objectives of the scheme are to keep employers' contributions at as constant a rate as possible. Funding levels are monitored on an annual basis. A fund valuation was carried out on the 31 March 2019 to set contributions for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2023, and is a triennial event, the next valuation being due to be completed on 31 March 2022.

The total contributions expected to be made on the Local Government Pension Scheme by the Council in the year to 31 March 2022 is £11.855m (£10.765m to 31 March 2021).

The estimated employer's past service duration for Wokingham Borough Council is 21 years at 31 March 2021 (21 years 31 March 2020). In Optalis Ltd the estimated employer's past service duration is 21 years at 31 March 2021 (22 years at 31 March 2020).

NOTE 20 GRANT INCOME

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

	2019/20	2020/21
	£,000	£,000
Credited to Taxation and Non-specific Grant Income:		
New Homes Bonus	(5,714)	(7,461)
Emergency Covid 19 Support Grant	0	(6,782)
Covid 19 Contain Outbreak Management Fund	0	(4,095)
Adult Social Care Grant	0	(1,708)
Covid 19 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable	0	(379)
Council Tax Hardship Fund	0	(416)
Capital Grants	(30,656)	(32,057)
Capital Contributions	(30,790)	(35,003)
Sub Total	(67,160)	(87,901)

	2019/20	2020/21
	£,000	£,000
Credited to Directorates:		
Dedicated Schools Grant	(82,832)	(82,272)
Mandatory Rent Allowances: Subsidy	(11,840)	(11,023)
Public Health	(5,213)	(5,481)
Rent Rebates Granted to HRA Tenants: Subsidy	(5,791)	(5,404)
Covid 19 Business Support Grants	0	(4,915)
Covid 19 Infection Control	0	(3,535)
Teachers' Pension Grant	(1,263)	(2,315)
Pupil Premium	(2,125)	(1,995)
Covid 19 Compensation for lost sales, fees, and charges	0	(1,849)
Small Business Rate Relief *	(1,798)	0
Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM)	(1,827)	(1,620)
EFA 6 th Form Funding	(1,673)	(1,559)
The Private Finance Initiative (PFI)	(1,109)	(1,109)
Additional Grant for Schools	(786)	(936)
Bus Services Operators Grant	0	(584)
Improved Better Care Fund	(56)	(458)
Flexible Homelessness Support Grant	(338)	(449)
Adult Social Care Grant	(686)	(400)
Covid 19 Rapid Testing Grant	0	(396)
UASC UK Border Agency	(458)	(394)
Covid 19 Community Testing	0	(389)
Covid 19 Business Rates New Burden Admin Costs	0	(376)
Families First	(238)	(375)
Covid 19 Catch Up Premium	0	(350)
Covid 19 Sport England Compensation Claim	0	(332)
Rough Sleeping Initiative	0	(298)

Covid 19 Winter Grant Scheme	0	(281)
Independent Living Fund	(265)	(265)
Adult and Community Learning from Learning and Skills Council	(249)	(260)
Covid 19 Test and Trace Grant	0	(253)
Dedicated Home to School and College Transport Grant	0	(220)
Discretionary Housing Payment	0	(206)
Covid 19 Workforce Fund	0	(201)
Teachers' Pay Grant	(649)	0
Winter Pressures	(402)	0
EU Exit Funding	(210)	0
Distribution of Levy Account Surplus	(47)	0
Other Grants	(1,441)	(2,321)
Sub total	(121,296)	(132,821)
Total	(188,455)	(220,722)

* For 20/21, grant moved to note 10 Other non-ringfenced government grants

The New Homes Bonus grant has increased between 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to more homes being built in the borough which qualify the Council for new homes bonus.

Capital Grants have increased due to the progression of major highways schemes in 2020/21 that were funded by Local Enterprise Partnership grants (provided through the Thames Valley Growth Deal). LEP grants are treated as receipts in advance and are credited to the CIES when the grant is spent and the conditions are met. Major highways schemes funded by LEP in 2020/21 were Arborfield Bypass, Winnersh Relief Road, Winnersh Triangle Parkway, Coppid Beech Park and Ride and works at Barkham Bridge. Capital Contributions have increased due to an increase in CIL contributions (£8.503m received in 2020/21 compared to £3.212m in 2019/20).

The main changes in revenue grants to Directorates are related to new grants given to Council in relation to Covid 19. The major grant in relation to Covid 19 was for business support grants which the Council have paid across many individual businesses during 2020/21. This grant will continue in 2021/22 however at a reduced amount.

The Council received some grants and contributions that have yet to be recognised as income because they have conditions attached to them that may require the monies or property to be returned to the grantor. These are treated as receipts in advance. The balances are shown below;

	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000
Revenue Receipts in Advance:		
Covid 19 Business Support Grants	0	(5,214)
Covid 19 Test and Trace Grant	0	(368)
Small Business Rate Relief Grant	(3,289)	0
Other Grants	(10)	(581)
Total	(3,299)	(6,163)

Some Covid grants intended for 2021/22 have been received early. In 2019/20, due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Small Business Rate Relief Grant was paid early by

	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000
Capital Grants and Contributions Receipts in Advance:		
Thames Valley Berkshire Growth Deal - Wokingham Arborfield Cross Relief Road	(12,416)	(1,129)
Thames Valley Berkshire Growth Deal – Winnersh Relief Road Phase 2	(5,117)	0
Thames Valley Berkshire Growth Deal – Thames Valley Park and Ride	(29)	0
Thames Valley Berkshire Growth Deal – Sustainable Transport National Cycle Network	(1,960)	(1,699)
Devolved Formula Grant	(1,219)	(994)
Other Grants	(991)	(1,595)
S106 Contributions	(77,831)	(92,532)
Total	(99,563)	(97,949)

Central Government to help local authorities with cashflow.

In addition to the S106 contributions receipts in advance of £92.5m as at 31 March 2021, the Council have £9.448m S106 contributions in earmarked reserves, which relate to S106 commuted sums and SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) contributions to maintain green spaces around developments.

NOTE 21 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT

The Council's expenditure on schools is funded primarily by grant monies provided by the Department for Education, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). An element of DSG is recouped by the Department to fund academy schools in the Council's area. DSG is ring fenced and can only be applied to meet expenditure properly included in the Schools Budget, as defined in the School Finance (England) Regulations 2008. 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 maintained school.

Details of the deployment of the DSG receivable for 2020/21 are as follows and comprise the DSG figure as issued by the Department for Education:

	Central Expenditure £,000	ISB £,000	Total £,000
Final DSG for 2020/21 before Academy Recoupment	(22,962)	(120,161)	(143,123)
Less Academy figure recouped for 2020/21	0	60,851	60,851
Total DSG after Academy recoupment for 2020/21	(22,962)	(59,310)	(82,272)
Brought forward from 2019/20	3,357	0	3,357
Carry-forward to 2020/21 agreed in advance	0	0	0
Agreed initial budget distribution in 2020/21	(19,605)	(59,310)	(78,915)
In year Adjustments	0	0	0
Final Budgeted distribution for 2020/21	(19,605)	(59,310)	(78,915)
Less Actual central expenditure	25,431		25,431
Less Actual ISB deployed to schools		59,310	59,310
Carry Forward to 2021/22	5,826	0	5,826

The £5,826k deficit is mainly due to the growth in demand for children with special needs in addition to the brought forward deficit. The deficit is being addressed with our DSG Deficit Recovery Plan.

NOTE 22 USABLE RESERVES

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

- General Fund Balance – the general reserves of the Council can be used to finance the day to day operations of the Council and its capital activities
- Earmarked Reserves – held for specific accounting / policy purposes and are ring fenced funds that cannot be used for other purposes
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – resources available to meet future running costs for council houses
- Schools & Dedicated Schools Grant – to resource expenditure directly/ not directly delegated to schools
- Capital Receipts – proceeds of asset sales available to meet future capital requirements and to act as a contingency
- Capital Grants Unapplied – holds the grants and contributions received towards capital projects which have not yet been used to finance specific capital schemes

NOTE 23 UNUSABLE RESERVES

	31st March, 2020 £,000 Restated	31st March, 2021 £,000
Revaluation Reserve	(206,802)	(237,586)
Capital Adjustment Account	(426,290)	(446,801)
Financial Instruments Adjustment Account	1,357	1,223
Pensions Reserve	259,601	357,174
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	2,872	8,042
Accumulated Absences Account	3,084	4,796
Dedicated Schools Grant Adjustment Account	0	5,826
Total Unusable Reserves	(366,178)	(307,326)
Group unusable reserves	(2,129)	(5,304)
Minority interest	(147)	(147)
Total Group Unusable Reserves	(368,454)	(312,777)

Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant, Equipment and Intangible Assets since 1 April, 2007, the date that the Reserve was created. Accumulated gains arising before that date are consolidated into the balance on Capital Adjustment Account.

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Balance at 1st April	(172,568)	(206,802)
Upward Revaluation of Assets	(64,960)	(51,898)
Downward Revaluation of Assets and Impairment Losses not Charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	24,057	14,045
Surplus or Deficit on Revaluation of Non-current Assets not Posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(40,903)	(37,853)
Difference Between Fair Value Depreciation and Historical Cost Depreciation	975	973
Accumulated Gains on Assets Sold or Disposed	5,694	6,096
Amount Written Off to the Capital Adjustment Account	6,669	7,069
Balance at 31st March	(206,802)	(237,586)

Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions. The account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before 1 April 2007, the date the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains. Note 5 provides details of the source of all the transactions posted to the account, apart from those involving the Revaluation Reserve.

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Balance at 1st April	(399,015)	(426,290)
Restated as at 1st April 2020		(426,290)
Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:		
• Charges for depreciation of non-current assets	17,192	18,866
• Charges for impairment of non-current assets	-	293
• Charges for impairment of inventories	-	1,814
• Revaluation losses on property, plant and equipment	23,687	27,367
• Amortisation of intangible assets	1,014	1,164
• Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	4,337	4,338
• 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	15,705	19,678
• Amounts of inventories written-off on disposal or sale as part of the gain / loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	0	5,235
	61,935	78,755
Adjusting amounts written out of the revaluation reserve	(6,669)	(7,069)
Net written out amount of the cost of non-current assets consumed in the year	55,266	71,686
Capital financing applied in the year:		
• Use of capital receipts reserve to finance new capital expenditure	(4,578)	(4,912)
• Use of major repairs reserve to finance new capital expenditure	(5,051)	(2,992)
• Capital grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	(68,454)	(49,523)
• Application of grants to capital financing from the capital grants unapplied account	(959)	(22,761)
• Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment charged against the general fund and HRA balances	(3,651)	(3,900)
Capital expenditure charged against the general fund and HRA Balances	(974)	(1,939)
Increase in fair value of investment property	3,098	(3,503)
Voluntary debt repayment - HRA	(1,998)	(3,028)
Equity loan redemption	26	0

Wokingham Housing Ltd loan repayment

-	360
(82,541)	(92,198)
(426,290)	(446,801)

Balance at 31st March

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.

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Balance at 1st April	1,493	1,357
Proportion of Premiums Incurred in Previous Financial Years Charged against the General Fund Balance in Accordance with Statutory Requirements	(136)	(134)
Balance at 31st March	1,357	1,223

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 debit balance on the Pensions Reserve 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.

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Balance at 1st April	291,272	259,601
Actuarial (Gains) or Losses on Pensions Assets and Liabilities	(54,359)	82,457
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	33,861	28,552
Employer's Pensions Contributions and Direct Payments to Pensioners Payable in the Year	(11,173)	(13,436)
Balance at 31st March	259,601	357,174

Collection Fund Adjustment Account

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

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Balance at 1st April	(2,004)	2,872
Amount by which Council Tax and Retained Business Rates Income Credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is Different from Council Tax and Retained Business Rates Income Calculated for the Year in Accordance with Statutory Requirements	4,876	5,170
Balance at 31st March	2,872	8,042

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, e.g. annual leave entitlement carried forward at 31st March. Statutory arrangements require that the impact on the General Fund Balance is neutralised by transfers to or from the account.

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Balance at 1st April	3,071	3,085
Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of preceding year	(3,071)	(3,085)
Amounts accrued at the end of the current year	3,085	4,796
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accrual basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	14	1,712
Balance at 31st March	3,085	4,796

Dedicated Schools Grant Adjustment Account

The dedicated schools grant adjustment account has been created to provide a statutory basis for the separation of the deficits arising due to the DSG from the general fund, the Department for Education (DfE) established through the 2020 Regulations that a local authority must either deduct the deficit from its school budget, or carry forward the deficit to future financial years rather than fund it from other sources.

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Balance at 1st April	0	0
<i>Reporting of Schools Budget Deficit to new Adjustment Account at 1 April 2020</i>	0	2,993
Restated Balance at 1st April	0	2,993
Deficit in year (expenditure greater than income)	0	2,833
Balance at 31st March	0	5,826

Prior to 2020/21, the DSG deficit was held in a separate reserve and reported under usable reserves. Changes to the accounting arrangements now require these reserves to be shown as unusable reserves.

Group Unusable Reserves

The group unusable reserves are calculated based on the consolidation of the subsidiary accounts on a consistent financial reporting basis to the main accounts.

Minority Interest

Accounting standards require the Council to consolidate Optalis at 100% and declare a minority interest for the proportion for which it is not the sole shareholder, 45%. This represents the share of Optalis owned by RBWM. See also note 46.

NOTE 24 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Movements in 2020/21:	Council Dwellings	Other Land and Buildings (Inc. HRA)	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets under Construction	Total Property, Plant and Equipment	PFI Assets Included in Property, Plant and Equipment
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Cost or Valuation								
Restated as at 1st April 2020	223,294	505,181	24,227	3,150	4,249	134,138	894,239	10,190
Additions	4,422	19,435	1,366	2	46	62,041	87,312	0
Revaluation Increases / (Decreases) Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	10,063	13,680	(397)	0	(763)	0	22,583	(397)
Revaluation Increases / (Decreases) Recognised in the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services	0	(35,208)	(669)	0	(81)	0	(35,958)	(2,563)
Impairment	(2,962)	(293)	0	0	0	0	(3,255)	0
De-recognition - Disposals	(118)	(19,512)	(162)	0	(378)	0	(20,170)	0
Assets reclassified (to) / from Held for Sale	(702)	0	0	0	0	0	(702)	0
Other asset reclassified and transferred in Cost or Valuation	754	27,556	575	2,897	0	(53,405)	(21,623)	0
At 31st March, 2021	234,751	510,839	24,940	6,049	3,073	142,774	922,426	7,230
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment								
Restated as at 1st April 2020	10,265	21,992	13,887	0	11	0	46,155	2,094
Depreciation Charge	4,008	7,008	1,792	0	12	0	12,820	426
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	(7,412)	(3,884)	(59)	0	0	0	(11,355)	(59)
Depreciation written out to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	0	(7,849)	(669)	0	(11)	0	(8,529)	(1,627)
Impairment Losses / (Reversals) Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	(6,875)	0	0	0	0	0	(6,875)	0
Impairment Losses / (Reversals) Recognised in the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Derecognition – Disposals	14	(440)	(55)	0	(12)	0	(493)	0
Assets reclassified (to) / from Held for Sale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other movements in accumulated depreciation and impairments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	16,827	14,896	0	0	0	31,723	834
Net Book Value								
At 31st March, 2021	234,751	494,012	10,044	6,049	3,073	142,774	890,703	6,396
At 31st March, 2020	213,029	483,189	10,340	3,150	4,238	134,138	848,084	8,096

Movements in 2019/20:	Council Dwellings	Other Land and Buildings (Inc. HRA)	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets under Construction	Total Property, Plant and Equipment	PFI Assets Included in Property, Plant and Equipment
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Cost or Valuation								
Restated as at 1st April 2019	205,211	477,219	22,077	3,149	4,258	90,100	802,014	10,190
Additions	10,576	31,502	2,669	1	199	66,782	111,729	0
Revaluation Increases / (Decreases) Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	7,617	24,284	0	0	0	0	31,901	0
Revaluation Increases / (Decreases) Recognised in the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services	0	(30,225)	0	0	(6)	0	(30,231)	0
Impairment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
De-recognition - Disposals	(911)	(14,350)	(551)	0	(198)	0	(16,010)	0
Assets reclassified (to) / from Held for Sale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other movements in cost or valuation	0	(118)	0	0	0	0	(118)	0
Other asset reclassified and transferred in Cost or Valuation	800	16,868	32	0	(4)	(22,744)	(5,048)	0
At 31st March, 2020	223,294	505,181	24,227	3,150	4,249	134,138	894,239	10,190
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment								
Restated as at 1st April 2019	3,271	33,845	12,841	0	4	0	49,961	1,668
Depreciation Charge	3,404	7,546	1,476	0	10	0	12,436	426
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	(3,271)	(12,608)	0	0	0	0	(15,879)	0
Depreciation written out to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	0	(6,558)	0	0	0	0	(6,558)	0
Impairment Losses / (Reversals) Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	6,875	0	0	0	0	0	6,875	0
Impairment Losses / (Reversals) Recognised in the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Derecognition – Disposals	(14)	(115)	(430)	0	(3)	0	(562)	0
Assets reclassified (to) / from Held for Sale	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other assets reclassified and transferred in	0	(118)	0	0	0	0	(118)	0
At 31st March, 2020	10,265	21,992	13,887	0	11	0	46,155	2,094

GROUP PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Movements in 2020/21:	Council Dwellings	Other Land and Buildings (Inc. HRA)	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets under Construction	Total Property, Plant and Equipment
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Cost or Valuation							
At 1st April, 2020	223,294	527,321	24,396	3,150	4,249	138,268	920,678
Additions	4,422	19,435	1,369	2	46	67,711	92,985
Revaluation Increases / (Decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	10,063	13,680	(397)	0	(763)	0	22,583
Revaluation Increases / (Decreases) recognised in the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services	0	(32,830)	(669)	0	(81)	0	(33,580)
Impairment	(2,962)	(293)	0	0	0	0	(3,255)
De-recognition - Disposals	(118)	(19,512)	(162)	0	(378)	(427)	(20,597)
Assets reclassified (to) / from Assets under Construction	(702)	0	0	0	0	0	(702)
Other movements in Cost or Valuation	0	0	0	0	0	(1,530)	(1,530)
Other asset reclassified and transferred in Cost or Valuation	754	31,433	575	2,897	0	(57,283)	(21,624)
At 31st March, 2021	234,751	539,235	25,112	6,050	3,073	146,740	954,961
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment							
At 1st April, 2020	10,265	22,230	14,019	0	11	0	46,525
Depreciation Charge	4,008	7,001	1,799	0	12	0	12,820
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	(7,412)	(3,885)	(59)	0	0	0	(11,356)
Depreciation written out to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	0	(7,840)	(669)	0	(11)	0	(8,520)
Impairment Losses / (Reversals) Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	(6,875)	0	0	0	0	0	(6,875)
De-recognition – Disposals	14	(440)	(55)	0	(12)	0	(493)
Assets reclassified (to) / from Assets under Construction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other movements in accumulated depreciation and impairment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
At 31st March, 2021	0	17,067	15,036	0	0	0	32,103



Movements in 2020/21:	Council Dwellings	Other Land and Buildings (Inc. HRA)	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets under Construction	Total Property, Plant and Equipment
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Net Book Value							
At 31st March, 2021	234,752	522,168	10,077	6,050	3,073	146,740	922,860
At 31st March, 2020	213,029	505,091	10,378	3,150	4,239	138,268	874,155
At 1st April, 2019 Restated	205,211	497,736	22,228	3,149	4,258	92,002	824,584
Additions	10,576	31,502	2,687	1	199	72,502	117,467
Revaluation Increases / (Decreases) Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	7,617	24,284	0	0	0	0	31,901
Revaluation Increases / (Decreases) Recognised in the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services	0	(30,524)	0	0	(6)	0	(30,530)
De-recognition - Disposals	(911)	(14,350)	(551)	0	(198)	(529)	(16,538)
Other movements in cost or valuation	0	(118)	0	0	0	(1,039)	(1,157)
Assets reclassified (to) / from Held for Sale	800	18,792	32	0	(4)	(24,668)	(5,048)
At 31st March, 2020 Restated	223,293	527,321	24,396	3,150	4,249	138,268	920,678
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment							
At 1st April, 2019 Restated	3,271	34,079	12,968	0	4	0	50,320
Depreciation Charge	3,404	7,860	1,482	0	10	0	12,756
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	(3,271)	(12,608)	0	0	0	0	(15,879)
Depreciation written out to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	0	(6,867)	0	0	0	0	(6,867)
Impairment Losses / (Reversals) Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	6,875	0	0	0	0	0	6,875
Impairment Losses / (Reversals) Recognised in the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
De-recognition – Disposals	(14)	(115)	(430)	0	(3)	0	(562)
Other movements in accumulated depreciation and impairments	0	(118)	0	0	0	0	(118)
At 31st March, 2020 Restated	10,265	22,231	14,020	0	11	0	46,526

INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS

Movements on balances

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.

The authority has chosen not to disclose this information as the previously reported practices and resultant information deficits mean that gross cost and accumulated depreciation are not measured accurately and would not provide the basis for the users of the financial statements to take economic or other decisions relating to infrastructure assets.

Movement on balances Infrastructure Assets	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000
Net book value (modified historical cost)		
At 1 April	119,351	129,541
Additions	9,915	23,057
Derecognition	0	0
Depreciation	(4,773)	(5,983)
Impairment	0	0
Other movements in cost	5,048	20,917
Net Book Value at 31 March	129,541	167,533

Reconciling note for PPE	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £,000
Infrastructure assets	129,541	167,533
Other PPE assets	848,084	890,703
Total PPE assets	977,625	1,058,236

The authority has determined in accordance with Regulations (30M England) of the Local Authority (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 that the carrying amounts to be derecognised for infrastructure assets when there is replacement expenditure is nil.

Depreciation

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

- Council Dwellings 41 years
- Other, Land and Buildings 2-77 years
- Surplus Assets 2-27 years
- Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment 1-21 years
- Infrastructure, Roads & Highways 1-57 years

Capital Commitments

The estimated commitments for capital expenditure for schemes where orders had been placed, or legal contracts entered into, at 31 March 2021 are listed below:

	2020/21 £,000
• Major Road Schemes - Road infrastructure (SCAPE)	30,163
• Carnival Pool Area Redevelopment	28,189
• Nine Mile Ride Extension	12,315
• Gorse Ride Regeneration (Phase 1)	5,567
• Matthews Green School / Community Centre	3,558
• New Arborfield Primary	3,082
• Winnersh Triangle Parkway	2,655
• Coppid Beech Park & Ride	2,212
• Gorse Ride (Phase 2) Construction	1,600
• Cantley Park Enhancement	1,435
• Dinton Activity Centre Project	1,055
• Bulmershe Leisure Centre Redevelopment	926
• Land Acquisition for Major Road Schemes	615
• Toutley Highways Depot Modernisation	600
• Highways Carriageways Structural Maintenance	552
• Greenways	295
• Support Services Energy Reduction Schemes	258
• Solar Farm (Barkham)	136
• Highway Structures - Earley Station Footbridge (Prelim Design)	106
• California Crossroads	70
• Learning Disability Service Transformation – Ryeish Green flats	31
Total	95,420

Revaluations

The Council carries out a rolling programme which ensures that all Property, Plant and Equipment required to be measured at fair value is revalued at least every five years. Also each year a 'basket' of assets is selected for valuation, of sub-categories that would not otherwise be valued, to assess for any material variations. All valuations were carried out internally, apart from properties purchased from the 'Investment Fund' which are valued by various external valuers. Valuations of land and buildings were 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 depreciated historic cost.

In respect of the Council's operational and non-operational property portfolio, as at the valuation date (31.03.2021) we continue to be faced with an unprecedented set of circumstances caused by COVID-19 and an absence of relevant/sufficient market evidence on which to base our judgements.

Our valuation of operational and non-operational property portfolio, is therefore reported as being subject to 'material valuation uncertainty' as set out in VPS 3 and VPGA 10 of the RICS Valuation – Global Standards. Consequently, in respect of these valuations less certainty – and a higher degree of caution – should be attached to our valuation than would normally be the case.

This does not mean that the valuation cannot be relied upon. Rather, to ensure transparency and to provide further insight as to the market context under which the valuation opinion was prepared. In recognition of the potential for market conditions to move rapidly in response to changes in the control or future spread of COVID-19 we highlight the importance of the valuation date.'

The table below shows the value of assets against the year they were revalued. The difference between years are due to the number and types of assets revalued as per the rolling programme i.e. at 31 March 2021 libraries and waste PFI assets were revalued, while in other years there are larger material assets revalued.

	Council Dwellings	Other, Land and Buildings (Inc. HRA)	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	Infra-structure Assets	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Total
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Carried at Historical Cost	0	0	10,044	167,534	6,050	0	183,628
Valued at Fair Value as at 31 st March:-							
2021	234,751	302,026	0	0	0	3,072	539,849
2020	0	146,999	0	0	0	0	146,999
2019	0	18,329	0	0	0	0	18,329
2018	0	7,405	0	0	0	0	7,405
2017	0	19,254	0	0	0	0	19,254
Total Cost or Valuation	234,751	494,013	10,044	167,534	6,050	3,072	915,464

NOTE 25 OTHER NON CURRENT ASSETS -

Investment Properties

The following items of income and expenditure have been accounted for in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:

	2019/20	2020/21
	£,000	£,000
Rental Income from Investment Property	1,827	1,803
Direct Operating Expenses arising from Investment Property	(98)	(9)
Net Gain / (Loss)	1,729	1,794

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: Not including Surplus Assets

	2019/20	2020/21
	£,000	£,000
Balance at the Start of the Year	17,077	32,571
Additions:		
Purchases	18,592	0
Disposals	0	0
Net Gains / (Losses) from Fair Value Adjustments	(3,098)	3,503
Transfers:		
(To) / From Inventories	0	0
(To) / from Property, Plant and Equipment	0	0
Balance at the End of the Year	32,571	36,074

Fair Value Hierarchy

Details of the authority's investment properties and information about fair value hierarchy as at 31/03/2021 are as follow: - Includes Surplus assets

	Quoted prices in Active markets for identical Assets (Level 1) £000	Other significant Observable inputs (Level 2) £000	Significant Unobservable inputs (Level 3) £000	Fair value as at 31 March 2021 £000
Recurring fair value Measurements using:				
Investment Properties	-	-	36,074	36,074
Surplus Assets	-	-	3,072	3,072
Total	-	-	39,146	39,146

2019/20 Comparatives

	Quoted prices in Active markets for identical Assets (Level 1) £,000	Other significant Observable inputs (Level 2) £,000	Significant Unobservable inputs (Level 3) £,000	Fair value as at 31 March 2020 £,000
Recurring fair value Measurements using:				
Investment Properties	-	-	32,571	32,571
Surplus Assets	-	-	4,238	4,238
Total	-	-	36,809	36,809

Transfers between Levels of the Fair Value Hierarchy

There were no transfers between Levels 1, 2 and 3 during the year.

Valuation Techniques used to Determine Level 3 Fair Values for Investment Properties

Significant Unobservable Inputs – Level 3

The office and commercial units and Investment Properties located in the local authority area are measured using the income approach, by means of the discounted cash flow method, where the expected cash flows from the properties are discounted (using a market-derived discount rate) to establish the present value of the net income stream. The approach has been developed using the authority's own data requiring it to factor assumptions, such as the duration and timing of cash inflows and outflows, rent growth, occupancy levels, bad debt levels, maintenance costs, etc.

The authority's office and commercial units are therefore categorised as Level 3 in the fair value hierarchy as the measurement technique uses significant unobservable inputs to determine the fair value measurements (and there is no reasonably available information that indicated that market participants would use different assumptions).

Highest and Best Use of Investment Properties

In estimation the fair value of the authority's investment properties, the highest and best use of the properties is their current use.

Reconciliation of Fair Value Measurements (using Significant Unobservable Inputs) Categorised within Level 3 of Fair Value Hierarchy Office buildings categorised within Level 3

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £000
Opening balance	21,331	36,809
Transfers into Level 3	0	0
Transfers out of Level 3	(4)	0
Total gains (or losses) for the period included in Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services resulting from changes in the fair value	(3,104)	2,669
Additions	18,791	46
Disposals	(195)	(365)
Other Charges	(10)	(12)
Closing Balance	36,809	39,146

Gains or Losses arising from changes in the fair value of investment properties are recognised in Surplus or Deficit in the Provision of Services – Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line.

NOTE 26 INTANGIBLE ASSETS

The carrying amount of intangible assets is amortised on a straight-line basis.

The Council accounts for its software as intangible assets to the extent that the software is not an integral part of a particular IT system and accounted for as part of the hardware item of Property, Plant and Equipment. Amortisation of £1,164k charged to revenue in 2020/21 was charged to the IT Administration cost centre and then absorbed as an overhead across all the service headings in the Net Expenditure of Services. It is not possible to quantify exactly how much of the amortisation is attributable to each service heading. The remaining amortisation was charged directly to the service using the asset.

The costs of the Council's major software suites are written off over the following periods:

Term	Internally Generated Assets	Other Assets
5 Years	None	I-Procurement, Human Resources Management Information Systems, E-mail and Schools e-learning, GIS Mapping Software, Wokingham Strategic Transport Model (WSTM) 2015 Base Update, Planning System, 21 st Century Implementation
15 Years	None	Housing Management System
10 Years	None	Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System
25 Years	None	Transition of WBC's ICT to a mixed economy model (migration to cloud), Customer Service System and self-service technology

The movement on Intangible Asset balances during the year is as follows:

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Balance at the Start of the Year		
Gross Carrying Amount	10,649	10,940
Accumulated Amortisation	(3,580)	(4,595)
Adjusted Gross Carrying amounts	7,069	6,345
Net Carrying Amount at Start of the Year		
Additions:		
Purchases	291	507
Other Changes	0	459
Amortisation for the Period	(1,014)	(1,164)
Net Carrying Amount at End of the Year	6,346	6,147
Comprising:		
Gross Carrying Amounts	10,941	11,906
Accumulated Amortisation	(4,595)	(5,759)
Closing Balance at 31March	6,346	6,147

NOTE 27

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), 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.

	2019/20	2020/21
	£,000	£,000
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	335,747	418,431
<i>Adjustment to Opening Balance – Waste PFI Addition</i>	<i>3,402</i>	<i>0</i>
Revised Opening Capital Financing Requirement	339,149	418,431
Capital Investment:		
Property, Plant and Equipment	121,643	110,113
Investment Properties	18,592	0
Intangible Assets	291	507
Inventories	14,797	1,709
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute	4,338	4,338
Long Term Debtor	5,274	6,540
Sources of Finance:		
Capital Receipts	(4,548)	(4,912)
Government Grants and Other Contributions	(69,512)	(72,581)
Sums Set Aside from Revenue:		
Direct Revenue Contributions	(5,954)	(4,634)
MRP / Loans Fund Principal	(3,651)	(3,900)
Other Adjustments:		
Voluntary Debt Repayment - HRA	(1,988)	(3,028)
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	418,431	452,583

Explanation of Movements in Year

Increase / (Decrease) in underlying need for supported borrowing	-	-
Increase / (Decrease) in underlying need for unsupported borrowing	79,282	34,152
Increase / (Decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement	79,282	34,152

NOTE 28 LEASES

The Council as Lessee

Finance Leases

The Council has two finance leases which were entered into in 1982. They relate to property at 1-14 and 1a-9a Weller Drive on the Hogwood Lane industrial estate, and the original length of the leases is 125 years.

The assets acquired in the leases on the industrial estate are carried as Investment Properties in the Balance Sheet at nil value as the value was written down to nil during 2012/13 following a review as the initial lease terms on the property are onerous and at present the units are not trading at a surplus taking into account total management and running costs. In the event the properties trade at a surplus at a future date, the assets will be revalued and the impairment reversed as appropriate.

The Council is committed to making the minimum payments under these leases comprising settlement of the long-term liability for the interest in the property acquired by the Council and finance costs that will be payable by the Council in future years while the liability remains outstanding. The minimum lease payments comprise the following amounts:

Finance Lease Liabilities (Net Present Value of Minimum Lease Payments):	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000
• Current	-	-
• Non-current	1,067	1,067
Finance Costs Payable in Future Years	8,278	8,171
Minimum Lease Payments	9,345	9,238

The minimum lease payments will be payable over the following periods:

	Minimum Lease Payments		Finance Lease Liabilities	
	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000
- Not Later than One Year	107	107	-	-
- Later than One Year and not Later than Five Years	427	427	-	-
- Later than Five Years	8,810	8,704	1,066	1,066
	9,344	9,238	1,066	1,066

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. In 2020/21 £186k contingent rents were payable by the Council (2019/20 £186k).

Operating Leases

The Council has a number of operating leases relating to buildings, vehicles and computer equipment. The items are used for the following purposes:

- buildings include office accommodation, industrial premises and social housing
- vehicles include animal warden, portorage and social services fleet vehicles

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

	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000
Not later than one year:		
Land and buildings	86	151
Vehicles, plant and equipment	41	21
Computer equipment	58	32
Later than one year and not later than five years:		
Land and buildings	264	206
Vehicles, plant and equipment	53	19
Computer equipment	47	16
Later than five years:		
Land and buildings	434	394
	983	

The expenditure charged to the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement during the year in relation to these leases was:

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Minimum lease payments:		
Land and buildings	214	185
Vehicles, plant and equipment	61	45
Computer equipment	122	59
Contingent rents:		
Land and buildings	0	0
	397	289

The Council as Lessor

Finance Leases

The Council did not enter into any finance leases in 2020/21 as a lessor.

The Council as Lessor

Operating Leases

The Council has a number of premises which it leases out on an operating lease basis for the following purposes:

- for the provision of community services such as sports facilities, community centres and leisure facilities
- for economic development purposes to provide suitable affordable accommodation for local businesses
- for the provision of service tenancy accommodation such as school caretakers.

The income receivable credited to the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement during the year in relation to these leases was:

Rental Income receivable:	2019/20	2020/21
	£,000	£,000
Shops	(2,875)	(3,328)
Industrial Premises	(933)	(1,875)
Offices	(874)	(538)
Other	(716)	(1,390)
Total	(5,398)	(7,131)

The increase rental income from £5,398k in 2019/20 to £7,131k in 2020/21 is largely due to the full year effect of regeneration works taking place in Wokingham Town Centre. There have also been some reclassifications between categories as more information has become available.

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

	31st	31st
	March,	March,
	2020	2021
	£,000	£,000
Not later than one year:		
Shops	(2,950)	(4,266)
Industrial premises	(1,382)	(1,582)
Offices	(635)	(342)
Other	(541)	(1,321)
Later than one year and not later than five years:		
Shops	(11,132)	(15,806)
Industrial premises	(4,335)	(5,305)
Offices	(1,723)	(1,053)
Other	(2,056)	(7,074)
Later than five years:		
Shops	(33,448)	(26,357)
Industrial premises	(12,600)	(13,155)
Offices	(480)	(171)
Other	(12,687)	(24,153)
Total	(83,970)	(100,585)

The increase in income as compared to 19/20 is due to the Town Centre regeneration.

NOTE 29 PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVES AND SIMILAR CONTRACTS

Waste Disposal PFI Scheme

In 2006/07 the Council, together with Reading and Bracknell Forest Borough Councils, entered into a PFI contract with WRG (RE3 Ltd) for the disposal of waste. The total outstanding value of the contract is estimated to be £101.5m as at 31 March, 2021, to be shared between the councils based on usage. Actual payments will depend upon the contractor's performance as well as that of the individual councils in waste collection and recycling. As part of the contract, the contractor has built a transfer station, materials recycling facility, civic amenity site and offices on land owned by Reading and Bracknell Forest Borough Councils. The contract will expire in December 2031.

The Council acquired a 37.2% share of assets that will revert to the ownership of the RE3 partnership between the three councils at the end of the contract.

The Council's share of the assets used to provide the waste disposal contract is recognised in the Council's Balance Sheet. Movements in their value over the year are detailed in the analysis of the movement on Property, Plant and Equipment in Note 24.

Payments remaining to be made by Wokingham Borough Council under the PFI contract at 31 March, 2021 (excluding any estimation of inflation and availability / performance deductions) are as follows:

	Income Amortisation £,000	Liability £,000	Interest £,000	Service Charges £,000	Total £,000
Payable in 2020/21	118	439	390	2,565	3,394
Payable within 2 to 5 Years	472	1,683	1,261	11,237	14,182
Payable within 6 to 10 Years	590	2,943	723	15,503	19,169
Payable within 11 to 15 Years	31	261	11	738	1,009
Total	1,211	5,326	2,384	30,044	37,755

The liability outstanding under the waste contract is as follows:

	Deferred Income		Lease Liability	
	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000
Balance Outstanding at Start of Year	(1,447)	(1,329)	(6,245)	(5,754)
<i>Opening balance adjustment</i>	-	-	-	-
Adjusted Balance	(1,447)	(1,329)	(6,245)	(5,754)
Amortisation/Payments During the Year	118	118	491	428
Balance Outstanding at End of Year	(1,329)	(1,211)	(5,754)	(5,326)

NOTE 30 DEBTORS

Debtors are amounts that were due to the Council in full at the end of the accounting year and are net of bad debt provisions. They can be analysed as follows:

SHORT TERM DEBTORS	WBC	Group	WBC	Group
	31st March, 2020	31st March, 2020	31st March, 2021	31st March, 2021
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Repayable within One year				
Central Government Bodies	4,491	4,554	3,673	3,674
Other Local Authorities	4,252	9,052	6,644	12,827
NHS Bodies	892	892	2,106	2,114
Other Entities and Individuals	21,445	23,062	40,515	40,833
Total	31,080	37,560	52,938	59,448

Other Entities and Individuals have increased from £21.4m in 19/20 to £40.5m in 20/21. This is due to an increase in amounts owing in respect of developer contributions owed to the Council.

DEBTORS FOR LOCAL TAXATION

The debtors which were due to the Council in full at the end of the accounting year, net of bad debt provision, for local taxation (council tax and non-domestic rates (business rates)) can be analysed by age as follows:

	Council Tax	Business Rates	31st March, 2020	Council Tax	Business Rates	31 st March, 2021
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Less than 1 year	1,376	1,682	3,058	1,951	1,115	3,066
Between 1 and 2 years	562	556	1,118	803	250	1,053
More than 2 years	326	185	511	423	219	642
Total	2,264	2,423	4,687	3,177	1,584	4,761

LONG TERM DEBTORS

	31st March 2020	31 st March 2021
	£,000	£,000
Repayable after one year		
Other entities and individuals	20,045	26,225
Total	20,045	26,225

Long term debtors have increased from £20m at 31 March 2020 to £26.2m at 31 March 2021. This is due to additional loans advanced to Wokingham Housing Ltd and WBC Holdings Ltd in 2020/21.

NOTE 31 CREDITORS

Creditors are amounts due to be paid by the Council at the end of the accounting year and include:

	WBC	Group	WBC	Group
	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000
Central Government Bodies	(7,640)	(7,577)	(11,180)	(14,364)
Other Local Authorities	(2,580)	(7,761)	(2,371)	(1,129)
NHS Bodies	(328)	(328)	(468)	(468)
Charities	42	42	0	0
Other Entities and Individuals	(46,380)	(47,299)	(52,760)	(56,412)
Total	(56,886)	(62,922)	(66,779)	(72,373)

The increase in Central Government Bodies from £7.7m in 2019/20 to £11.2m in 2020/21 is primarily due to Covid related grants received in advance.

LONG TERM CREDITORS

Repayable after one year

Lease premium received in advance	(6,030)	(5,360)
Other Entities and Individuals	(71)	(71)
Total	(6,101)	(5,431)

	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000
Lease premium received in advance	(6,030)	(5,360)
Other Entities and Individuals	(71)	(71)
Total	(6,101)	(5,431)

The long-term creditor of £71k is in respect of funds received from a developer for a deposit relating to a section 38 agreement, which will be returned to the developer at the end of the development if all conditions are met.

During the year the Council leased out a number of residential properties in respect of the Peach Place regeneration project to a subsidiary company, Berry Brook Homes Limited. There are 3 leases each of which has a 30 year term with a break clause after 10 years and lease premiums totalling £6.7m were received by the Council at the inception of the lease. The leases do not transfer all the risks and rewards of ownership to the lessee and, accordingly, these leases have been classified as operating leases. The lease premium is to be recognised in income over the initial lease term of 10 years as follows:

	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000
Short-term		
Within one year	(670)	(670)
Long-term		
Between one and two years	(670)	(670)
Between two and five years	(2,680)	(2,680)
Between five and ten years	(2,680)	(2,010)
Total Long-term	(6,030)	(5,360)

NOTE 32 PROVISIONS

All of the Council's provisions are short term.

Provisions than 1 year:	less	2019/20			2020/21		
		Provision for Accumulated Absences	Other Provisions	Total	Provision for Accumulated Absences	Other Provisions	Total
		£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Balance brought forward		(3,071)	(5,025)	(8,096)	(3,085)	(4,773)	(7,858)
Additional provisions made in year		(3,085)	(1,341)	(4,426)	(4,797)	(3,208)	(8,005)
Amounts used in year		-	1,593	1,593	3,085	3,849	6,934
Unused amounts reversed in year		3,071	-	3,071	0	0	0
Balance carried forward		(3,085)	(4,773)	(7,858)	(4,797)	(4,132)	(8,929)

Provision for Accumulating Absences

Officers can carry forward holiday and flexi leave entitlement at the end of the financial year; however, they are not financially compensated if they leave the Council's employment before taking up their entitlement. The Council made a provision of £4.797m at 31 March 2021 (£3.085m at 31 March 2020) for compensated absences.

Other Provisions

Provision for Non-Domestic Rates successful appeals against valuations - Following guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), and in line with proper accounting practice, the Collection Fund has made a provision of £7.115m (£5.334m as at 31 March 2020) for successful appeals against business rates valuations, of which Wokingham's share is £3.506m (£3.947m as at 31 March 2020).

Dilapidation – A provision for dilapidation costs on buildings for Council lease of £0.217m (£0.217m as at 31 March 2020). As contracts may specify the building must be returned to their original condition at the end of the lease. This also includes terminating leases where necessary.

Wokingham Borough Council is a Member of the MMI (Municipal Mutual Insurance) Scheme of Arrangement, which was put in place following MMI's insolvency in 1992. It relates to historic insurance claims for mesothelioma caused by asbestos and those claims that may have been incurred but not yet reported. A provision of £0.409m (31 March 2020 £0.409m) is held for this purpose.

In 2020/21 the Council paid a claim, as a result of an employment tribunal, utilising the provision previously made for £0.2m.

NOTE 33 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

Wokingham Borough Council has a number of subsidiary companies, which were operational during 2020/21. The Council funds any operating losses reported by the companies from its working balances as loans to the companies. The losses are carried forward in the profit and loss reserves of the companies (see the main financial statements and note 46 for more information). In addition, it acts as guarantor for any losses or liabilities incurred by the companies, particularly any residual losses that may be incurred by the companies if they were to cease trading and were wound up.

In relation to Optalis Ltd, the Council has an additional contingent liability in relation to staff transferred from the Council to the company under TUPE arrangements. The Council remains liable for the pension liabilities of the staff transferred, for costs associated with future redundancies and for pension strain costs arising from service closures and future modernisations if they were to occur. The Optalis pension deficit at 31 March 2021 is £9.156m (£5.542m at 31 March 2020), as can be seen in note 19.

In August 2019 the Employee Appeal Tribunal made a judgement that holiday pay for permanent employees whose work patterns are varied across the year should be calculated based on the average earnings for the 12 weeks prior to the holiday as opposed to the average earnings on an annual basis. There is a possibility that an appeal may be made against this ruling although this would appear unlikely and there is a lack of clarity with regard to the basis of any potential claims and the period, if any, to be backdated. In view of this and the lack of current data available the Council is unable to estimate the likely financial impact of any claims that may arise.

NOTE 34 CONTINGENT ASSETS

The Council does not currently have any contingent assets.

NOTE 35 ASSETS HELD FOR SALE

	Current	
	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Balance outstanding at start of the year	258	0
Assets newly classified as held for sale:		
Property, plant, and equipment	0	692
Assets sold	(258)	0
Transfers to Operational Assets - Not sold	0	0
Balance outstanding at end of year	0	692

As at 31 March 2021 there were 6 properties classified as assets held for sale (0 properties at 31 March 2020)

NOTE 36 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Categories of Financial Instruments

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

	<u>Current</u>						<u>Non-Current</u>			
	Investments		Debtors		Cash and Cash Equivalents		Investments		Debtors	
	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000
Financial Assets										
At amortised cost	40,506	195,336	17,438	40,060	60,603	131,296	35,000	30,104	20,045	26,225
Total Financial Assets	40,506	195,336	17,438	40,060	60,603	131,296	35,000	30,104	20,045	26,225
Non-financial Assets										
Other	0	0	13,642	12,878	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Non-financial Assets	0	0	13,642	12,878	0	0	0	0	0	0
Per Balance Sheet	40,506	195,336	31,080	52,938	60,603	131,296	35,000	30,104	20,045	26,225

Categories of Financial Instruments

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

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	<u>Current</u>						<u>Non-Current</u>			
	Borrowings		Creditors		Cash and Cash Equivalents		Borrowings		Creditors	
	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000
Financial Liabilities										
At amortised cost	(63,781)	(338,711)	(39,820)	(44,260)	(1,995)	(1,651)	(216,030)	(191,890)	(71)	(71)
Total Financial Liabilities	(63,781)	(338,711)	(39,820)	(44,260)	(1,995)	(1,651)	(216,030)	(191,890)	(71)	(71)
Non-financial Assets										
Other	0	0	(17,066)	(22,519)	0	0	0	0	(6,030)	(5,360)
Per Balance Sheet	(63,781)	(338,711)	(56,886)	(66,779)	(1,995)	(1,651)	(216,030)	(191,890)	(6,101)	(5,431)

Income, Expense, Gains and Losses

	2019/20			2020/21		
	Financial Liabilities Measured at Amortised Cost £,000	Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost £,000	Total £,000	Financial Liabilities Measured at Amortised Cost £,000	Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost £,000	Total £,000
Interest expense on external borrowing	6,840	0	6,840	7,719	0	7,719
Interest expense on PFI and finance lease liabilities	688	0	688	637	0	637
Impairment losses	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total expense in surplus or deficit on the provision of services	7,528	0	7,528	8,356	0	8,356
Interest income	0	(1,793)	(1,793)	0	(2,122)	(2,122)
Total income in surplus or deficit on the provision of services	7,528	(1,793)	5,735	8,356	(2,122)	6,234
Surplus / deficit arising on revaluation of financial assets in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net (gain) / loss for the year	7,528	(1,793)	5,735	8,356	(2,122)	6,234

Fair Values of Financial Assets and Financial Liabilities

All financial assets and financial liabilities of the Council are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost. The fair values calculated for financial assets and liabilities are as follows:

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 the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) and other loans payable, premature repayment rates from the PWLB have been applied to provide the fair value under PWLB debt redemption procedures;
- for loans receivable prevailing benchmark market rates have been used to provide the fair value;
- no early repayment or impairment is recognised;
- where an instrument has a maturity of less than 12 months or is a trade or other receivable the fair value is taken to be the principal outstanding or the billed amount;
- the fair value of trade and other receivables is taken to be the invoiced or billed amount.

	31 March 2020		31 March 2021	
	Carrying Amount £,000	Fair Value £,000	Carrying Amount £,000	Fair Value £,000
Financial Assets Held at Amortised Cost				
Short-term Investments	40,506	40,506	195,336	195,336
Long-term Investments	35,000	35,000	30,104	30,491
Short-term Debtors	17,438	17,438	40,060	40,060
Long-term Debtors	20,045	20,045	26,225	26,225
Cash and Cash Equivalents	60,603	60,603	131,296	131,296
Total Financial Assets	173,591	173,591	423,021	423,408
Financial Liabilities Held at Amortised Cost				
Borrowings	(279,811)	(371,454)	(530,601)	(596,109)
Cash and Cash Equivalents	(1,995)	(1,995)	(1,651)	(1,651)
Other liabilities and creditors	(39,891)	(39,891)	(44,331)	(44,331)
	(321,697)	(413,340)	(576,583)	(642,091)
Other				
PFI and other Finance Lease Liabilities	(8,149)	(8,149)	(7,604)	(7,604)
	(8,149)	(8,149)	(7,604)	(7,604)
Total Financial Liabilities	(329,846)	(421,849)	(584,187)	(649,695)

The fair value of liabilities as at 31 March 2021 is greater than the overall carrying amount because the Council's portfolio of loans from the Government's Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) and other sources includes a number of fixed rate loans where the interest payable is higher than the rates available for similar loans in the market at the Balance Sheet date.

The fair values for financial liabilities have been determined by reference to the PWLB redemption rules and prevailing PWLB redemption rates as at each balance sheet date, and include accrued interest. The fair value for non-PWLB debt has also been calculated using the same procedures and interest rates and this provides a sound approximation for fair value of these instruments.

The differences are attributable to fixed interest instruments payable being held by the Council whose interest rate is slightly lower than the prevailing rate estimated to be available at 31 March 2021. This increases the fair value of loans and receivables.

The fair values for investments have been determined by reference to similar practices, as detailed above, which provide a reasonable approximation for the fair value of a financial instrument and includes accrued interest. The comparator market rates prevailing have been taken from indicative investment rates at each balance sheet date. In practice, rates will be determined by the size of the transaction and the counterparty but it is impractical to use these figures and the difference is likely to be immaterial.

Fair Value Hierarchy for Financial Assets and Financial Liabilities that are not measured at Fair Value

	31st March, 2020 Other Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2) £,000	31st March, 2021 Other Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2) £,000
Financial Liabilities		
PWLB and LOBO loans	(139,512)	(136,014)
Borrowings with other local authorities	(140,299)	(394,512)
Other loans	0	(75)
PFI and finance lease liabilities	(8,149)	(7,604)
	(287,960)	(538,205)
Financial Assets		
Short-term investments with other local authorities	75,505	195,335
Investments with banks and other financial institutions	59,246	22,721
Other investments	20,045	26,225
	154,796	244,281

NOTE 37 NATURE AND EXTENT OF RISKS ARISING FROM FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

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 commitments to make payments;
- re-financing risk – the possibility that the Council might be required to renew a financial instrument on maturity at disadvantageous interest rates or terms;
- 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.

The Council's overall risk management procedures focus on the unpredictability of financial markets, and are structured to implement suitable controls to minimise these risks. The procedures for risk management are set out through a legal framework. 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 Local Government Act 2003. Overall, these procedures require the Council to manage risk, which it does through the following means.

The Annual Treasury Management and Investment strategy which incorporates the prudential indicators was approved by Council on 20 February 2020 and is available on the Council website.

Credit risk

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

This risk is minimised through the Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy, which requires that deposits are not made with financial institutions unless they meet identified minimum credit criteria, as laid down by Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's Ratings Services. The Treasury Management Strategy also imposes a maximum sum to be invested and time limits with a financial institution located within each category. Deposits are not made with banks and financial institutions unless they meet the minimum requirements of the investment criteria. The credit criteria in respect of financial assets held by the Council are detailed in the annual treasury management and investment strategy.

The following analysis summarises the Council's potential maximum exposure to credit risk on financial assets, based on experience of default, and ability to collect, over the last six financial years, adjusted to reflect current market conditions:

Amounts Arising from Expected Credit Losses

The changes in the loss allowance for financial assets at amortised cost are as follows:

	Lifetime Expected Credit Losses- Credit Impaired Simplified Approach £,000
2020-21 Movement	
Opening balance at 1 April 2020	(2,393)
Amounts written-off	546
Increase in allowance for credit losses	(553)
Other changes	0
Closing balance at 31 March 2021	(2,400)
2019-20 Movement	
Opening balance at 1 April 2019	(2,461)
Amounts written-off	159
Increase in allowance for credit losses	25
Other changes	0
Closing balance at 31 March 2020	(2,277)

The Council has the following exposure to credit risk at 31 March 2021:

	Gross Carrying Amount at 31 March, 2021 £,000
Deposits with banks and financial institutions:	
AAA Rated Counterparties	5,654
Deposits with banks and financial institutions:	
AA Rated Counterparties	332,667
Simplified Approach	
Customers	38,987
Total	377,308

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 and bonds.

Liquidity risk

The Council manages its liquidity position through the risk management procedures above (the setting and approval of prudential indicators and the approval of the annual treasury and investment strategy), as well as through a comprehensive cash flow management system, as required by the CIPFA Code of Practice. This seeks to ensure that cash is available when needed. 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.

Instead, the risk is that the Council is exposed 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 maturity analysis of financial assets is as follows:

	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000
Within one year	101,109	326,632
Between one and two years	35,000	30,104
	136,109	356,736

Maturity and refinancing risk

The Council maintains a significant debt and investment portfolio. Whilst the cash flow procedures above are considered together with the 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 indicator 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 Management and Investment Strategy address the main risks and the corporate finance team addresses 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 the rescheduling of the existing debt;
- monitoring the maturity profile of investments to ensure sufficient liquidity is available for the Council's day to day cash flow needs, and the spread of longer term investments to provide stability of maturities and returns in relation to the longer term cash flow needs.

The maturity analysis of financial liabilities is as follows:

	31st March 2020 £,000	31st March 2021 £,000
Short term borrowing		
Within one year	(63,781)	(338,711)
Long term borrowing		
Between 1 and 2 years	(75,342)	(49,493)
Between 2 and 5 years	(26,036)	(26,908)
Between 5 and 10 years	(11,180)	(31,799)
Between 10 and 15 years	(47,684)	(35,215)
Between 15 and 20 years	(11,600)	(4,000)
Between 25 and 30 years	(1,465)	(1,465)
More than 30 years	(42,723)	(43,010)
Total Long Term	(216,030)	(191,890)
Total Borrowing	(279,811)	(530,601)

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. 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 Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services will rise;
- borrowings at fixed rates – the fair value of the borrowing liability will fall;
- investments at variable rates – the interest income credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services will rise;
- investments at fixed rates – the fair value of the assets will fall.

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. 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 draws together the Council's prudential indicators and its expected treasury operations, including an expectation of interest rate movements. From this strategy a prudential indicator is set which provides maximum and minimum limits for fixed and variable interest rate exposure. The corporate finance 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.

At 31 March, if all interest rates had been 1% higher with all other variables held constant, the financial effect would be:

	31st March, 2020 £,000	31st March, 2021 £,000
Increase in interest payable on variable rate borrowings	-	-
Increase in interest receivable on variable rate investments	(252)	(308)
Impact on Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(252)	(308)
Share of overall impact debited/(credited) to the HRA	-	-
Decrease in Fair Value of Fixed Rate Investment Assets	-	-
Impact on Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(252)	(308)
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)	-	-

There is nil impact on the cost of borrowing of a 1% change as all the loans are at fixed rates. The impact of a 1% fall in interest rates would be as above but with the movements being reversed. Fund Managers investments are not considered as variable rate investments.

Price risk

The Council does not generally invest in instruments with this type of risk.

NOTE 38 OPERATING ACTIVITIES

The cash flows for operating activities include the following items:

	WBC 31st March 2020 £,000	Group 31st March 2020 £,000	WBC 31st March 2021 £,000	Group 31st March 2021 £,000
- Interest Received	(1,793)	(1,793)	(2,122)	(2,122)
- Interest Paid	7,527	7,527	8,356	8,356
	5,734	5,734	6,234	6,234

The surplus or deficit on the provision of services has been adjusted for the following non-cash movements

	Restated WBC 31st March 2020 £,000	Restated Group 31st March 2020 £,000	WBC 31st March 2021 £,000	Group 31st March 2021 £,000
- Depreciation of property, plant and Equipment	17,207	17,229	18,804	18,814
- Impairment and downward valuations	23,674	23,973	27,722	25,344
- Amortisation of intangible assets	1,015	1,015	1,164	1,164
- (Increase) / decrease in inventories	0	13	5,340	4,929
- Increase / (decrease) in impairment allowance for bad or doubtful debts	(175)	(175)	1,253	1,253
- Increase / (decrease) in creditors	3,901	(5,604)	(1,485)	(1,672)
- (Increase) / decrease in debtors	20,449	21,959	(22,945)	(22,973)
- Movement in pension liability	14,913	15,365	15,116	15,372
- Carrying amount of non-current assets, and non – current assets held for sale, sold or derecognised	15,705	15,976	19,934	20,361
- Other non-cash items charged to the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services	2,858	2,076	(6,577)	(6,605)
Total Non-Cash Movements	99,547	91,827	58,326	55,987

NOTE 39 INVESTING ACTIVITIES

	WBC 31st March 2020 £,000	Group 31st March 2020 £,000	WBC 31st March 2021 £,000	Group 31st March 2021 £,000
- Purchase of Property, Plant and Equipment, Investment Property and Intangible Assets	(139,739)	(144,613)	(103,391)	(107,370)
- Purchase of Short-term and Long-term Investments	(92,965)	(92,965)	(780,197)	(780,197)
- Other Payments for Investing Activities	(5,273)	(1,028)	(6,540)	(117)
- Proceeds from the Sale of Property, Plant and Equipment, Investment Property and Intangible Assets	1,745	1,745	7,349	7,349
- Proceeds from Short-term and Long-term Investments	68,610	69,490	630,623	630,263
- Other Receipts from Investing Activities	70,351	70,351	69,587	69,587
Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities	(97,271)	(97,020)	(182,568)	(180,484)

NOTE 40 FINANCING ACTIVITIES

	WBC 31st March 2020 £,000	Group 31st March 2020 £,000	WBC 31st March 2021 £,000	Group 31st March 2021 £,000
- Cash Receipts of Short and Long-term Borrowing	216,723	217,806	433,871	432,485
- Other Receipts or Payments for Financing Activities	6,772	6,772	3,057	3,057
- Cash Payments for the reduction of outstanding liabilities relating to Finance leases and on balance sheet PFI contracts	(610)	(610)	(545)	(545)
- Repayments of short and long-term borrowing	(164,463)	(165,240)	(183,080)	(183,080)
- Other Payments for Financing Activities	0	0	0	0
Net Cash Flows from Financing Activities	58,422	58,727	253,302	251,916

NOTE 41 CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	WBC 31st March, 2020 £,000	Group 31st March, 2020 £,000	WBC 31st March, 2021 £,000	Group 31st March, 2021 £,000
Cash held by the Council	64	64	1,650	1,650
Bank Current Assets	12,146	14,170	17,033	19,860
Money Market Instruments	47,750	47,750	112,218	112,218
Cash Held by Fund Managers	643	643	654	654
Cash and Cash Equivalents	60,603	62,627	131,555	134,382
Bank Current Liabilities	(1,995)	(1,995)	(1,651)	(1,651)
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	58,608	60,632	129,904	132,731

NOTE 42 ACQUIRED AND DISCONTINUED OPERATIONS

There were no acquired or discontinued operations in 2020/21 or 2019/20.

NOTE 43 EVENTS AFTER THE BALANCE SHEET DATE

The financial statements have not been adjusted for any post balance sheet events which took place after 31 March 2021.

NOTE 44 AGENCY SERVICES

The Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy service contract concluded in 2019/20.

The Council operates a shared legal service and internal audit & investigations service with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, a building control service with Royal Borough Windsor and Maidenhead and West Berkshire, and a reprographics service with Bracknell Forest Council. The operational property service was operated with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead until 31 March 2020. Some services already engaged were utilised during 2020/21. A summary of expenditure incurred and income received, in respect of agency services, which is not included within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, is as follows: operational property service

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	Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA)	Shared Legal Services	Internal Audit and Investigation	Building Control	Operational Property	Reprographics	Total
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
2020-21							
Income							
Bracknell Forest	-	-	-	-	-	(71)	(71)
Windsor & Maidenhead	-	(582)	(378)	(567)	(169)	-	(1,696)
West Berkshire	-	-	-	(567)	-	-	(567)
Total Income	-	(582)	(378)	(1,134)	(169)	(71)	(2,334)
Expenditure	-	582	378	1,134	169	71	2,334
Net Expenditure/(Income)	-	0	0	0	0	0	0
2019-20							
Income							
Bracknell Forest	-	-	-	-	-	(104)	(104)
Windsor & Maidenhead	(8)	(474)	(408)	(651)	(685)	-	(2,226)
West Berkshire	9	-	-	(651)	-	-	(642)
Total Income	1	(474)	(408)	(1,302)	(685)	(104)	(2,972)
Expenditure	(1)	474	408	1,302	685	104	2,972
Net Expenditure/(Income)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

NOTE 45 POOLED BUDGETS

Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006 and the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 enable the establishment of joint working arrangements between NHS bodies and local authorities to enable them to work collaboratively to provide services to address local health issues. Wokingham currently has two pooled budget arrangements.

Joint Equipment Stores Agreement

The Joint Equipment Stores Agreement uses NRS Healthcare as an agent to provide the services. The six Berkshire Unitary Authorities and the Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Groups are members of the agreement with West Berkshire Council as the lead partner. The memorandum account for the fund is as follows:

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Funding Provided to the Pooled Budget:		
Wokingham Borough Council	(691)	(679)
West Berkshire Council	(1,032)	(1,019)
Other Berkshire Councils	(2,096)	(2,581)
Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Groups	(6,034)	(6,278)
Other (Reading and Slough Children's Companies)	(177)	(139)
	(10,030)	(10,696)
Expenditure Met from the Pooled Budget:		
Management Fund Costs	117	121
Nottingham Rehab Supplies	9,913	10,575
Net (Surplus) / Deficit Arising on the Pooled Budget During the Year	-	-

Better Care Fund (BCF)

Wokingham Borough Council and Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group (Wokingham CCG) are partners in the provision of services to support the following aims and benefits:

- improve the quality and efficiency of Health and Social Care Services;
- meet the National Conditions set by NHS England and Local Objectives set;
- make more effective use of resources through the establishment and maintenance of an aligned fund for revenue expenditure on the Services;
- ensure that people in Wokingham will remain independent, avoid hospital admission or are discharged quickly with a joined up package of care and support, and;
- for those that need it, to develop an integrated health and care system that enables people to proactively manage their own care with the support of their family, community and the right professionals at the right time in a properly joined up system.

The BCF provides various services to residents of Wokingham who benefit from specific targeted interventions,

The services provided include:

- Support for carers;
- Extended social care provision hours;
- Re-ablement services, and
- Intermediate care and support.

	2019/20	2020/21
	£,000	£,000
Funding Provided to the Pooled Budget:		
Wokingham Borough Council	2,501	2,646
Wokingham CCG	8,288	8,711
	10,789	11,357
Expenditure Met from the Pooled Budget:		
Wokingham Borough Council	6,835	7,248
Wokingham CCG	3,900	4,108
	10,735	11,357
Net (Surplus) / Deficit Arising on the Pooled Budget During the Year	(54)	0

NOTE 46 INVESTMENTS IN COMPANIES

Trading Standards South East Ltd (TSSEL)

This is a company set up by 19 local authority trading standards departments in the South East of England to provide a consumer helpline and regional intelligence unit for Trading Standards' functions, training to the member authorities and other joined up trading standards services. It was established in 2004/05 and is limited by guarantee of £1. Wokingham Borough Council has an equal 1/19th share in the company and is able to nominate one director on the Board of Directors of the company. It has been determined that the Council does not have control or significant influence over the activities of TSSEL and, accordingly, the company has not been treated as a subsidiary, joint entity or associate of the Council. The latest financial statements available for the company were prepared for the year ended 31 March 2020 and show net assets of £0.484m at 31 March 2020 (£0.538m at 31 March 2019). Wokingham Council does not receive any dividend income from the company. The financial statements for the company for the year ended 31 March 2021 will be available later in 2021. A full set of financial statements for the company can be obtained from the Company Secretary at the registered office: Surrey County Council, Trading Standards, Fairmount House, Bull Hill, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 7AY.

Flexible Home Improvement Loans Ltd (FHILL)

This is a company set up by 17 local authorities across the South East of England to deliver small loans to homeowners to improve their property. The loans are targeted at vulnerable households to ensure they are in decent accommodation and therefore can remain in their own home rather than go into residential care. The company was established in March 2008 and is limited by guarantee of £10. Wokingham Borough Council has an equal 1/17th share in the company and is able to nominate one director to the Board of Directors. It has been determined that the Council does not have control or significant influence over the activities of FHILL and, accordingly, the company has not been treated as a subsidiary, joint entity or associate of the Council. The latest financial statements prepared for the company were for the year ended 31 March 2021 and reflect Nil turnover and investment income of £0.259m (£0.270m 2019/20) with a net profit after tax of £0.229m (2019/20: Profit after tax £0.215m). The company had net assets of £8.821m at 31 March 2021 (£8.592m at 31 March 2020). The purpose of the company is to receive grants from Central Government and make loans to local authority members which, when repaid, are then also used to make loans to homeowners. Any grant income and investment income, therefore, maintain the company as a going concern. Wokingham Council does not receive any dividend income from the company. A full set of financial statements for the company can be obtained from Head of Finance, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Town Hall, St. Ives Road, Maidenhead, SL6 1RF.

Optalis Holdings Ltd

Optalis Ltd (OL) is a company set up by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) for the purposes of providing Adult Social Care Services. The company was established in 2011 and is limited by shares. On 01 April 2014 Optalis Holdings Ltd (OHL) was set up and 100% of the shareholding in OL was transferred by WBC to OHL. On the same date OHL issued 50,000 preference shares of £1 and 1 ordinary share of £1 to which WBC (Holdings) Ltd subscribed 100%. Also on 01 April 2014, Optalis Wokingham Ltd (OWL) was set up as a wholly owned subsidiary of OHL. Its purpose is to assist service delivery and tax management. In preparation for the commencement of a new arrangement with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM), 100% of WBC (Holdings) Ltd shareholding in OHL was transferred back to WBC. At the same time the 50,000 preference shares were re-designated as ordinary shares and 99 additional ordinary shares were issued. A share sale took place on 31 March 2017 with RBWM purchasing 22,545 shares in OHL for £771k, representing a 45% interest, with new services starting and the TUPE of staff into Optalis Ltd on 03 April 2017. Jointly with

RBWM, WBC is able to control the operating, governance and financial policies of the organisation, and also able to appoint the Board of Directors of the company. The Company is accounted for as a partially owned subsidiary of WBC however, as WBC's interest in Optalis arose as a result of the formation of the company no goodwill arose. Optalis Holdings had a turnover of £45.6m in 2020/21 (£46.8m in 2019/20), a net loss after tax of £493 (£Nil in 2019/20), and had net assets of £0.3m at 31 March 2021 (£0.3m net assets at 31 March 2020).

WBC (Holdings) Ltd (WBCH)

WBCH is a company wholly owned and set up by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) for the purposes of providing housing services. The company was established in January 2012 and is limited by shares and started trading during 2012-13. The company has issued a total of 1.9m ordinary £1 shares and the Council subscribed to all of them at a cost of £1.9m, however, the ownership of these shares was transferred to the Council's holding company, WBC (Holdings) Ltd, in 2014/15 in line with Council policy. During 2020/21, WBC (Holdings) Ltd impaired the investment of £1.9m share capital in Wokingham Housing Ltd by £246k. The Council is able to control the operating, governance and financial policies of the company as well as the ability to appoint the Board of Directors of the company. The Company is accounted for as a wholly owned subsidiary of WBC. As WBC's interest in WBCH arose as a result of the formation of the company no goodwill has arisen.

Wokingham Housing Ltd (WHL)

Wokingham Housing Ltd (WHL) is accounted for as a wholly owned subsidiary of WBC providing high quality affordable housing and market housing. In 2020-21 WHL had a turnover of £5.9m (£7.3m in 2019/20) and the company had net assets of £1.7m at 31 March 2021 comprising £1.9m share capital and accumulated losses of £0.2m (accumulated losses were £0.4m at 31 March 2020).

Loddon Homes Ltd (LHL)

Loddon Homes Ltd (LHL) is accounted for as a wholly owned subsidiary of WBC. Loddon Homes Ltd is a provider of social and affordable housing, accredited with Homes England as a for-profit registered provider. In 2020-21 LHL had a turnover of £1.4m (£1.5m in 2019/20) and the company had net liabilities of £0.7m at 31 March 2021 comprising £1 share capital and accumulated losses of £0.7m (net liabilities were £0.7m at 31 March 2020).

Berry Brook Homes Ltd (BBHL) (formerly known as Wokingham Enterprises Ltd (WEL))

Berry Brook Homes Ltd (BBHL) is accounted for as a wholly owned subsidiary of WBC. The company was formerly known as Wokingham Enterprises Ltd (WEL), which had not undertaken any trading activity since March 2013. WEL was renamed BBHL in 2017/18 and the shareholding transferred to WBC Holdings Ltd to be used within the portfolio of housing companies. In 2020-21 BBHL had turnover of £0.9m (£0.7m in 2019/20) and the company had net liabilities of £0.3m at 31 March 2021 comprising £3k share capital and accumulated losses of £0.3m (net liabilities were £0.3m at 31 March 2020).

NOTE 47 ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN GROUP ACCOUNTS AND AUTHORITY ACCOUNTS

Details of intra group transactions between entities within the Group, eliminated out of the consolidation of the group accounts.

Adjustment for Intra - group transactions in Net Cost of Sales	Wokingham Authority	Optalis Ltd	Wokingham Housing Ltd	WBC (Holdings) Ltd	Loddon Homes Ltd	Berry Brook Homes Ltd	Total
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
2020/21							
Expenditure	(7,590)	(518)	(48)	0	(6,072)	(211)	(14,439)
Income	957	7,536	5,894	0	44	8	14,439
- CIES - Cost of Services	(6,633)	7,018	5,846	0	(6,028)	(203)	0
2019/20							
Expenditure	(15,480)	0	(256)	0	(222)	(137)	(16,095)
Income	615	8,599	0	0	181	6,700	16,095
- CIES - Cost of Services	(14,865)	8,599	(256)	0	(41)	6,563	0

2019/20 included c£6.7m of transactions between Berry Brook Homes Ltd and Wokingham Authority in relation to transfer of commuted sums.

Details of all Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure transactions put through the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account on consolidation

Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

2020/21

Net Interest on Pension Fund Defined Liability (assets)

2019/20

Net Interest on Pension Fund Defined Liability (assets)

	Wokingham Authority	Wokingham Subsidiaries	Wokingham Group
	£,000	£,000	£,000
Net Interest on Pension Fund Defined Liability (assets)	5,663	129	5,792
Net Interest on Pension Fund Defined Liability (assets)	6,832	174	7,006

NOTE 48 PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENTS

The following prior period adjustments have been identified during the preparation of the 2020/21 financial accounts. These adjustments relate to the following and have been adjusted in the financial statements.

The areas of adjustments relate to:

- Town centre regeneration development, Elms Field and Rose Street assets. Any assets which have been constructed solely for market sale had been recognised as property, plant and equipment however under the accounting code, these assets should be treated as current assets, inventories. Any costs, depreciation and revaluations associated with these assets have been reversed in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement (CIES), movement in reserves statement (MIRS) and the balance sheet with the assets now being shown under inventories (see note 49).

- Treatment of accumulated depreciation and impairments on the housing revenue account assets. On revaluation of assets, accumulated balances need to also be written out as part of the revaluation movement. This had previously not been completed and has been corrected. There is no impact on the comprehensive income and expenditure statement (CIES), movement in reserves statement (MIRS) and the balance sheet. The net book value of the assets are unchanged. The only adjustment is within note 24 between the “cost / valuation” and “accumulated depreciation and impairment balances”.

RESTATED 2019/2020 COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

	(Previously reported)			(Prior period adjustment)			(Restated)		Net Expenditure £,000
	Gross Expenditure £,000	Gross Income £,000	Net Expenditure £,000	Gross Expenditure £,000	Gross Income £,000	Net Expenditure £,000	Gross Expenditure £,000	Gross Income £,000	
Chief Executive	2,885	(210)	2,675	0	0	0	2,885	(210)	2,675
Corporate Services	48,135	(27,474)	20,661	98	0	98	48,223	(27,474)	20,748
Customer and Localities Services	51,680	(21,932)	29,748	0	0	0	51,680	(21,932)	29,748
Housing Revenue Account	10,643	(15,231)	(4,588)	0	0	0	10,643	(15,231)	(4,588)
Adult Social Care	59,109	(9,838)	49,271	0	0	0	59,109	(9,838)	49,271
Children's Services	58,078	(4,417)	53,661	0	0	0	58,078	(4,417)	53,661
Children's Services - Schools Block	107,417	(102,981)	4,436	0	0	0	107,417	(102,981)	4,436
Cost of Services	337,947	(182,083)	155,864	98	0	98	338,045	(182,083)	155,962
- Other Operating Expenditure (Note 8)			18,632			0			18,632
- Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure (Note 9)			13,935			0			13,935
- Taxation and Non-specific Grant Income (Note 10)			(199,788)			0			(199,788)
(Surplus) or Deficit on Provision of Services			(11,357)			98			(11,259)
- (Surplus) or Deficit on Revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment Assets charged to the revaluation reserve			(40,903)			0			(40,903)
- Actuarial (Gains) / Losses on Pension Assets / Liabilities			(46,585)			0			(46,585)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			(87,488)			0			(87,488)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			(98,845)			98			(98,747)

RESTATED 2019/2020 MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

	General Fund (GF) Balance	Earmarked GF Reserves	Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	Schools & Dedicated Schools Grant Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Major Repairs Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Total WBC Usable Reserves	WBC Unusable Reserves	Total WBC Reserves
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Balance at 31st March, 2019 (previously reported)	(8,828)	(71,024)	(2,783)	(2,257)	(5,379)	(2,227)	(29,614)	(122,112)	(277,751)	(399,863)
Movement in Reserves during 2019/20: <u>(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services</u>										
- Previously reported	(9,550)	0	(1,807)	0	0	0	0	(11,357)	0	(11,357)
- Prior period adjustments	98	0	0	0	0	0	0	98	0	98
Restated	(9,452)	0	(1,807)	0	0	0	0	(11,259)	0	(11,259)
<u>Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure</u>										
- Previously reported	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(87,488)	(87,488)
- Prior period adjustments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Restated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(87,488)	(87,488)
<u>Adjustments between Accounting Basis & Funding Basis under Regulations (note 5)</u>										
- Previously reported	(13,328)	0	2,368	0	2,993	669	7,360	62	(62)	0
- Prior period adjustments	(98)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(98)	98	0
Restated	(13,426)	0	2,368	0	2,993	669	7,360	(36)	36	0
<u>Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves (Note 6)</u>										
- Previously reported	19,466	(20,499)	131	1,876	0	0	0	974	(974)	0
- Prior period adjustments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Restated	19,466	(20,499)	131	1,876	0	0	0	974	(974)	0
Balance at 31st March 2020 carried forward										
- Previously reported	(12,240)	(91,523)	(2,091)	(381)	(2,386)	(1,558)	(22,254)	(132,433)	(366,275)	(498,708)
- Prior period adjustments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	98	98
Restated	(12,240)	(91,523)	(2,091)	(381)	(2,386)	(1,558)	(22,254)	(132,433)	(366,177)	(498,610)

RESTATED 2019/2020 BALANCE SHEET

	Notes	31st March, 2020 £,000 (Previously reported)	31st March, 2020 £,000 (Prior period adjustment)	31st March, 2020 £,000 (Restated)
Property, Plant & Equipment	24	992,521	(14,895)	977,626
Investment Property	25	32,571	0	32,571
Intangible Assets	26	6,346	0	6,346
Long Term Investments	36	35,000	0	35,000
Long Term Debtors	30	20,045	0	20,045
Long Term Assets		1,086,483	(14,895)	1,071,588
Short Term Investments	36	40,506	0	40,506
Assets Held for Sale	35	0	0	0
Inventories	49	0	14,797	14,797
Short Term Debtors	30	31,080	0	31,080
Cash and Cash Equivalents	41	60,603	0	60,603
Current Assets		132,189	14,797	146,986
Cash and Cash Equivalents	41	(1,995)	0	(1,995)
Short Term Borrowing	36	(63,781)	0	(63,781)
Short Term Creditors	31	(56,886)	0	(56,886)
Provisions	32	(7,858)	0	(7,858)
Current Liabilities		(130,520)	0	(130,520)
Long Term Borrowing	36	(216,030)	0	(216,030)
Long Term Creditors	31	(6,101)	0	(6,101)
PFI and Finance Lease Liabilities	36	(8,149)	0	(8,149)
Pensions Liability	19	(259,601)	0	(259,601)
Capital Grants and Contributions Receipts in Advance	20	(99,563)	0	(99,563)
Long Term Liabilities		(589,444)	0	(589,444)
Net Assets		498,708	(98)	498,610
Usable Reserves	22	(132,433)	0	(132,433)
Unusable Reserves	23	(366,275)	98	(366,177)
Total Reserves		(498,708)	98	(498,610)
Minority Interest				
Total Reserves Excluding Minority Interest		(498,708)	98	(498,610)

RESTATED 2019/2020 NOTE 24 – PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (PPE)

The impact of the prior period adjustments on property, plant and equipment (note 24) are shown below.

	Council Dwellings	Other Land and Buildings (Inc. HRA)	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	Infrastructure Assets	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets under Construction	Total Property, Plant and Equipment
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Cost or Valuation								
At 31st March, 2020 - Previously reported	273,521	506,995	24,227	173,765	3,150	4,249	147,232	1,133,139
<i>Prior period adjustments</i>	<i>(50,227)</i>	<i>(1,815)</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>(13,094)</i>	<i>(65,136)</i>
At 31st March, 2020 - Restated	223,294	505,180	24,227	173,765	3,150	4,249	134,138	1,068,003
<u>Lines within "cost or valuation" that have changed due to prior period adjustments</u>								
<u>At 1st April, 2019</u>								
Previously reported	252,167	477,220	22,077	158,802	3,149	4,258	90,100	1,007,773
<i>Prior period adjustments</i>	<i>(46,956)</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>(46,956)</i>
Restated	205,211	477,220	22,077	158,802	3,149	4,258	90,100	960,817
<u>Additions</u>								
Previously reported	10,576	33,204	2,669	9,915	1	199	79,876	136,440
<i>Prior period adjustments</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>(1,702)</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>(13,094)</i>	<i>(14,797)</i>
Restated	10,576	31,502	2,669	9,915	1	199	66,782	121,643
<u>Revaluation Increases / (Decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve</u>								
Previously reported	10,888	24,284	0	0	0	0	0	35,172
<i>Prior period adjustments</i>	<i>(3,271)</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>(3,271)</i>
Restated	7,617	24,284	0	0	0	0	0	31,901

	Council Dwellings	Other Land and Buildings (Inc. HRA)	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	Infrastructure Assets	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets under Construction	Total Property, Plant and Equipment
<u>Revaluation Increases / (Decreases) recognised in the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services</u>								
Previously reported	0	(30,113)	0	0	0	(6)	0	(30,119)
Prior period adjustments	0	(112)	0	0	0	0	0	(112)
Restated	0	(30,225)	0	0	0	(6)	0	(30,231)
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment								
At 31st March, 2020 - Previously reported								
	60,492	22,006	13,887	44,222	0	11	0	140,618
Prior period adjustments	(50,227)	(14)	0	0	0	0	0	(50,241)
At 31st March, 2020 - Restated	10,265	21,992	13,887	44,222	0	11	0	90,377
<u>Lines within "accumulated depreciation and impairment" that have changed due to prior period adjustments</u>								
At 1st April, 2019								
Previously reported	50,227	33,846	12,841	39,450	0	4	0	136,368
Prior period adjustments	(46,956)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(46,956)
Restated	3,271	33,846	12,841	39,450	0	4	0	89,412
<u>Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve</u>								
Previously reported	0	(12,608)	0	0	0	0	0	(12,608)
Prior period adjustments	(3,271)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(3,271)
Restated	(3,271)	(12,608)	0	0	0	0	0	(15,879)
<u>Depreciation written out to the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services</u>								
Previously reported	0	(6,543)	0	0	0	0	0	(6,543)
Prior period adjustments	0	(14)	0	0	0	0	0	(14)
Restated	0	(6,557)	0	0	0	0	0	(6,557)

	Council Dwellings	Other Land and Buildings (Inc. HRA)	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	Infrastructure Assets	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets under Construction	Total Property, Plant and Equipment
Net Book Value								
At 31st March, 2020 - Previously reported	213,029	484,989	10,340	129,543	3,150	4,238	147,232	992,521
<i>Prior period adjustments</i>	0	(1,800)	0	0	0	0	(13,094)	(14,895)
At 31st March, 2020 – Restated	213,029	483,189	10,340	129,543	3,150	4,238	134,138	977,626

NOTE 49 INVENTORIES

The Council have the following inventories included under current assets in the balance sheet. Inventories relate to costs incurred developing assets to sell on the open market. The Councils current inventories are in relation to the residential properties in the town centre regeneration development (Elms Field and Rose Street).

These balances are restated in relation to prior year adjustments which are explained further in note 48.

	2019/20 £,000 Restated	2020/21 £,000 Restated
Balance at 1st April	0	14,797
Additions	14,797	1,709
Impairment	0	(1,814)
Disposals	0	(5,235)
Balance at 31st March	14,797	9,457

Impairments are required under the accounting code to ensure the value of inventories is the lower of cost vs net realisable value.

7. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Introduction

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reflects a statutory obligation to maintain a revenue account for the Council's housing provision, in accordance with Schedule 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (England and Wales). Its primary purpose is to ensure that expenditure on managing tenancies and maintaining dwellings is balanced by rents charged to tenants. Consequently, the HRA is a statutory account, ring-fenced from the rest of the General Fund so that rents cannot be subsidised from council tax and vice versa.

Transactions relating to the HRA have been separated into two statements:

- HRA Income and Expenditure Statement
- Movement on the HRA Statement

HRA Income and Expenditure Statement

The HRA Income and Expenditure Statement shows the economic cost in the year of providing housing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from rents and government grants. The Council charges rents to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost. The increase or decrease in the year, on the basis of which rents are raised, is shown in the Movement on the HRA Statement.

Movement on the HRA Statement

The overall objectives for the Movement on the HRA Statement, and the general principles for its completion, are the same as those generally for the Movement in Reserves Statement into which it is consolidated. The statement takes the outturn on the HRA Income and Expenditure Statement and reconciles it to the surplus or deficit for the year on the HRA Balance, calculated in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Housing Revenue Account Income and Expenditure Statement

	Notes	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Income			
Dwelling rents (gross)		(14,001)	(14,994)
Non-dwelling rents (gross)		(222)	(166)
Charges for services and facilities		(568)	(604)
Re-imburement of costs		(9)	0
		(14,800)	(15,764)
Expenditure			
Repairs and maintenance		3,051	3,286
Supervision and management		3,151	3,092
Rents, rates, taxes and other charges		157	139
Increased impairment allowance for bad or doubtful debts	11	0	150
Depreciation	7	3,736	4,332
Accumulated absences leave		0	56
Debt management costs		117	117
		10,212	11,172
Net Cost of HRA Services			
(Gain) or loss on sale of HRA non-current assets (Inc. Pooling Payment)		(54)	(217)
Interest payable and similar charges		2,719	2,660
HRA interest and investment income		(35)	(13)
Pension interest cost and expected return on pension assets	9	151	124
		(1,807)	(2,038)

Movement on the HRA Statement

	Notes	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Balance on the HRA at the End of the Previous Year		(2,783)	(2,090)
(Surplus) or deficit for the year on the HRA income and expenditure statement		(1,807)	(2,038)
Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Statute			
Depreciation	7	(3,736)	(4,332)
Impairment / revaluation loss		0	0
(Gain) / loss on disposal		54	217
Reversal of accumulating absences		(3)	(56)
Capital expenditure funded by the HRA (adjusted against the capital adjustment account)	5	5,051	2,992
Transfer to the capital adjustment account for voluntary debt repayment		1,998	3,028
HRA share of contributions (to) or from the pensions reserve	9	(327)	(329)
Financial instrument amortisation		1	(1)
Net (Increase) or Decrease in the HRA Balance before Transfers to or from Reserves		1,231	(519)
Transfer to capital reserves		645	0
Transfers to or (from) the major repairs reserve	4	(1,314)	1,341
Transfer to earmarked reserves		131	0
(Increase) or Decrease in Year on the HRA		693	822
Housing Revenue Account Balance Carried Forward		(2,090)	(1,268)



8. NOTES TO THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

NOTE 1 HOUSING STOCK -

The number and types of dwellings in the Council's housing stock are as follows:

	Number of Properties	
	31 March 2020	31 March 2021
Dwellings:		
Low and medium rise flats	594	593
Traditional houses and bungalows	1,381	1,385
Non-traditional houses and bungalows	331	328
Sheltered Units:		
Low and medium rise flats	174	175
Traditional houses and bungalows	111	110
Shared Equity Properties:		
Low and medium rise flats	5	5
Traditional houses and bungalows	36	36
Total HRA Housing Stock	2,632	2,632

NOTE 2 HRA ASSET VALUATION

	Operational Assets			Total £,000
	Dwellings	Other Land and Buildings	Plant and Equipment	
	£,000	£,000	£,000	
Gross Valuation at 31 March, 2020	273,522	3,867	858	278,247
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment	(60,492)	(918)	(735)	(62,145)
Net Book Value at 31 March, 2020	213,029	2,950	124	216,102
Additions	5,166	-	0	5,166
Disposals	(132)	-	-	(132)
Revaluations	24,352	-	-	24,352
Assets reclassified (to) / from Held for Sale	(692)	-	-	(692)
Other movements	-	-	-	-
Depreciation	(4,008)	(305)	(19)	(4,332)
Impairments	(2,962)	-	-	(2,962)
Net Book Value at 31 March, 2021	234,753	2,645	104	237,502

NOTE 3 VACANT POSSESSION

The vacant possession value of dwellings within the Council's HRA as at 31 March 2021 was £726.6m and as at 31 March 2020 was £643.1m.

The vacant possession value and the balance sheet value of dwellings within the HRA show the economic cost to the Government of providing council housing at less than open market rents. The dwellings in the balance sheet are valued using the existing use value (EUV) for social housing rate. This is an open market rate with an adjustment factor that recognises the fact that the dwellings are tenanted properties let at affordable rents without vacant possession. The adjustment factor is set by the Government and is currently 33% of open market value (33% in 2019/20).

NOTE 4 MAJOR REPAIRS RESERVE

Movement on the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR) was as follows:

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Balance at 1st April	(2,227)	(1,558)
Charges for depreciation	(3,737)	(4,332)
Capital expenditure on land, houses and other property within the HRA	5,051	2,991
Transfers (to) or from major repairs reserve	1,315	(1,340)
Revenue contribution to capital expenditure	(645)	0
Balance at 31st March	(1,558)	(2,899)

NOTE 5 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Capital Expenditure within the Year:		
Capital expenditure on land, houses and other property within the HRA	10,576	4,422
Funded by:		
Major repairs reserve	(4,881)	(2,983)
Capital receipts reserve	(3,356)	(229)
S106 developer contributions	(450)	0
HRA revenue	(170)	0
HRA Borrowing	(1,719)	(1,210)
(Surplus) / Deficit	0	0

NOTE 6 CAPITAL RECEIPTS

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Disposal receipts for one dwellings (eight in 2019/20)	1,705	349

In 2020/21 one properties were purchased for £0.7m.
(In 2019/20 four properties were purchased for £1.1m).

NOTE 7 DEPRECIATION

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Operational assets (property, plant and equipment)	24	19
Other, land and buildings	308	305
Council dwellings	3,404	4,008
	3,736	4,332

NOTE 8 IMPAIRMENT CHARGES

There have been £2.962m impairments on council dwellings available for letting and other non-current HRA Assets during 2020/21. (In 2019/20, there was £6.9m of impairments).

NOTE 9 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PENSION RESERVE

Pension costs of £205k (£176k in 2019/20) and interest of £124k (£151k in 2019/20) are included in the '(surplus) or deficit for the year on HRA services' section of the income and expenditure statement.

NOTE 10 RENT ARREARS

	2019/20 £,000	2020/21 £,000
Current Tenants	542	366
Former Tenants	244	444
	786	810

NOTE 11 IMPAIRMENT ALLOWANCE FOR BAD DEBTS

	2019/20	2020/21
	£,000	£,000
Balance at 1st April	683	683
Drawdown of provision in year	0	(127)
(Decrease) / Increase in Provision for the Year	0	150
	683	706

NOTE 12 SUMS DIRECTED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No items have been directed to be debited or credited to the HRA.

NOTE 13 ASSETS HELD FOR SALE

The HRA has six properties classed as 'assets held for sale' in the Council's balance sheet at 31 March 2021 (no properties at 31 March 2020).

9. COLLECTION FUND

Introduction

The Collection Fund (England) is an agent's statement that reflects the statutory obligation 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 and its distribution to local government bodies and the Government.

	2019/20			2020/21		
	Business rates £,000	Council tax £,000	Total £,000	Business rates £,000	Council tax £,000	Total £,000
INCOME	(72,775)	(130,838)	(203,613)	(49,990)	(138,567)	(188,557)
Total income	(72,775)	(130,838)	(203,613)	(49,990)	(138,567)	(188,557)
EXPENDITURE						
Prescribed amounts						
Wokingham Borough Council	59,550	104,137	163,687	28,130	111,162	139,292
Payments to Government	18,371	-	18,371	36,130	0	36,130
Parish Councils	-	4,379	4,379	0	4,746	4,746
Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley	-	14,476	14,476	0	15,580	15,580
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authority	787	4,651	5,438	649	4,870	5,519
Cost of collection	203	-	203	201	0	201
Bad and doubtful debts						
Provisions	330	288	618	2,805	451	3,256
Write offs	-	169	169	0	219	219
Provisions for appeals	1,098	-	1,098	1,822	0	1,822
Transfer of collection fund surplus	-	293	293	0	592	592
Total expenditure	80,339	128,393	208,732	69,737	137,620	207,357
Deficit/(surplus) for the year	7,564	(2,445)	5,119	19,747	(947)	18,800
Balance at 1 April	2,159	(4,312)	(2,153)	9,723	(6,757)	2,966
Opening Balance Adjustment	-	-	-	0	0	0
Adjusted Balance at 1 April	2,159	(4,312)	(2,153)	9,723	(6,757)	2,966
Balance at 31 March	9,723	(6,757)	2,966	29,470	(7,704)	21,766

See note 3 to the collection fund to see Wokingham Borough Council's share of the deficit / (surplus) on the collection fund.

10. NOTES TO THE COLLECTION FUND

General

The Council has a statutory requirement as a billing authority to operate a collection fund as a separate account from the general fund. The purpose of the collection fund is to separately identify the income and expenditure relating to council tax and business rates.

Collection fund surpluses or deficits are declared by the billing authority in relation to council tax and are apportioned to the relevant precepting bodies in the subsequent financial year. Wokingham's precepting bodies for council tax are the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley and the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

Business rates surpluses or deficits declared by the billing authority in relation to the Collection Fund are apportioned to the relevant precepting bodies in the subsequent financial year in their respective proportions.

The code of practice requires the collection fund income and expenditure account to be included in the Council's accounts, and the collection fund balance sheet is incorporated into the Council's consolidated balance sheet.

NOTE 1 INCOME COLLECTABLE FROM BUSINESS RATE PAYERS

Each Council which is a billing authority collects Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) for its area based on local rateable values provided by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) multiplied by the business rates multiplier set nationally by Central Government.

The total business (non-domestic) rateable value at 31 March 2021 was £175,367,091 (at 31 March 2020 £178,789,531). The national non-domestic rate multiplier for 2020/21 was 51.2p (for 2019/20 50.4p).

NOTE 2 CALCULATION OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE

Council tax is charged according to the value of residential properties, which are classified into 8 valuation bands (A to H) for this specific purpose. Individual charges are calculated by estimating the amount of income required to be taken from the collection fund by the Council for the forthcoming year and dividing this by the council tax base (i.e. the equivalent numbers of Band D dwellings).

The council tax base for 2020/21 was 72,036.5 band D equivalent properties (70,176.6 in 2019/20). The tax base for 2020/21 was approved at an Extraordinary Council meeting on 23 January 2020 and was calculated as set out in the table below. The council tax reduction scheme which must be approved each year, was approved by Council on 23 January 2020.

Band	2019/20			2020/21		
	Chargeable Dwellings	Ratio	Band D Equivalent Dwellings	Chargeable Dwellings	Ratio	Band D Equivalent Dwellings
A	1,566	6/9	1,044	1,578	6/9	1,052
B	3,044	7/9	2,367	3,122	7/9	2,428
C	9,386	8/9	8,343	9,768	8/9	8,682
D	17,480	1	17,480	18,012	1	18,012
E	14,544	11/9	17,776	14,872	11/9	18,177
F	9,661	13/9	13,955	9,872	13/9	14,260
G	6,057	15/9	10,094	6,174	15/9	10,290
H	474	18/9	948	489	18/9	978
Total			72,007			73,879
Net effect of premiums and discounts			(1,830)			(1,842)
Council Tax Base			70,177			72,037

NOTE 3 COLLECTION FUND (SURPLUS) / DEFICIT

	Council Tax	Business Rates	2019/20	Council Tax	Business Rates	2020/21
	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
Wokingham Borough Council	(5,707)	8,579	2,872	(6,538)	14,579	8,041
Central Government	-	1,047	1,047	0	14,596	14,596
Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley	(799)	-	(799)	(902)	0	(902)
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	(250)	97	(153)	(264)	295	31
Total	(6,757)	9,723	2,966	(7,704)	29,470	21,766

During 2020/21, as part of COVID measures introduced by the Government, the Council were required to increase the amount of reliefs given to businesses which had the effect of reducing the income received into the collection fund. Under the statutory accounting arrangements, the amount of income withdrawn from the collection fund is based on an estimated amount at the start of the year rather than actual income, the impact of the extra reliefs has therefore created a significant increase in the business rates deficit position. However, the Government have compensated the Council in full for the extra reliefs granted during COVID in the form of a grant. This grant does not form part of the collection fund and is held in earmarked reserves (WBC share) to offset the deficit above in 2022/23.

11. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's and Group transactions for the 2020/21 financial year and its position at 31 March 2021. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, which require them to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices.

The Statement of Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) 2020/21 supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and have been produced in accordance with the statutory framework established by sections 3 and 20 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

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 accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis, under the assumption that the Council will continue in existence for the foreseeable future.

The single entity financial statements are also defined as including the income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows of the local authority maintained schools within the control of the Council. Local authority maintained schools are those schools categorised in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, i.e. community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, foundation, community special, foundation special and nursery schools.

The Statement of Accounts reflect the requirements of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) by adopting the core accounting principles and concepts of:

- **Accruals Basis** – the financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and report transactions that have been recorded in the accounting period for which the goods and services were received or supplied rather than in which the cash was received or paid.
- **Going Concern** – the financial statements have been prepared on the assumption that the Council will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. This is explained in more detail on the next page.
- **Understandability** – the financial statements have been prepared to ensure they are as easy to understand as possible.
- **Relevance** – the financial statements provide information about the Council's performance and position that is useful to the users of the accounts to assess the stewardship of public funds and for making economic decisions.
- **Reliability** – the financial information faithfully represents the substance of the transactions, the activities underlying them and other events that have taken place, are free from deliberate or systematic bias and material error, are complete within the bounds of materiality and cost and have been prudently prepared.
- **Comparability** – the information has been prepared consistently and with adequate disclosures so that it can be compared with prior years and other local authorities.
- **Materiality** – the statements only disclose items of a certain value and nature such that they provide a fair presentation of the financial position and transactions of the Council. Where there

are items below this threshold or are considered to have no impact on fair presentation in the accounts they are not included.

- **Legality** – where the accounting principles and specific legislation requirements are in conflict, the financial statements have been prepared to reflect legislative requirements.

Where the Council is acting as an agent for another party (e.g. in the collection of business rates and council tax), income and expenditure items are recognised only to the extent that commission is receivable by the Council for the agency services or the Council incurs expenses directly on its own behalf in rendering the services.

1. Statement on Wokingham Borough as a ‘Going Concern’

The annual accounts for 2020/21 (up to 31 March 2021) have been prepared on a ‘going concern’ basis in that the authority will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

The provisions in the Code of Audit Practice in respect of ‘going concern’ reporting requirements reflect the economic and statutory environment in which local authorities operate. These provisions confirm that, as authorities cannot be created or dissolved without statutory prescription, they must prepare their financial statements on a going concern basis of accounting. Local authorities carry out functions essential to the local community and are themselves revenue-raising bodies (with limits on their revenue-raising powers arising only at the discretion of central government). If an authority were in financial difficulty, the prospects are thus that alternative arrangements might be made by central government either for the continuation of the services it provides or for assistance with the recovery of a deficit over more than one financial year (eg: as with Northamptonshire County Council in 2018). It would not therefore be appropriate for local authority financial statements to be provided on anything other than a ‘going concern’ basis. Accounts drawn up under the CIPFA Code therefore assume that a local authority’s services will continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

The Council recognises that its financial position deteriorated in the early months of 2020/21, having reported in quarter one a £5.7m forecast deficit for the financial period ending 31 March 2021. The initial deterioration was only due to the impact of Covid-19 and as more government support has become apparent through the year, the assessment of the financial impact of the pandemic on the Council reduced. The outturn for financial year 2020/21 showed a favourable variance to budget of £0.8m. For 2021/22, although the impact of COVID is present in areas such as car parking income, leisure services and temporary accommodation, the Council are forecasting a small adverse variance to budget of £0.5m as part of the quarter three revenue monitoring.

At its Budget Council meeting on 18 February 2021, the Council has set its budget for the forthcoming financial year (21/22) and indicative budgets for a further two years. The budget set is balanced and includes some budgeted transfers to earmarked reserves for key risk areas.

As part of the normal revenue budget setting, all service areas are reviewing their budgets during the current year to identify options for delivering efficiency savings or generating increased income; a balanced budget will be set for 2022/23. The budget setting process is complete with budget bids being presented to overview and scrutiny committee during November and December with the final budget presented to Council in February 2022. The future challenge is the longer term impact of the pandemic and potential recession on Council balances, but it is considered that Wokingham Borough Council has sufficient general fund reserves over the next MTFP to cover this. The estimated impact for our reserves is therefore:

- General fund balance as per the 2020/21 accounts - £12.0m
- General fund balance as at 31 March 2022 - £9.9m
- General fund balance as at 31 March 2023 - £8.2m

- General fund balance as at 31 March 2024 - £9.0m
- General fund balance as at 31 March 2025 - £9.0m

The Council had a cash balance of £58m at the end of January 2022, compared to the 31 March 2021 year-end figure of £61m. The figures previously mentioned include money market funds. The Council has a further £225m in short and long term non-property investments. Whilst there is uncertainty on income, the Council remains confident in its ability to maintain sufficient cash for its services throughout the medium term. A detailed assessment of the Council's ongoing cashflow has been undertaken up to 31 March 2024 with sufficient levels of cash reserves being available through this period. The Council is of course also able to borrow short term for revenue purposes if ever needed.

The Council has a number of subsidiary companies. The main subsidiary is a 'Teckal' company providing adult social care services to both this Council and the neighbouring Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM). This company has not been adversely impacted during the pandemic and has seen demand for its services increase. The other companies are solely owned housing delivery companies whose primary aim is to support the Council in the delivery of its housing strategies and providing social and affordable housing. These companies are underwritten by the Council and as such have a guarantee of support from the Council.

These accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis, following the projection of a largely break-even outturn in 2022/23 and the production of a balanced budget in 2023/24, which maintains a prudent level of general fund balances over the three-year projection of the Medium Term Financial Plan, to be agreed at Council on 16 February 2023.

2. Accruals of Income and Expenditure

Activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place and when a right to consideration exists, 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 the goods or services are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the performance obligations in the contract.
- Supplies and services 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 stocks on the Balance Sheet
- Works are charged as expenditure when they are completed, before which they are carried as works in progress 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 payable on borrowings and receivable on investments is accounted for on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- Where income and expenditure has been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where it is doubtful that debts will be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected
- Where payments are made or received in advance of a service being provided or received a payment or receipt in advance is recognised as a debtor or creditor in the Balance Sheet
- Income and expenditure are credited and debited to the relevant revenue account, unless they properly represent capital receipts or capital expenditure

3. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of less than 24 hours.

Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that mature in 3 months or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with little risk of change in value.

4. Exceptional Items

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

5. Prior Period Adjustments, Changes in Accounting Policies and Estimates and Errors

Adjustments applicable to prior years arising from changes in accounting policies are accounted for by restating the comparative figures for the preceding period and by adjusting opening balances as if the new policy had always been applied.

Changes in accounting estimates are accounted for in the current and future years affected by the change but do not give rise to a prior period adjustment.

Material errors are corrected retrospectively by restating the comparative figures for the preceding period and by adjusting the opening balances.

6. Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets

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

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

The Council is not required to raise council tax to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisation. It is required, however, to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis by the Council in accordance with the approved Minimum Revenue Provision policy. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisations are, therefore, replaced by the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). This adjusting transaction is included in the Movement in Reserves Statement with the Capital Adjustment Account being charged with the difference between the two.

7. Employee Benefits

i. Benefits Payable During Employment

Short term employee benefits are those to be settled within 12 months of the year end, for example wages and salaries, paid annual and sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits such as cars. They are charged to the accounts in the period within which the employees worked. An accrual is made for the cost of any leave earned but not taken before the year end and which can be carried forward by the employee into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the wages and salaries rate in the new financial year as that will be when the employee will benefit. The charge is made to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and then reversed out by a credit to the Accumulating Compensated Absences Adjustment Account through the Movement in Reserves Statement, allowing the benefit to be charged to revenue in the period in which the leave occurs.

ii. Termination Benefits

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 are charged on an accruals basis to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement 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.

Termination benefits involving pension enhancements are required by statutory provisions to be charged to the General Fund balance on the basis of the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or the pensioner in the year not the amount calculated according to relevant accounting standards.

Appropriations are required to and from the Pensions Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement to remove the notional debits and credits for pension enhancement termination benefits and to replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund, the pensioners and any amounts payable but unpaid at the year end.

iii. Post-Employment Benefits

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

- The Teacher's Pension Scheme, administered by Capita Teachers' Pensions on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE)
- The Local Government Pension Scheme, administered by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council

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

The arrangements for the teacher's scheme mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot be specifically identified to the Council. The scheme is therefore accounted for as if it were a defined contribution scheme with no liability for future payments of benefits recognised in the Balance Sheet. The Children's and Education Services line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is charged with the employer's contributions payable to Teachers Pensions in the year.

Local Government Pension Scheme

The Local Government Pension Scheme provides members of the scheme with defined benefits related to pay and service. The level of the employer's contribution is determined by a triennial actuarial valuation. The latest review was undertaken as at 31 March 2019. Under Superannuation Regulations, the contribution rates are set to meet all the liabilities of the fund.

The Balance Sheet includes a Pension Reserve which includes the attributable share of the fund's assets and liabilities that relate to the Council. Employer contributions will be adjusted in future years to account for any projected deficit.

The liabilities of the pension scheme attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method – i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc., and projections of projected earnings for current employees.

Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate determined by the actuary, which has been chosen to meet the requirements of IAS 19 and with consideration of the duration of the employer's liabilities. This is consistent with the approach used at the previous accounting date.

The assets of the 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
- unlisted securities – current bid price
- property – market value

The valuation of quoted securities for the pension scheme is based on bid price rather than mid-market value.

The change in the net pension 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 is allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the revenue accounts of 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 – charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- net interest on the net defined liability i.e. net interest expense for the Council-the change during the period in the net defined liability that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in 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 liability at the beginning of the period, taking into account any changes in the net defined liability during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.

Re-measurement comprising:

- The return on plan assets – excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined liability – 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 in 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 Berkshire County Council Pension Scheme – cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities is not accounted for as an expense.

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

Discretionary Benefits

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

Details of the methods adopted in the valuation of scheme assets and liabilities are set out in the notes to the Balance Sheet.

8. Events after the Balance Sheet Date

These are events both favourable and unfavourable, which occur between the end of the Balance Sheet date and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue:

Adjusting Event

The Statement of Accounts is adjusted to reflect events where there is evidence that conditions existed at the Balance Sheet date

Non-Adjusting Event

Where an event is indicative of conditions that arose after the Balance Sheet date, the Statement of Accounts are not adjusted. The following, however, will be disclosed for each material category of non-adjusting event:

- the nature of the event, and
- an estimate of the financial effect, or a statement that such an estimate cannot be made reliably.

The date when the Statement of Accounts was authorised for issue and who gave the authorisation is disclosed in the notes to the accounts.

9. Financial Instruments

i. 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 carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments over the life of the instrument to the amount at which it was originally recognised.

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

The Council does not issue bonds.

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.

ii. 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). The Council does not hold any financial assets that are measured at FVPL and FVOCI.

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 (CIES) for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For most of the financial assets held by the Council, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable (plus accrued interest) and interest credited to the CIES is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

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

Expected Credit Loss Model

The Council recognises expected credit losses on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost, 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.

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit of Loss

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

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

- instruments with quoted market 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 accounting policy set out in section 1.27 Fair Value Measurement.

Any gains and losses that arise on the derecognition of a financial asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

10. Government Grants and Contributions

Whatever their basis of payment, Government grants and other contributions or donations are accounted for on an accruals basis. They are recognised on the relevant service line or the Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement if there are no conditions or once the conditions for their receipt have been complied with and there is reasonable assurance that the grant or contribution will be received. Where conditions have not been satisfied, the grant or contribution is carried in the Balance Sheet as a creditor.

Capital grants credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Grants which have not yet been used to finance capital expenditure are transferred to the Capital Grants Unapplied reserve. When an amount in the Grants Unapplied Reserve is applied to fund capital expenditure, it is transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account through the Movement in Reserves Statement. There is no deferral of grant expenditure to match against the depreciation of the underlying asset the grant was used for.

Donated assets transferred to the Council for nil consideration are recognised at fair value in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement once any conditions attaching to them have been met.

Community infrastructure levy

The Council has elected to charge a community infrastructure levy (CIL). The levy will be charged on new builds (chargeable developments for the Council) with appropriate planning consent. The Council charges for and collects the levy, which is a planning charge. The income from the levy will be used to fund a number of infrastructure projects (these include transport, flood defences and schools) to support the development of the area. The CIL is received without outstanding conditions; it is therefore recognised at the commencement date of the chargeable development in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in accordance with the accounting policy for

government grants and contributions set out above. CIL charges will be largely used to fund capital expenditure, however, a proportion of the charges may be used to fund administration expenditure.

11. Intangible Assets

The Council accounts for its software as intangible assets, to the extent that the software is not an integral part of a particular IT system and accounted for as part of the hardware item in Property, Plant and Equipment. Expenditure on the development of websites is not capitalised if the enhancement is primarily intended to promote or advertise the Council's goods or services. Intangible assets include purchased licenses. Expenditure on application software is capitalised as an intangible asset when it will bring benefits to the Council for more than one reporting period. Intangible assets are recognised where they have a cost in excess of £10,000.

The intangible assets held by the Council are measured at depreciated historical cost as readily ascertainable market values are not available. Intangible assets are amortised on a straight-line basis over their remaining useful lives varying between 5 years and 25 years and charged to the relevant service lines in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

An asset is tested for impairment whenever there is an indication that the asset might be impaired. Any losses recognised as a result of impairment are treated as follows:

- Where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance up to the amount of the accumulated gains
- If there is insufficient or no balance in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service lines in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The reversal of an impairment loss is only recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement if the value is directly attributable to the reversal of the event which caused the original impairment loss. Any gain or loss arising on the disposal or abandonment of an intangible asset is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

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

12. Interests in Companies and Other Entities

The Council has interests in companies and other entities that have the nature of subsidiaries, associates and jointly controlled entities and require it to prepare group accounts. In the Council's own single-entity accounts, the interests in companies and other entities are recorded in the Balance Sheet if the company has share capital, as financial assets at cost less any provision for losses. The Council records the name, business, shareholding, net assets and results of operations and other financial transactions of any related companies including cross-reference to where the accounts of the related companies may be acquired.

13. Long-Term Contracts

A long-term contract is 'A contract entered into for the design, manufacture or construction of a single substantial asset or the provision of a service (or of a combination of assets or services which together constitute a single project) where the time taken substantially to complete the contract is

such that the contract activity falls into different accounting periods'. Long-term revenue contracts are charged to services in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services with the value of works and services received under the contract during the financial year and long-term capital contracts are charged to capital on the basis of the valuation certificate.

14. Investment Property

Investment properties are those that are used solely to earn rentals and / or 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. Where the Council acquires properties for rental income but have an element of economic development and/or regeneration these are classified as operational land and buildings as such properties are not solely used for investment purposes.

Refer to Note 25 in the Statement of Accounts for explanations of the basis of the valuation of properties, and the categorisation required under IFRS 13.

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value (Highest and Best Use), based on the amount at which the asset could be exchanged between knowledgeable parties at arm's-length. Properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually, according to market conditions at the year end. Gains and losses on revaluation or disposal are posted to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

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 with the carrying value of the asset transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account and the sale proceeds above £10,000 transferred to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

15. 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, they are considered separately for classification.

Arrangements that do not have the legal status of a lease but convey a right to use an asset in return for payment are accounted for under this policy where fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent on the use of specific assets.

i. 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 the lower of 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 an expense in the periods in which they are incurred.

Rentals payable are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the asset-applied to write-down the lease liability, and
- a finance charge (debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

Assets recognised under finance leases are accounted for using the policies applied generally to Property, Plant and Equipment, subject to depreciation being charged over the lease term if this is shorter than the asset's estimated useful life.

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

Operating Leases

Where assets are acquired by the Council (as a lessee) under operating leases, the lease rentals payable are charged to the revenue accounts of those services that use the assets as they are made.

Any hire purchase contracts that have similar characteristics to an operating lease are accounted for as an operating lease and disclosed in a note to the Balance Sheet.

ii. The Council as Lessor

Finance Leases

The Council has not entered into any finance leases as lessor.

Operating Leases

An asset held by the Council for use in operating leases by a lessor is retained in the Balance Sheet and depreciated over its useful life. Rental income from operating leases, excluding charges, is recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on a straight-line basis over the term 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).

This is a change in accounting policy from the previous years where rental income was recognised as the income was received. This is as a result of leases entered into in the current year where material lease premiums were received. There is no material impact as a result of this change on existing leases accordingly the prior year accounts have not been restated.

16. Overheads and Support Services

The costs of overheads and support service costs (e.g., legal, human resources and finance) are charged to the relevant teams and departments (i.e., the front line service departments) in accordance with the Council's arrangements for accountability and financial performance. The total absorption costing principle is used in that the full cost of overheads and support services are shared between users in proportion to the benefit received.

17. Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)

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

i. Recognition

Items of PPE that qualify for recognition will be measured at cost and capitalised on an accruals basis. Cost is defined as either purchase price, costs attributable to bringing the asset to location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management or the initial estimate of the costs of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located.

ii. De-Minimis

Capitalisation of expenditure on PPE is not necessary where the amounts involved are not material to the true and fair presentation of the financial position and transactions of the authority and to an understanding of the Statement of Accounts by a reader. The Council has agreed a de-minimis level of £10,000 for expenditure to be capitalised, with the exception of capital works for schools where the de-minimis level is £1,000, and in order to utilise ring-fenced funding no de-minimis is applied.

iii. Measurement

Assets are disclosed and valued on the Balance Sheet using the following bases:

Asset Category	Valuation Method
Assets under Construction	Historic Cost
Infrastructure Assets	Depreciated Historic Cost
Council Dwellings	Fair Value (Existing Use Value – Social Housing) EUV-SH
Community Assets	Depreciated Historic Cost or Valuation in accordance with section 4.10 of the Code
Other Land and Buildings	Fair Value (Existing Use Value) EUV or DRC*
Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	Depreciated Historic Cost
Surplus Assets	Fair Value (Highest and Best Use)
Heritage Assets	Individual Asset Valuation

* Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC) using the ‘instant build’ will be used if Existing Use Value (EUV) cannot be determined.

A full valuation of a property is conducted by the Council’s internal valuer, Mr C Hoggeth, the Council’s Head of Estates and also a Professional Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). The valuations have been prepared in accordance with the Practice Statements and UK Practice Statements contained in the RICS Appraisal and Valuation Standards.

The asset valuations have been prepared using the following assumptions:-

- The Council has good title free from encumbrances;
- There are no hazardous substances or latent defects in the properties and there is no contamination present;
- The properties have permanent planning permission and any other necessary statutory consent for their current use;
- Plant and machinery is included in the valuation of the property, where applicable;

- e) No special circumstances beyond those likely to be considered by a prospective purchaser in the open market have been taken into account;
- f) No allowance has been made for any liability to taxation, which may arise on disposal, nor for costs of acquisition or realisation.
- g) All transactions agree with the Council's de-minimis level

Not all properties are specifically inspected for the purpose of asset valuations. This is neither practicable, nor considered by the valuer to be necessary, for the purpose of the valuation. However, regular inspections are made by the Council's Property Section of all the Council's property assets. The inspections and report do not purport to be a building survey.

The Council operates a 5 yearly revaluation cycle for all assets, with the exception of Council Dwellings, Investment Properties and Economic Regeneration (PPE) assets which are reviewed on an annual basis as per the Code's requirements. Additionally each year a basket of assets is also selected for valuation from sub-category's not otherwise valued, to assess for material variances (should an asset sub-category be identified as requiring a change in value an indexation calculation is applied to all assets in the category).

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 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.

iv. Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all Property Plant and Equipment by the allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives, in line with IAS 16. An exception is made for assets without a determinable useful life (e.g. freehold land and some community assets) and assets not yet available for use (e.g. assets under construction). The useful lives of assets are estimated on a realistic basis and are reviewed on a regular basis and, where necessary, revised. Where the useful life of a fixed asset is revised, the carrying amount of the fixed asset is depreciated over the revised remaining useful life. Revaluation gains are also depreciated, with an amount equal to the difference between current value depreciation charged on assets and the depreciation that would have been charged based on their historical cost being transferred from the Revaluation Reserve to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Depreciation is calculated on the amount at which the asset is included in the Balance Sheet, whether current cost or historical cost. Depreciation has been calculated as follows:

- All assets are depreciated on the straight line basis over the useful life of the asset taking into account land value and residual value. The range of estimated lives of each asset is set out in note 24.

- Investment Properties are not depreciated as per the Code's guidance; instead they are revalued on an annual basis.
- Newly acquired assets are not depreciated in the year of acquisition, while assets under construction are only depreciated once the asset becomes operational.
- Community assets are also exempt from depreciation requirements as a determinable finite useful life cannot be obtained.
- Assets are depreciated for a full year in the year of disposal.

A change from one method of providing depreciation to another is only made where the new method will give a fairer presentation of the results and of the financial position. Such a change does not, however, constitute a change of accounting policy; the carrying amount of the fixed asset is depreciated using the revised method over the remaining useful life, beginning in the period in which the change is made.

Componentisation

Each part of an item of property, plant and equipment with a cost that is significant in relation to the total cost of the item should be depreciated separately. Where there is more than one significant part of the same asset which has the same useful life and depreciation method, such parts may be grouped in determining the depreciation charge. In practice this can be achieved by only separately accounting for significant components that have different useful lives and/or depreciation methods.

The Council's policy is to componentise part of assets where the part subject to componentisation is more than £500k or 10% or more of the building value of the asset and the value of the building itself is greater than £5m. Any amounts below these levels would not be considered material enough for componentisation purposes.

v. Impairment

The value at which each category of assets is included in the Balance Sheet is reviewed at each year-end. Where there is reason to believe that its value has changed materially in the period, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated and where this is less than the carrying amount, an impairment loss is recognised for the shortfall.

Events and changes in circumstances that indicate a reduction in value may have incurred include:

- a significant decline in an asset's market value during the period
- evidence of obsolescence or physical damage to the asset
- a significant adverse change in the statutory or other regulatory environment in which the Council operates
- a commitment by the Council to undertake a significant reorganisation.

Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for as follows:

- Where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance, up to the amount of the accumulated gains
- If there is insufficient or no balance in the Revaluation Reserve, 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 subsequently reversed, 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.

vi. Disposals and Non-Current Assets Held for Sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered through a sale rather than continuing use, it is reclassified as an Asset Held for Sale, but only if the following criteria are met:

- a) The asset must be available for sale in its present condition subject to terms that are usual and customary for sales of such assets.
- b) The sale must be highly probable, the appropriate level of management must be committed to a plan to sell the asset and an active programme to locate a buyer and complete the plan must have been initiated.
- c) The asset must be actively marketed for a sale at a price that is reasonable in relation to the current value.
- d) The sale should be expected to qualify for recognition as a completed sale within one year of the date of classification and action required to complete the plan should indicate that it is unlikely that significant changes to the plan will be made or that the plan will be withdrawn.

Immediately before reclassification the asset is revalued and carried at the lower of this figure and fair value (Highest and Best Use) 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 and Expenditure Statement. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any losses previously recognised in the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services. Assets Held for Sale are not depreciated.

If an asset no longer meets the criteria to be classified as Assets Held for Sale, they are classified back to non-current assets 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 if they had not been classified as Held for Sale) and their recoverable amount at the date of the decision not to sell. Assets that are abandoned or scrapped are not reclassified as Assets Held for Sale.

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

Amounts received in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. The proportion that is required to be paid over to Central Government for housing disposals is appropriated to the Capital Receipts Reserve from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Where a fixed asset is disposed of for other than a cash consideration, or payment is deferred, an equivalent asset is recognised and included in the balance sheet at its fair value.

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

vii) Accounting Policy for Highways Infrastructure Assets

Highways infrastructure assets

Highways infrastructure assets include carriageways, footways and cycle tracks, structures (eg bridges), street lighting, street furniture (eg illuminated traffic signals, bollards), and traffic management systems which together form a single integrated network.

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition or replacement of components of the network is capitalised on an accrual basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to the authority and the cost of the item can be measured reliably.

Measurement

Highways infrastructure assets are generally measured at depreciated historical cost. However, this is a modified form of historical cost – opening balances for highways infrastructure assets were originally recorded in balance sheets at amounts of capital undischarged for sums borrowed as at 1 April 1994, which was deemed at that time to be historical cost.

Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for by the carrying amount of the asset being written down to the recoverable amount.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on the parts of the highways network infrastructure assets that are subject to deterioration or depletion and by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives. Depreciation is charged on a straight-line basis.

Annual depreciation is the depreciation amount allocated each year.

Useful lives of the various parts of the highways network are assessed by liaising with the Assistant Director for Highways, and using industry standards where applicable as follows:

Part of the highways network	Useful life (years)
Carriageways	23
Footways and Cycletracks	23
Street Furniture	23
Traffic Management Systems	23
Structures	58
Highways Lighting	23

Disposals and derecognition

When a component of the network is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the component in the Balance Sheet is written off to the 'Other operating expenditure' line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and

Expenditure Statement, also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal).

The written-off amounts of disposals are 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 transferred to the capital adjustment account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Componentisation

Each part of an item of highway infrastructure with a cost that is significant in relation to the total cost of the item should be depreciated separately.

The Council's policy is to componentise part of assets where the part subject to componentisation is more than £500k or 10% or more of the value of the asset and the value of the asset itself is greater than £5m. Any amounts below these levels would not be considered material enough for componentisation purposes.

18. 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. The Council has one PFI contract with Reading and Bracknell Councils for waste disposal under the RE3 Partnership. The Council receives the benefit of the services that are provided under its PFI scheme and ownership of the property, plant and equipment will pass to the partnership at the end of the contract for no additional charge. The Council carries its share of the property, plant and equipment used under the contract on the Balance Sheet.

The original recognition of these assets was balanced by the recognition of a liability for amounts due to the scheme operator to pay for the assets. 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 five elements:

- fair value of the services received during the year – debited to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- finance cost – an interest charge of 7.5% on the outstanding Balance Sheet liability, debited to Financing and Investment Income line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- contingent rent - increases in the amount to be paid for the property arising during the contract, debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- payment towards liability – applied to write down the Balance Sheet liability towards the PFI operator
- lifecycle replacement costs – these are included within the fair value of services and not recognised as additions to Property, Plant and Equipment as the amounts involved are not material and details of the actual spend is not readily available.

19. Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

i. Provisions

Provisions are made for any liabilities of uncertain timing or amount that have been incurred. Provisions are recognised when:

- the Council has a legal or constructive obligation as a result of a past event
- it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits or service potential will be required to settle the obligation, and
- a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Provisions are charged to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year that the Council becomes aware of the obligation. The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimate taking into account the risks and uncertainties surrounding the events. When payments for expenditure are incurred to which the provision relates they are charged direct to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Provisions are reviewed at each balance sheet date and adjusted to reflect the current best estimate. If it is no longer probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation (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 expenditure required to settle a provision is expected to be reimbursed by another party, the reimbursement is recognised as income for the relevant service only when it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received if the obligation is settled.

In the case of a provision for bad or doubtful debts, the carrying amount of debtors is adjusted and known uncollectable debts are written off.

ii. 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 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 the notes 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 of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council. Contingent assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in the notes to the accounts.

20. Reserves

Transfers to and from reserves are distinguished from service expenditure. The movements in reserves available to this Council are detailed in a note to the financial statements. Reserves include earmarked reserves set aside for specific policy purposes and balances which represent resources set aside for purposes such as general contingencies and cash flow management.

When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then appropriated back into the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement so there is no net charge against council tax for the expenditure.

Most capital reserves are not available for revenue purposes and some of them can only be used for specific statutory purposes. The Revaluation Reserve and Capital Adjustment Account are non-distributable reserves. The Capital Receipts Reserve is a reserve established for specific statutory purposes.

The Major Repairs Reserve is required by statutory provision to be established in relation to the HRA in England.

21. Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute

Revenue expenditure classified as capital under statute, formerly known as deferred charges, represents expenditure that may be capitalised but does not result in the creation of non-current assets. The expenditure has been charged 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 there is no impact on the level of council tax.

22. VAT

VAT payable is included as an expense, whether of a capital or revenue nature, only to the extent that it is irrecoverable. VAT receivable is excluded from income.

23. Group Accounts

The Code requires the Council to consider all of its interests and to prepare a full set of group accounting statements where there are material interests in subsidiaries, associates and joint ventures. The Council has investigated all potential interests that could qualify for group accounts and has determined it has five group relationships which qualify for the preparation of, and inclusion in, group accounts. The companies all operate the same financial year and follow the same accounting policies as Wokingham Borough Council.

The Council has a holding company, WBC (Holdings) Ltd, whose main purpose is to enable group tax relief to be claimed, and in addition to coordinate the management of the Council's interests in the companies included in the group accounts, which are summarised below. The company is 100% owned by the Council. WBC (Holdings) Ltd wholly owns three housing companies: Wokingham Housing Ltd, Loddon Homes Ltd and Berry Brook Homes Ltd. All of these companies' accounts are consolidated into the group accounts.

Optalis Ltd is a partially owned subsidiary of Wokingham Borough Council with the other 45% owned by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The company was established in June 2011 and became operational during 2011/12. 2017/18 has been the first year of joint operation with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Optalis Ltd is consolidated on a subsidiary basis at 100%, with RBWM's 45% share disclosed as a minority interest on the group balance sheet.

24. Heritage Assets

Heritage assets are assets that are held by the Council principally for their contribution to knowledge and culture. The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2011/12 introduced a change to the treatment in accounting for heritage assets held by the Council so that heritage assets must be shown separately on the balance sheet. The Council undertook a detailed review and at present does not have any material heritage assets.

25. Tax Income (Council Tax, and Non-Domestic Rates)

The Council acts as agents, collecting council tax and non-domestic rates (NDR) on behalf of the major preceptors (including Central Government for NDR) and, as principals, collecting council tax and NDR for themselves. The Council is 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.

Non-Domestic rates (NDR)

- Retained Business Rates income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year is treated as accrued income.
- Levy expenditure included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year is treated as accrued expenditure

Council Tax

- Council Tax income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year is treated as accrued income

Both NDR income, less tariff and levy expenditure, and Council tax are recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the line Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income. As a billing authority the difference between the NDR and Council Tax included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the General Fund is transferred to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account through the Movement in Reserves Statement. Each preceptor's share of the accrued NDR and Council Tax income will be available from the information that is required to be produced in order to prepare the Collection Fund Statement.

The income for Council Tax, and NDR, is recognised when it is probable that the economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council and the amount of the revenue can be measured reliably. Revenue relating to such things as council tax, business rates, etc., shall be measured at the full amount receivable (net of any impairment losses) as they are non-contractual, non-exchange transactions and there can be no difference between the delivery and payment dates.

26. 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 its highest and 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 or liabilities that the Council can access at the measurement date
- Level 2 – Inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly
- Level 3 – Unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

12. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accounting Code of Practice

The CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting: Specifies the principles and practices of accounting required to give a 'true' and 'fair' view of the financial position and transactions of a local authority, including group financial statements. The code prescribes the accounting treatment and disclosures for all normal transactions of a local authority based on a hierarchy of standards including International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)

Accounting policies

The rules and practices adopted by the Council that dictate how transactions and events are treated in its financial records.

Accounting standards

A set of rules explaining how accounts are to be kept. By law, local authorities must follow 'proper accounting practices', which are set out in Acts of Parliament, professional codes and statements of recommended practice.

Accruals

This is an accounting concept that recognises income and expenditure when goods or services are provided, and not when cash is transferred. The inclusion of debtors and creditors are examples of accruals.

Actuarial gain/losses

The profits and losses on the pension scheme as calculated by the actuary because the assumptions made were not the same as the actual performance (e.g. if interest rates were less than anticipated).

Acquisitions

The Council spends funds from the capital programme to buy assets such as land and buildings.

Amortisation

The equivalent of depreciation for intangible assets.

Appointed auditors

Public Sector Audit Appointments appoints external auditors to local authorities, from one of the major firms of registered auditors.

Asset

An asset is a resource controlled by the Council as a result of past events and from which economic benefits or service potential are expected to flow to the Council e.g. cash, stock, buildings etc.

Assets held for sale

Properties or equipment that have been taken out of use for service delivery and are awaiting sale.

Assets under construction

Assets not yet ready for use. This could be new building work in schools or road construction.

Balances and reserves

Balances and reserves are maintained to fund future years' expenditure, or specific projects, and to provide a cushion against expenditure being higher or income lower than expected. Contributions to balances and reserves can be either a planned contribution from the revenue budget to set aside monies for a specific purpose or a transfer of any revenue surplus at the year-end. The maintenance of an appropriate level of general balances is a fundamental part of prudent financial management.

Budget

A planned expenditure forecast. Budgets are reviewed during the course of the financial year to take account of pay and price changes and other factors affecting the level or cost of services.

Capital expenditure

Capital expenditure is expenditure that creates future benefits. Capital expenditure is incurred either when buying or, adding to the value of an existing fixed asset with a useful life extending beyond the current financial year.

Capital adjustment account (CAA)

A Balance Sheet reserve that is unique to the local authority accounting capital accounting regime. The balance on the account cannot be used, but reflects how the Council's assets have been financed. It contains the balance of depreciation against the minimum revenue provision (MRP), additional debt repayments over the MRP, reserved capital receipts and usable capital receipts/ grants/ planning gains applied to meet capital expenditure.

The account is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement of assets, 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 account is credited with the amounts set aside by the Council as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and enhancement.

The account contains accumulated gains and losses on investment properties and gains recognised on donated assets that have yet to be consumed by the Council. The account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on property, plant and equipment before 1 April 2007, the date the revaluation reserve was created to hold such gains.

Capital financing

This term describes the method of financing capital expenditure, the principal methods being loan financing, leasing, capital receipts and developer contributions.

Capital financing requirement

This measures the Council's underlying need to borrow or finance by other long-term liabilities for capital purposes. It represents the amount of capital expenditure that has not yet been resourced absolutely.

Capitalisation

Costs are capitalised to the extent that they create or improve any fixed asset with a useful economic life greater than one year.

Capital receipts

Proceeds from the sale of fixed assets. The Council earmarks capital receipts to finance future capital expenditure.

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)

CIPFA is the professional accountancy institute that sets the standards for the public sector. The institute produces advice, codes of practice and guidance to local Authorities on best practice.

Collection fund

A statutory account into which council tax and non-domestic rates are paid, and from which amounts are paid to the local authority and the precepting bodies.

Community assets

Assets that the Council intends to hold in perpetuity, that have no determinable useful life and that may have restrictions on their disposal. Examples include the Countryside estate and historic assets that are not used in service delivery.

Community infrastructure levy (CIL)

CIL is a statutory charge on proposals for buildings based upon the type, size and location of development. As a charging Authority for the purposes of Part 11 of the Planning Act 2008 the Council may therefore charge the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in respect of development in its administrative area.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES)

As statement that shows the accounting cost in the year of providing the services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices.

Contingent assets

Potential assets whose outcome depends on future events.

Contingent liabilities

A contingent liability is either: a possible obligation 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 (e.g. the outcome of a court case).

Creditors

Financial liabilities for future goods or services that have been received or supplied by the end of the accounting period, that is due immediately or in the short term. Creditors are an example of the concept of accruals.

Current service cost (pensions)

The increase in the present value of Local Government pension scheme liabilities expected to arise from employee service in the current period.

Curtailed costs (pensions)

For a defined benefit scheme (such as LGPS) an event that reduces the expected years of future service of present employees or reduces for a number of employees, the accrual of defined benefits for some or all of their future service.

Debtors

Financial assets, with fixed or determinable payments, when goods or services have been delivered or rendered. Debtors are an example of the concept of accruals.

Depreciation

A charge to the revenue account to reflect the consumption or use of a fixed asset in service delivery. There is a corresponding reduction in the value of the fixed asset.

Earmarked reserves

These are reserves set aside for a specific purpose or a particular service, or type of expenditure.

Exceptional item

An item identified separately in the accounts because of its exceptional nature to ensure the presentation of the accounts is fair, and comparable year on year.

Fair value

The amount for which an asset could be exchanged, or liability settled at arm's length, between knowledgeable and willing parties.

Fair value hierarchy

IFRS 13 requires investment properties, assets held for sale and surplus assets to be valued at fair value. A hierarchy has been established that categorises into three levels the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. The levels of inputs are as follows:-

Level 1 inputs – observable, unadjusted quoted prices in active markets

Level 2 inputs – observable, other than quoted prices in active markets

Level 3 inputs – unobservable inputs

Valuation techniques shall aim to maximise the use of observable inputs and minimise the use of unobservable inputs.

Finance lease & operating leases

A finance lease is one that transfers substantially all of the risks and rewards of a fixed asset to the lessee. With a finance lease the present value of the lease payments equates to substantially all of the value placed on the leased asset. For an operating lease a rental payment is payable to the lessor for the use of the asset and the ownership reverts to the owner when the lease is terminated.

Financial instrument

A contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Financial instruments can be classified generally as equity based, representing ownership of the asset, or debt based, representing a loan made by an investor to the owner of the asset.

Financial instrument 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 was outstanding on the loans when they were redeemed.

Financial year

The year of account, which runs from the 1st April to the following 31st March.

Fixed assets

An asset that yields benefits to the Council and the services it provides for a period of more than one year. Tangible fixed assets have a physical form e.g. buildings or land.

General fund

The Council's main revenue account that covers the net cost of all services other than the provision of council housing for rent.

Government grants

Financial assistance from Central Government, or its agents, usually for a specific purpose, in the form of cash transfers in return for compliance with certain conditions. These grants may be capital or revenue in nature.

Heritage assets

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Historic cost

The value of an asset on the balance sheet based upon its original purchase cost, less depreciation to date.

Housing revenue account (HRA)

The Housing Revenue Account Balance reflects the statutory obligation to maintain a revenue account for local authority council housing. It contains the balance of income and expenditure that is available to fund future expenditure in connection with the Council's landlord function or (where in deficit) that is required to be recovered from tenants in future years.

Impairment

A reduction in the value of a fixed asset, below its carrying amount on the Balance Sheet.

Infrastructure assets

Fixed assets, such as highways and footpaths, that is inalienable and has no resale value.

Intangible assets

Fixed assets which have value but do not have physical any substance. They are identified and controlled by the Council for example, purchased software licences.

Investment properties

An interest in land and, or buildings, which are held solely for their investment potential/rental income and are not required for delivery of local authority service.

Lessee

The party that leases an asset that is owned by another party.

Lessor

The owner of an asset that is leased by another party.

Liability

An obligation that binds the Council to settle a debt as a result of a past event or transaction such as the purchase of goods or services.

Major repairs reserve

Contains an element of the capital resources limited being used on capital expenditure by the HRA. The balance shows the capital resources that have yet to be applied at the year-end.

Minimum revenue provision

The way in which capital expenditure which is financed by borrowing or credit arrangements is paid for by council tax payers. Local authorities must set aside some of their revenue each year as provision for this debt.

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 amounts provided for depreciation.

Net realisable value

A method of valuation that estimates the open market value of an asset, less the expenses required to sell it.

Non-domestic rate (NDR) income

A levy on businesses based on national 'rateable value' of the premises occupied. NDR is paid into a national pool and then redistributed to all local and police authorities on the basis of assessed needs.

Non-operational assets

Fixed assets held by a Council but not directly occupied, used or consumed in the delivery of services. Examples of these assets are investment properties and assets that are surplus to requirements, pending sale or redevelopment.

Observable inputs

See 'fair value hierarchy'. Inputs that are developed using market data, such as publicly available information about actual events or transactions, and reflect the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability.

Operational assets

Fixed assets held and occupied, used or consumed by the Council in the direct delivery of those services for which it has either a statutory or discretionary responsibility.

Past service cost (pensions)

For a defined benefit 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 improvement to, retirement benefits.

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 Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement 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.

Precept

An amount levied on another public body in respect of council tax. Parish Councils, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley levy precepts on the Council to collect council tax on their behalf.

Prior period adjustments

Material adjustments applicable in prior years, arising from changes in accounting policies or from correction of fundamental errors.

Private finance initiative (PFI)

A contract between the Council and a private company. The private company makes a capital investment in the assets required to deliver improved services, and the Council pays a unitary charge to cover the cost of services and financing requirements. In the case of Wokingham the PFI contract is for the disposal of waste.

Provisions

Amounts set aside for any liabilities or losses that are likely to be incurred, but which are uncertain as to the amounts or the dates on which they will arise.

Public Works Loans Board (PWLB)

A Central Government agency which provides long and medium-term loans to local authorities at interest rates only slightly higher than those at which the Government itself can borrow. Local authorities are able to borrow a proportion of their requirements to finance capital spending from this source.

Revaluation reserve

This account contains the balance on the revaluation of fixed assets previously shown in the accounts arising from revaluations or disposals of those assets. 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 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. The balance on the account cannot be used.

Revenue expenditure

Expenditure incurred on day to day running costs e.g. running costs, salaries, and is confined to accounts within one financial year.

Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute (REFCUS)

Expenditure that is treated under the Local Government Act 2003, as capital expenditure but which does not meet the definition of capital expenditure in the statement of recommended practice. Therefore the expenditure is not carried on the Balance Sheet as a fixed asset.

Revenue support grant (RSG)

This grant is non-specific and funds local government revenue expenditure. It is based upon the Government's assessment of how much a local authority needs to spend to provide a common level of service.

Surplus assets

Surplus assets are those assets that are no longer essential for the operation of services.

Unobservable inputs

See 'fair value hierarchy'. Inputs for which market data are not available and that are developed using the best information available about the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability.

Unusable reserves

Unusable reserves are reserves that in simple terms enable the Council's balance sheet to reconcile and cannot be released to spend on services.

Usable reserves

Usable reserves are those reserves that can be released to spend on services or added to for future spending on services.

Useful life (of assets)

The period over which the Council can derive benefits from the use of a fixed asset.

Write-offs

Elimination of an asset or liability within the financial year, for example, uncollectable debts.

Formal Complaints Report – 9 month summary April – December 2022

Audit Committee

13th March 2023



Formal Complaints | Executive Summary

Between quarters 1-3, 69% of complaints submitted were resolved without formal escalation to Stage 1. Across all stages, 30% of cases were upheld, 54% not upheld and 16% undecided.

Deliverables and business context for Qtrs. 1-3

- Complaints are complex and challenging:
 - ✓ Complaints often involve various stakeholders
 - ✓ Waiting lists for care commissioned services cause health reports to be delayed
 - ✓ Weather conditions – cold temperatures affecting road surfaces, tenant maintenance repairs
 - ✓ Media focus on particular talking points or one-off events e.g. mould and damp, care home costs, cause spikes in Service demand
- Place & Growth dedicate resource to streamline complaint management and improve customer experiences
- Three C writing workshops launch. These workshops focus on how officers communicate to customers.
- Housing Services received 48% of all complaints, which is higher than previous quarters. This rise links to the introduction of the new Housing complaints policy which removed the early resolution stage.
- 85% of all complaints resolved informally, related to Place & Growth. These cases concerned incidents that disrupted people's routines and/or resulted in poor one off experiences i.e. road/utility works causing traffic delays, rude construction workers, perceived lack of road work signage.

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The majority of complaints resolved at Stage 1 related to inadequate service or poor communication. When there is no evidence of fault in how a decision was made, the complainant favour escalation to Stage 2.

Directorate	Total Formal	Early Resolution
ASC	30	29
Chief Executive Office	8	33
Housing	135	6
Children's Services	52	29
Place & Growth	46	345
Resources & Assets	12	23
(258 Unique case)	283	465
TOTALS		

What is the learning...

- If early resolution cannot be achieved, then timely escalation to stage 1 should be actioned. Use letter templates and '3 C' writing guidance
- Remind officers of the resources available to them (templates and quality assessors) to ensure complaint responses align with the 3C values.
- Officers with experience of complaints and the Ombudsman, accelerate informed decision making.

Areas of focus for next quarter...

- Survey launched to gather customer/colleague feedback around the 3 C's principles, to respond with care, clarity and confidence – followed by a customer focus group
- Internal communication around what to do if you receive a complaint and signposting for support
- Promote Staff access to the interactive 3 C writing workshops.
- Assess results of the Highways & Transport Dynamics based CRM system; impact on complaint volumes.
- Quality assessors meet monthly to identify trends and solutions

Formal complaints | Insight



Environment

- In May 2022, Housing Services implemented a new complaints policy. This policy is in line with the Housing Ombudsman's guidance and requires all landlords to respond to complaints at Stage 1. The policy change has seen Housing Services make up a larger percentage of all complaints received; 48% as compared to averaging between 25-30% over 2021-22.
- Media reports of a toddler dying directly from mould exposure, highlighted the failings of a social housing provider. Awareness of the need to control damp grew, contributing to a rise in tenant service requests, at a time when workloads (boiler repairs) were already high from the cold season. To manage the impact on Service delivery, a new mould and damp policy will be introduced, once it is approved by the Tenants Panel.
- To better evaluate the volume of complaints received, this financial year's reporting will not include undecided cases raised in a previous quarter.



Ownership

- Greater transparency in responses; where something has gone wrong, we accept it, apologise, and advise what will be done to reduce the likelihood of a reoccurrence. This aligns with our customer charter.
- ASC recruited an Autism Lead to review the staff training programme and offer training on neurodiverse conditions and how this may impact delivery of service. This will assist in ensuring clients with neurodevelopmental conditions receive information they can access and understand.
- Complaints regarding poor service from the contractors managing the gardens at sheltered schemes, resulted in the Asset Management team collaborating with other teams to resolve the issues for tenants.



Customer Expectations

- Customers confuse a decision they find disagreeable, with poor performance. These complaints make up most Stage 2 escalations and are not usually upheld, but they do highlight opportunities to improve how we communicate.
- Tenant group meetings with officer attendance, has led to greater transparency of the Housing complaints policy. This approach has made the complaint process more accessible, enabling tenants to understand what they can expect from the Council.
- Customers have communicated their frustration with the new car park machines, finding the charging complicated and confusing. Signage on the payment method is being changed to improve clarity and confirm when Pre-Authorised payments are refunded to the customer's account

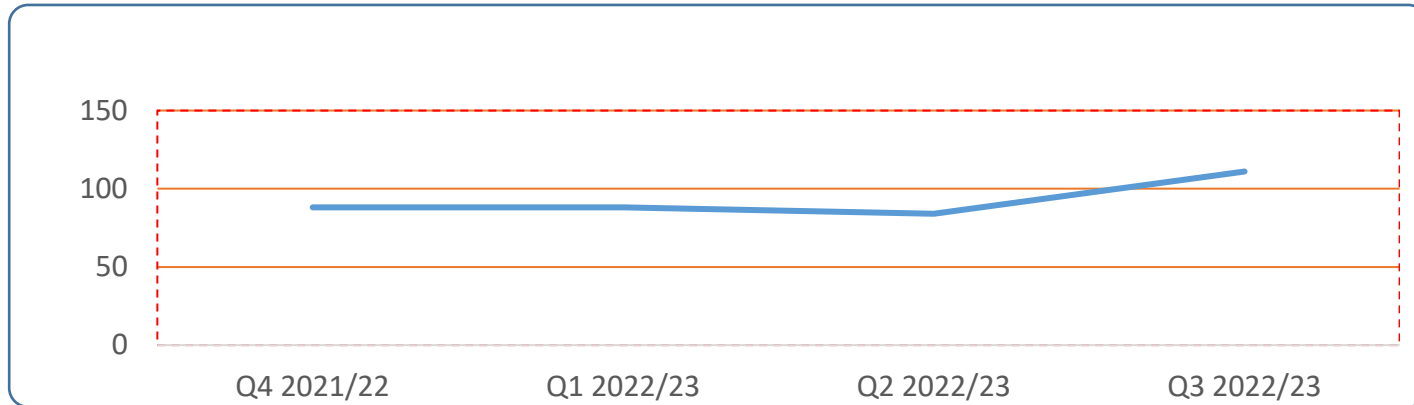


Suggested Improvements

- Directorate complaint representatives, attended a LGSCO workshop in May 2022 on effective complaints handling.
- Booking for Three C's Writing workshops is now live for staff.
- Regular internal communication on what tools and services are available to officers in managing complaints effectively e.g. Quality assessors

Formal Complaints | Volumes

Over the 3 quarters we have seen an average rise in complaints of 7%*.



Reporting is compared to previous Quarter

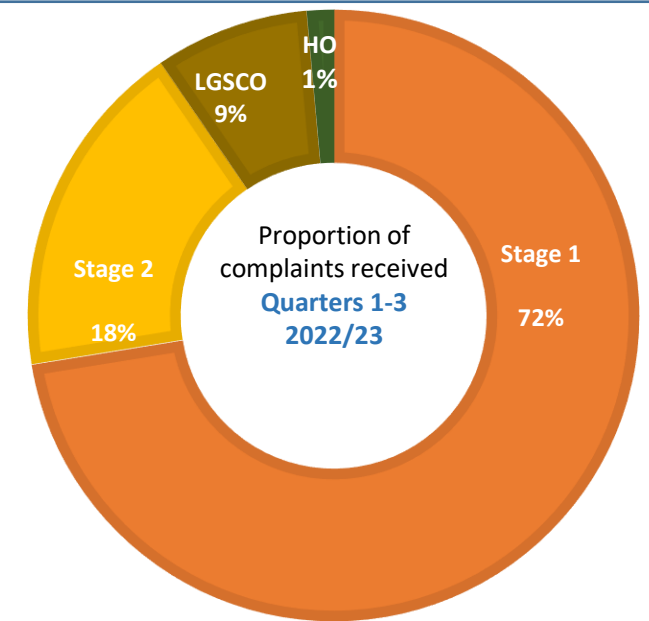
Period	Stage 1	Stage 2	TP ⁱ⁾	Stage 3 ⁱⁱ⁾	LGSCO	Housing ombudsman	Total	RAG Direction of Travel
Q1 2021/22	46	17	N/A	1	6	0	70	Green
Q2 2022/22	41	25	N/A	0	11	0	77	Red
Q3 2021/22	38	19	N/A	0	10	3	70	Green
Q4 2021/22	48	21	N/A	1	15	3	88	Red
Year end 2021/22	173	82	N/A	2	42	6	305	Blue
Q1 2022/23	64	18	0	0	6	0	88	Yellow
Q2 2022/23	57	12	0	0	13	2	84	Green
Q3 2022/23	84	21	0	0	4	2	111	Red
Q4 2022/23								
Year end 2022/23								

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ⁱ⁾Tenant complaint Panel ⁱⁱ⁾ Complaints at Stage 3 only apply to Children's statutory social care

*Average compared to the total at the end of Qtr. 4 2021-22 (88).

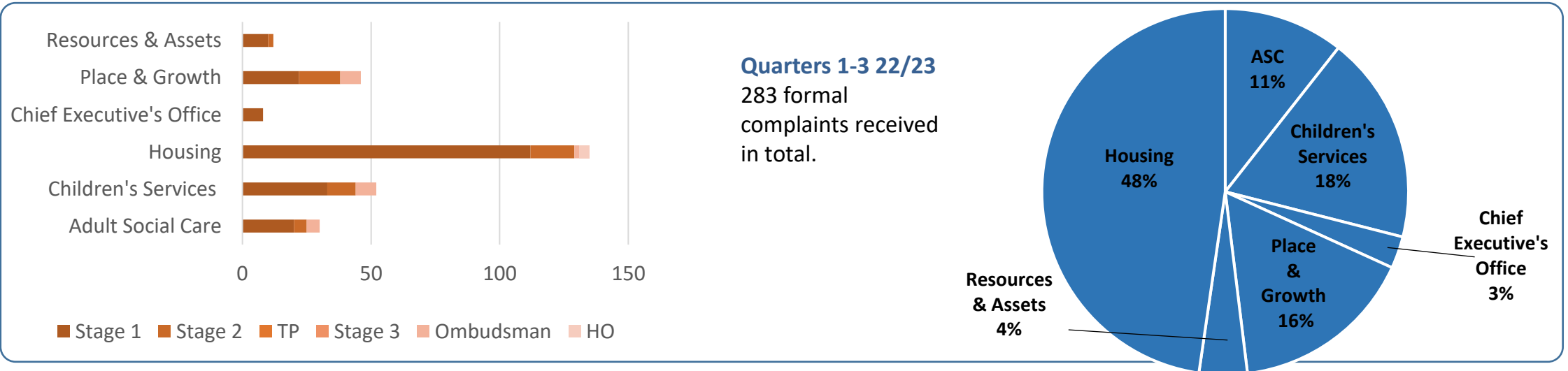
- The number of Stage 1's is 64% higher (impact of Housing complaints policy) and the number of Stage 2's approximately 16% lower, when compared to the same period in 2021-22.
- The LGSCO considered 23 cases. The Housing Ombudsman made 4 inquiries. The Council managed 258 unique cases.



Quarters 1-3
283 complaints
72% Stage 1
18% Stage 2
0% Tenant Panel
0% Stage 3
9% LGSCO
1% HO

Formal Complaints | Directorates and Service areas

Housing and Children's Services received the highest volume of complaints at 48% and 18% respectively. Since the introduction of the Housing Ombudsman complaints policy, Housing has increased its share of total formal complaints submitted.



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- **ASC** complaints totalled thirty, with twenty at Stage 1, five Stage 2 requests and five LGSCO cases.
- **Place and Growth** complaints totalled forty-six, with twenty-two at Stage 1, sixteen at Stage 2 and eight LGSCO cases.
- **Resources & Assets** complaints totalled twelve, with ten at Stage 1, and two escalating to Stage 2.
- **Housing** complaints totalled one hundred and thirty-five, with one hundred and twelve at Stage 1, seventeen Stage 2's, two LGSCO cases and two Housing Ombudsman inquiries.
- **Children's Services** complaints totalled fifty-two, with thirty-three Stage 1's, eleven at Stage 2 and eight LGSCO cases.
- **Chief Executive's Office** complaints totalled eight complaints, all at Stage 1.

A new approach to communication

We have been working to improve the way we communicate. The 3 C's principles have been designed following staff and customer feedback.

The aim is to bring the human touch back into our communication, particularly when we are responding to complaints.



We Bring Care

Did you:

- put their needs first, with the most important information upfront?
- show you know what's important to them and personalise the message where you can?
- write like you would talk to your neighbour, to sound human and warm?

Test the care

Read it out loud. Did it sound like you talking?

We Bring Clarity

Did you:

- use a clear format with headings, bullet points, short paragraphs, short sentences and white space?
- use clear words, with no jargon or technical language? Only use technical terms if you're certain your customer will understand them.
- use clear facts and figures that are as relevant, local and specific as possible to your customer?

Test the clarity

For the general public, aim for 65 or more on the readability test: www.thefirstword.co.uk/readabilitytest

We Bring Confidence

Did you:

- say what we can do, with positive statements and direct calls to action?
- say what you mean and stop there, with no waffle?
- write to you and say who's doing what using *I*, *we* and *they*, or names?

Test the confidence

Think about someone you know. Would they believe this message?

BRIDGING THE EMPATHY GAP

3 C's Workshop

- WBC's 'Tone of voice' and communication style explained.
- Officers learn how to communicate with Care, Clarity and Confidence.

Quality assessors

- Officers can have their responses assessed against the 3 C standards.

Impact

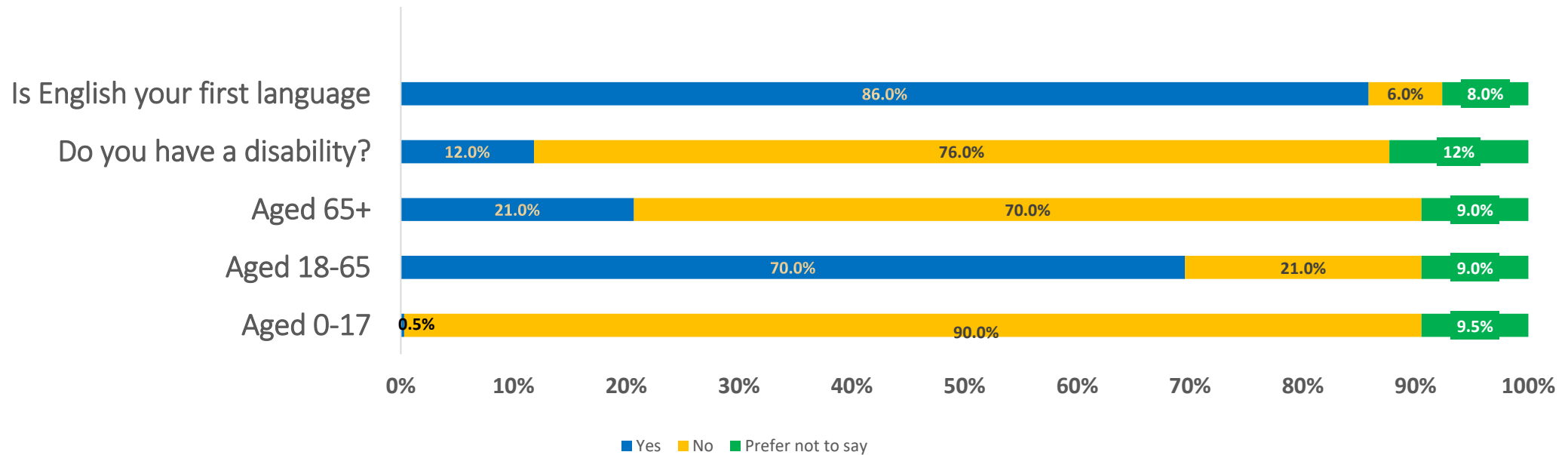
- Complaints process re-designed to make access simple and intuitive.
- Personalised complaint responses offers opportunities to resolve matters more effectively and efficiently.
- 77% of the 300 officers surveyed, prefer the '3 C' style of writing.
- Those who completed the 3 C workshop, scored it 4.7 out of 5.

Equality monitoring data | Quarters 1-3

The following data was collected from 982 completed/partially completed online complaint forms:

- 6% of the complaint forms were completed by customers with English not as a first language. This was consistent across all quarters.
- 12% of the complaint forms were completed by customers with a disability.
- 70% of the complaint forms were completed by those aged between 18-65.
- The results align with what is seen in the 2021 Census data for Wokingham.*

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*Data taken from Berkshire Observatory [Population - UTLA | Wokingham | Report Builder for ArcGIS \(berkshireobservatory.co.uk\)](https://www.berkshireobservatory.co.uk/). The 2011 Census was used to compare the data for “Is English your first language?” result.

CUSTOMER COMPLIMENTS

"The sweeper turned up around 08:30 and did an amazing job. There was one parked vehicle which moved just as he was leaving the close so he turned round and completed that part. The speed of your response and his level of cleaning are both to be highly commended"

Clienting team December 2022

"All the parts that have been missed all year have been done and it looks so much better and tidier .. So on behalf of us all, thank you so so much to yourself and the maintenance team"

*Cleaner & Greener team
November 2022*

"I want to thank my social worker and my PA. They are such hard workers and they have helped me a lot I just love them and I just can't describe them by words. Finally I want to thank all the other personal advisers"

*Children's Social Care team
November 2022*

"The summary setting out what is needed to comply is clear, uncomplicated... I believe the summary you provided would save anyone considering solar panels much time and consternation"

*Development Management team
September 2022*

"I want to praise for your professional response and advice to make the process less complicated. I have encountered many planning officers in different boroughs, your positive attitude and patience is certainly exceptional in handling our application... Thank you"

*Development Management team
June 2022*

"It was first class, professional, kind and patient and understanding. The follow ups have been swift. Am so pleased"

*ASC Sensory Needs
Service September
2022*

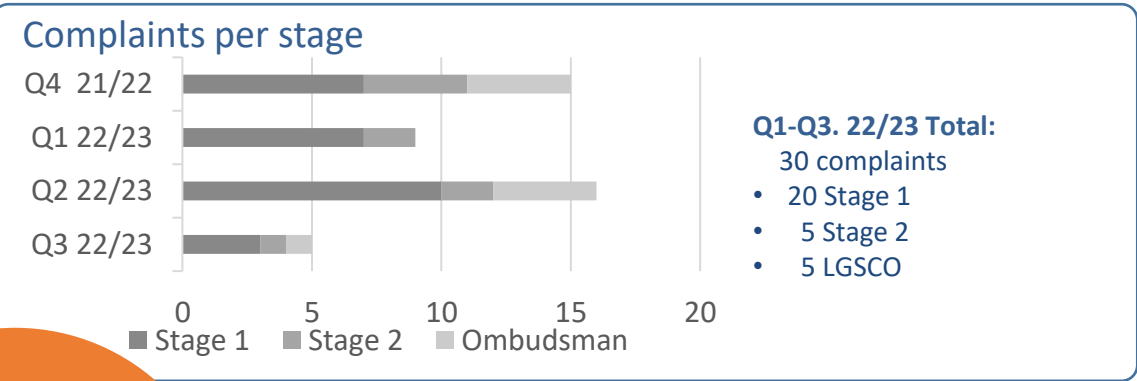
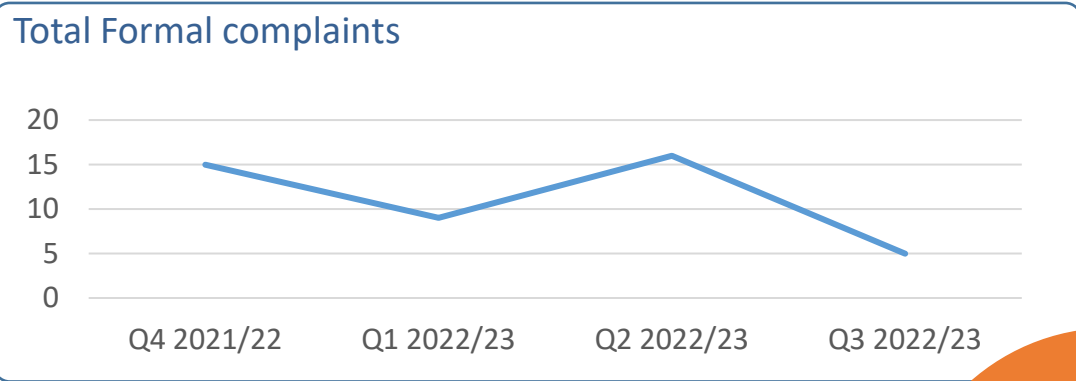
233
"thanks to you for being so kind and grateful for all your help with everything"

ASC Payments team June 2022



Formal Complaints – Quarters 1-3 | ASC

29 complaints were closed at Early Resolution. There was a downward trend in the volume of complaints received. Of the 30 complaints received, 7 were upheld, 20 not upheld and 3 undecided.



234

How did we receive the complaints?

- 10 Web form
- 20 Email

Which services were complaints submitted to?

Adult Social Care & Safeguarding (30)

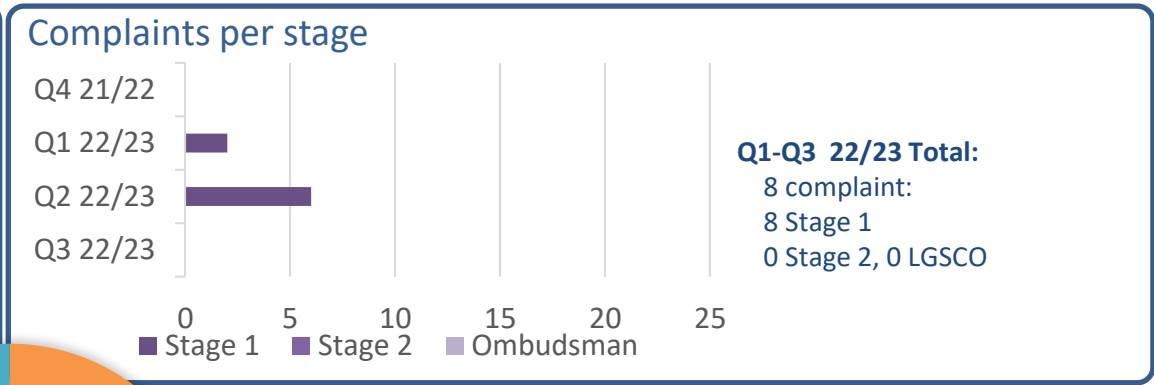
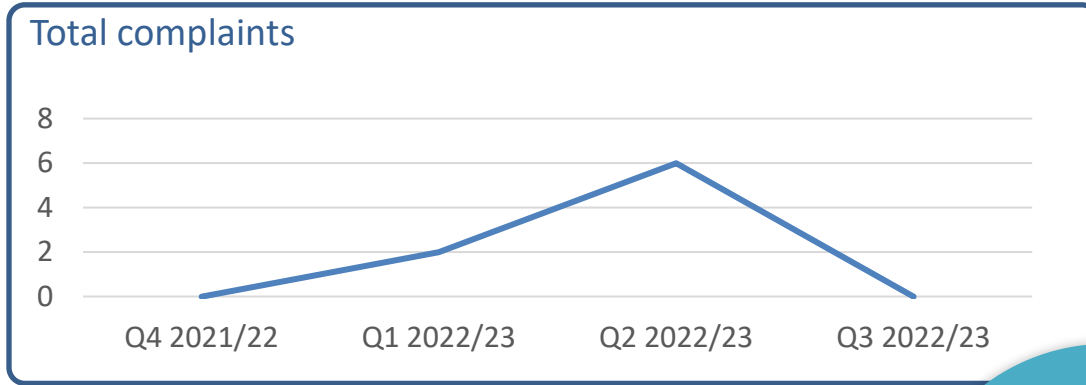
What were our residents dissatisfied with?

- 14
- 6
- 1
- 9

- The Service resolved **29** complaints outside the formal complaints process. The number of individual cases totalled **28**. Over the quarters there was a downward trend in the volume of complaints received with the majority resolved at Stage 1. Of the Stage 2's, one case found fault in how the invoice payments were calculated.
- The complaints showed the importance of providing clear guidance and transparency around specialist housing/accommodation, and in how the Council determined its discharge of duty rate. There were instances of insufficient collaboration between teams who assess and fund support. To remedy this, workers are reminded to regularly update the information they share with providers, especially when needs are high and where there are significant difficulties sourcing a suitable placement. When sourcing a placement is difficult, workers will be invited to attend a Placement Panel, so that an action plan can be agreed and committed to.
- Finance and Budget Holders have provided a series of training (Budget Reflection) sessions to all supervisors and managers to assist in the more complex aspects of support planning and placements.
- On concerns that Social Workers lacked awareness about people living with autism or neuro-divergent conditions. An Autism Lead was recruited to review the staff training programme and offer training on neurodiverse conditions and how this may impact delivery of service.
- 5 new Ombudsman inquiries were made in Quarter 2. Two cases were closed without investigation because there was no evidence of fault. The other 3 were still to be determined and related to safeguarding, care home options and the service offered to a neuro-diverse client. The Ombudsman reached a Final decision on a case raised in a previous Quarter. The complaint against Optalis was upheld, resulting in an apology, procedural action and a financial remedy.



Formal Complaints – Quarter 1-3 | Chief Executive’s Office

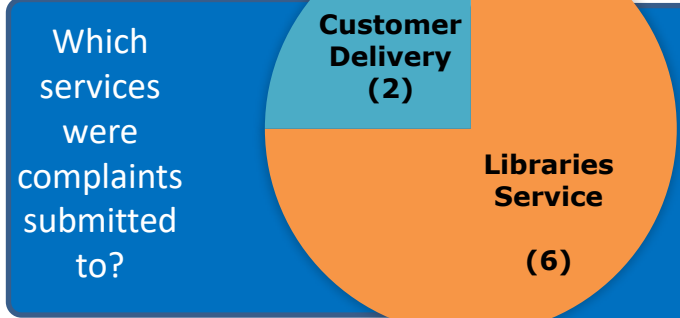
33 complaints were closed at Early Resolution. A single issue caused a dramatic rise in Qtr.2 and is not representative of the past and current trends seen in complaint volumes. Of the 8 complaints received, none were upheld.



235

How did we receive the complaints?

 **0** Via phone
 **8** Via webform/email



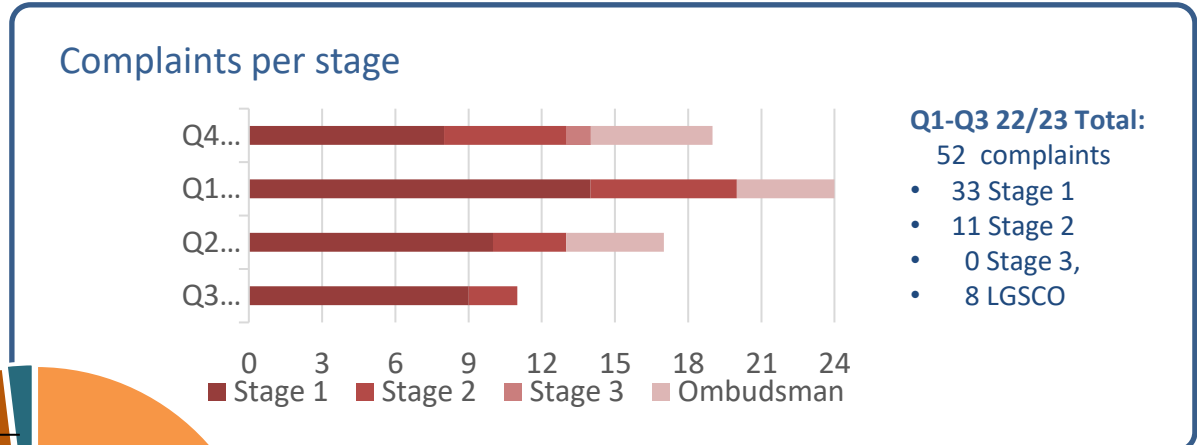
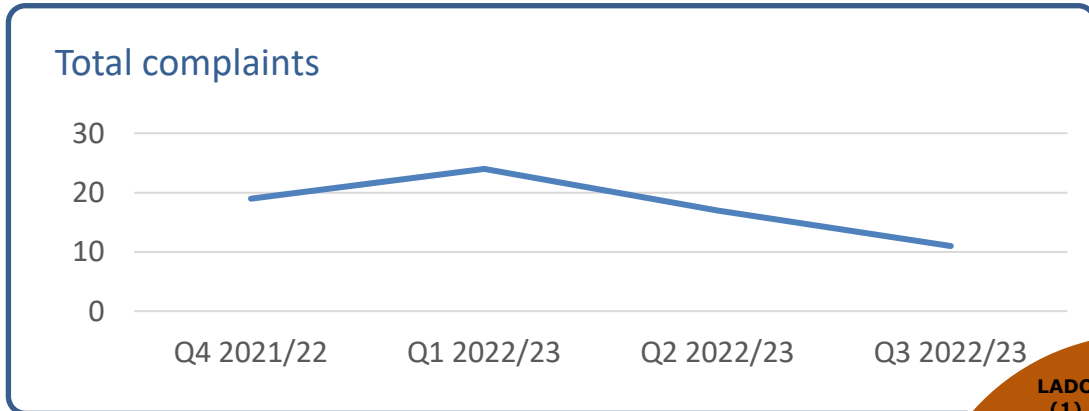
What were our residents dissatisfied with?

 Decision
8

- **33** complaints were resolved outside the formal complaints process. The libraries Service formally managed **8** individual cases.
- Six Stage 1 complaints related to the Libraries Service hosting a series of diversity and inclusion performances. The complaints were not upheld, but offered an opportunity to explain more fully the reason behind hosting the performances and what safeguarding measures were taken to ensure they were age appropriate. As a result, the commissioning process requires the performer to submit their publicity to the Council for approval, prior to it being made public.
- The two other formal complaints, were also resolved at stage 1 and related to decisions made by the Customer Delivery team.
- Callers to the Customer Service team, are able to feedback on their experience and the quality of service received. The Registrar’s team achieved an overall satisfaction rating of ‘Good’. Blue Badges, General Enquiries and Libraries achieved an ‘Average’ overall satisfaction rating.
- No formal complaints were raised in Quarter 3.

Formal Complaints – Quarter 1-3 | Children’s Services

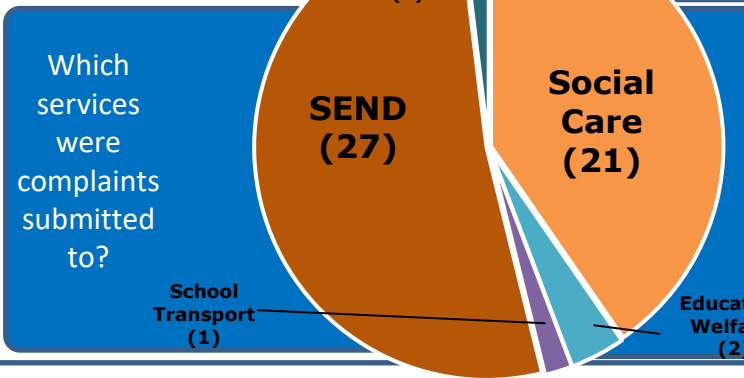
29 complaints were closed at Early resolution. There has been a downward trend in the volume of formal complaints submitted. Of the 52 complaints received 12 were upheld, 26 not upheld and 14 undecided.



236

How did we receive the complaints?

- 10** Web form
- 42** Email/post



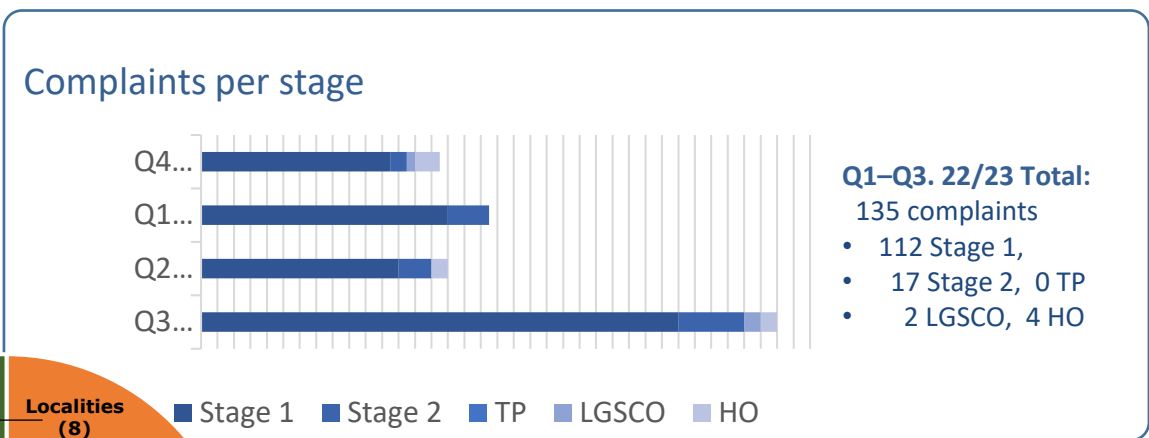
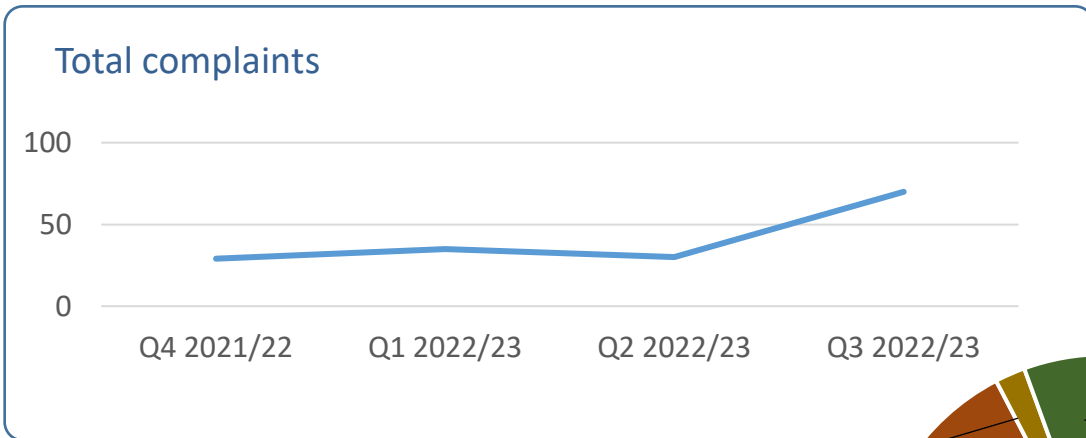
What were the key areas our residents were dissatisfied with?

- Inaccurate recordkeeping: **6**
- Decision: **8**
- Staff Conduct: **1**
- Inadequate service: **31**
- Inadequate communication: **6**

- 29 complaints were resolved outside the formal complaints process (11 social care and 18 Corporate). The Service formally managed **48 individual** complaint cases.
- Childrens’ Services Social care teams, responded to **13** complaints at Stage one and **5** cases at Stage two. These cases did not represent any identifiable trend, as the cause of dissatisfaction varied as well as the team which was seen to be at fault. Similarly, root causes were diverse; misunderstanding on what information needed to be amended in a report/assessment, alleged failure to respond to safeguarding concerns, alleged failure to fund support in a timely manner. The Social Care team received a lot of positive feedback regarding the attentiveness of staff to young persons opinions, the comprehensiveness of reports/assessments presented at Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) meetings.
- The SEND service received the majority of Corporate complaints. The SEND team issued 18 Stage 1 responses with 6 cases escalating to Stage 2. The complaints related to either delays in the issue or the outcome reached in an Educational Health Care (EHC) plan. Other complaints related to specialist school placement decisions. Apologies were offered for delays, but with lengthy health waiting lists, the matter was seen to be beyond the Council’s control. The other Corporate complaints were closed at Stage 1 and were not upheld, but there was an unnecessary delay in issuing one response.
- The Council received **8** LGSCO inquiries. 3 cases (one related to the LADO Service) were not investigated and two were still to be determined. 3 cases received a Final decision in Quarter 3 and found fault against the Specialist Educational Needs Service. Recommendations have included an apology, financial payments and a review of processes to ensure statutory obligations are met in relation to EHC plans.

Formal Complaints - Quarter 1 - 3 | Housing

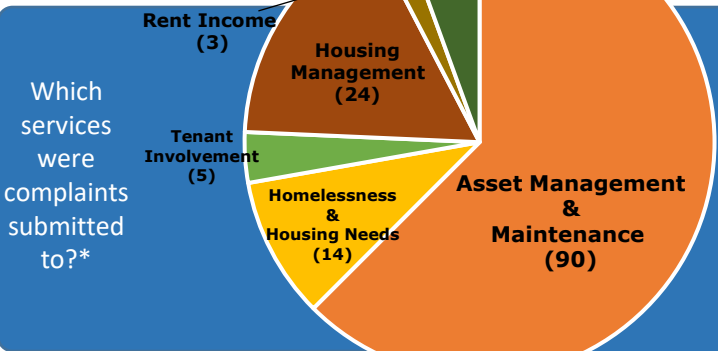
6 complaints were closed at Early Resolution and 112 at Stage 1. From 9th May 2022, the Service implemented, a new complaints, compliments and compensation policy. This policy requires all complaints to be issued a Stage 1 response. This contributed to the upward trend in cases requiring a formal response. Of the 135 complaints received, 58 were upheld, 47 not upheld and 30 undecided.



237

How did we receive the complaints?

- 25 Letter or phone
- 110 Email



What were our residents dissatisfied with?*

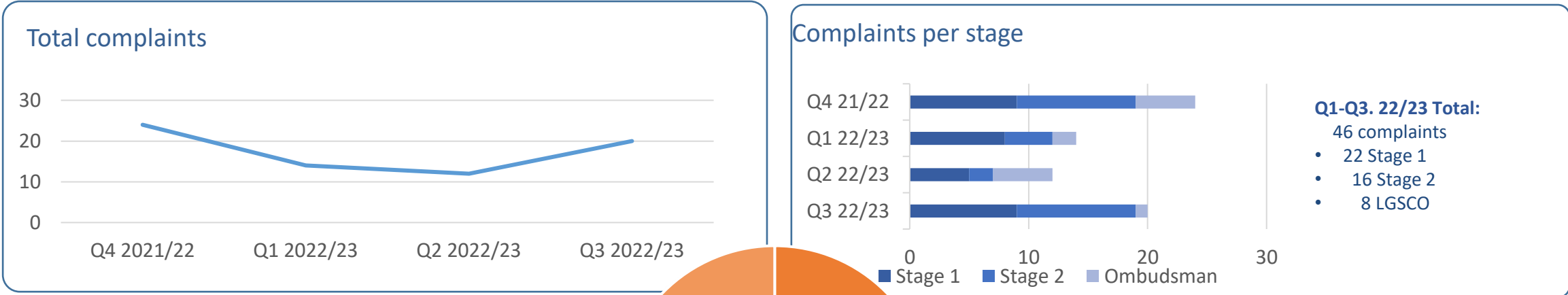
Category	Count
Decision	5
Maintenance repairs	53
Inadequate service	43
Lack of communication	32
Staff Conduct	14

- The Service formally managed **120 individual** complaint cases. * totals may not equate to complaint volumes, as complex cases require responses from more than one Service team.
- On 9th May 2022, a new Housing complaints policy was implemented. This policy removes the early resolution step and requires all cases to be issued a Stage 1 response.
- The impact of the new complaints policy cannot be underestimated; Qtr.1 saw a 30% rise in Stage 1 cases. This increase was centred around inadequate communication and service from the Asset & Management & Maintenance team. The number of complaints partially and fully upheld increased, with 10 out of 15 complaints closed in June identifying fault.
- In Qtr.2 tenants complaints dropped, but Cllr enquiries, FOIs and the amount of contact requests regarding a complaint that turned out to be a first request of service or not a complaint under the complaint policy, increased. This stretched the capacity of the Housing Services Customer Care team and was addressed with the allocation of additional resource.
- In Qtr.3, Housing Services managed 34 more Stage 1 complaints. This increase centred on complaints about the out of hours telephony service and mould/damp concerns. Whilst complaints about mould are not unusual, Qtr. 3 saw a substantial rise in tenants reporting this issue. National media coverage of a toddler's death from mould exposure within a home environment, contributed to the surge in demand to address such issues.
- In line with amendments made by the HO, the Customer Care Team are reviewing the Complaints Policy; consultation with the Tenant Volunteers and Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel (TLIP), to determine processes for managing complaints made via social media.
- The Tenant Complaint Panel (TP) is trained and set up, with letter templates and telephone acknowledgements signed off by tenant volunteers. On a monthly basis, the TP will be presented with a performance framework report to assist with service improvement suggestions.

Formal Complaints - Quarter 1-3 | Place & Growth

345 complaints were closed at Early Resolution. There was an upward trend in the number of formal complaints submitted.

Of the 46 complaints received 2 were upheld, 43 not upheld and 1 undecided.



238

How did we receive the complaints?



14

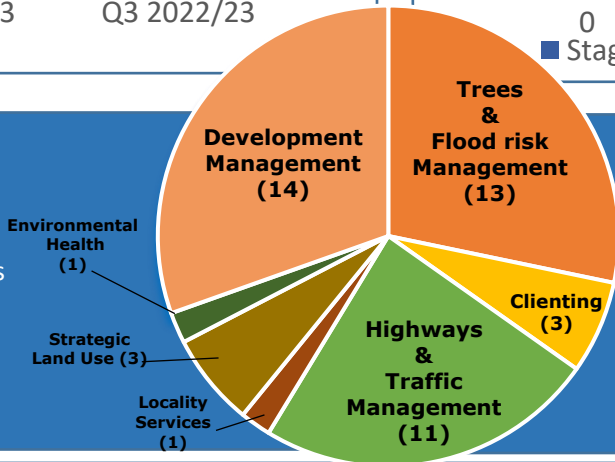
Web form



32

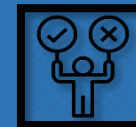
email

Which services were complaints submitted to?



What were our residents dissatisfied with?

Decision



21

Inadequate Communication



5

Inadequate Service



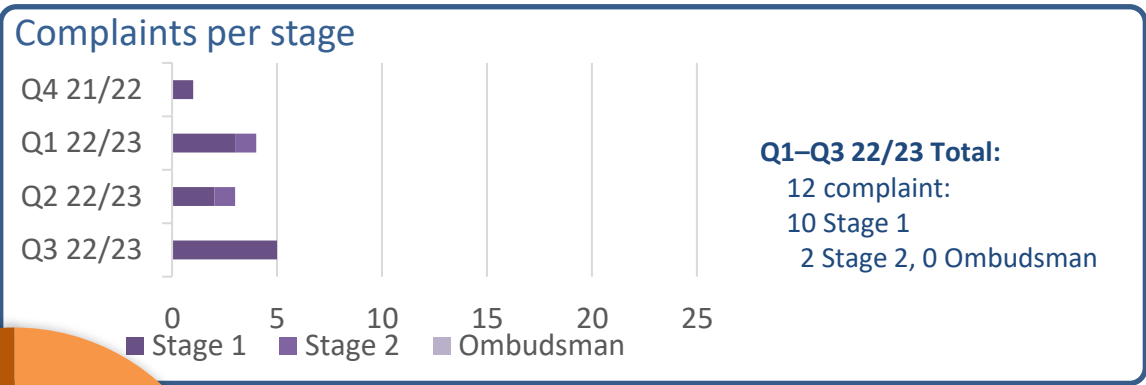
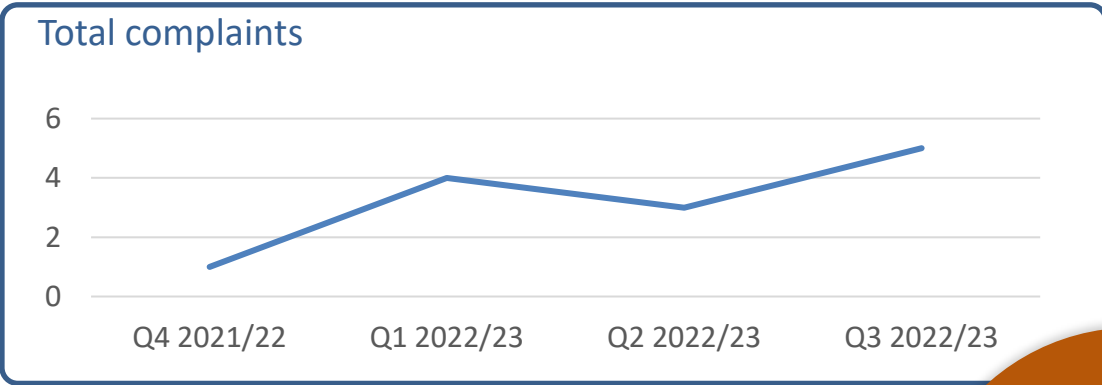
20

- 345 complaints, were resolved outside the formal complaints process. The Service formally managed **36 individual** complaint cases.
- The volume of Early resolution complaints increased by 283% between quarters 1 and 2 and a further 70% in quarter 3. These complaints fell into the category of one-off incidents that by their nature have a negative impact (road/emergency utility works causing traffic and delays). The fact that these complaints did not escalate or seek a specific outcome, would suggest that submitting the complaint form was in itself a form of resolution to the matter. This conclusion is drawn from many complainants caveating their complaint with an understanding that some disruption was inevitable.
- The redesign of the complaints webpage may have contributed to the rise in these complaints about inconvenience. The webpage is now more accessible making it easier for customers to feedback their frustrations.
- The volume of Stage 1's was concentrated in Highways & Traffic Management (8) , Trees and Flood risk management (5) and Development Management (8). None of these complaints were upheld and in the main related to unhappiness with a decision made without fault. However, improvements have been identified in how to improve the tracking of complaints about trees and drainage issues. In addition to this, the Blue and Green infrastructure team plan to review the information online that details the application/procedural process. This is aimed to remove uncertainty and thereby better manage customer expectations.
- The LGSCO cases concerned Locality Services, Development Management, and Trees & Flood risk management. These cases were either not upheld or investigated due to insufficient evidence of fault. During this period, two other LGSO cases from the previous financial year were resolved without finding the Council at fault; breach of Planning control was "properly considered" and the issue of a Tree Preservation Order did not cause injustice.

Formal Complaints - Quarter 1-3 | Resources & Assets

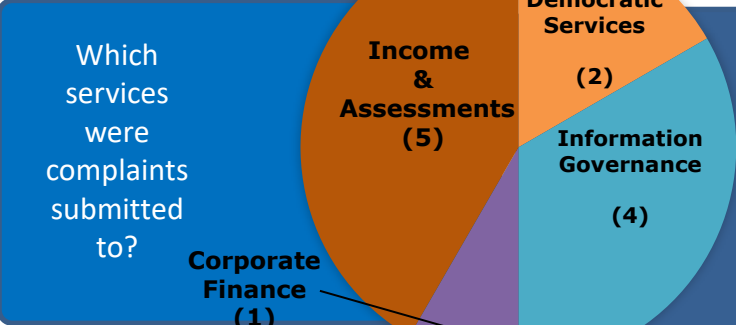
23 complaints were closed at Early Resolution. There was an upward trend in the number of formal complaints managed. Of the 12 complaints received, 3 were upheld and 9 not upheld.

239



How did we receive the complaints?

- 1** Telephone
- 6** Webform/Email



What were our residents dissatisfied with?

- 1** Data Breach
- 3** Decision
- 3** Lack of Communication
- 5** Inadequate Service

- **23** complaints were resolved outside the formal complaints process. The Services managed **10** individual complaint cases.
- Three Stage 1 complaints, two for Income & Assessments and one for Corporate Finance team were upheld. They related to either inadequate service and/or poor communication. These were individual cases and led to customer service training, via the new online Customer Experience Learning Programme, or a reminder to officers on the purchase order process.
- None of the complaints regarding Democratic Services or Information Governance were upheld.
- The monthly recovery programme is underway to follow up on overdue accounts. The recent fall in real disposable incomes (cost of living emergency) has made negotiations particularly challenging, in resolving unpaid debt.
- By December, approximately 36,700 households received their energy rebate. £200,100 was paid out to vulnerable households under the discretionary energy rebate scheme and collection for Council tax and Business rates was on track. The Income & Assessments team received 141 'Good' ratings via phone feedback on Gov metrics.

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TITLE	2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Q3 Progress Report
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Audit Committee on 13 March 2023
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Public assurance about the Council's risk, internal control and governance environment.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee (AC) is asked to review and scrutinise the 2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Quarter 3 Progress Report (activity to 31 December 2022).

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report: -

- Provides assurance that no new areas have been identified in the third quarter of the financial year where less than satisfactory levels of assurance have been given;
- Identifies the High-Risk Concerns and Follow Up activity;
- Summarises the work of the IAIS and status of the audits in the reporting period;
- Identifies the Key Corporate Risks covered;
- Confirms that at quarter end, there were 3 draft reports with outstanding responses; Reconciliation, ICT Controls (Cyber Security) and S106 Agreements. The first two reports have since been finalised and for the S106 Agreements, work has been undertaken with relevant officers to address the concerns raised and Internal Audit are reviewing progress to ensure that action agreed is being implemented;
- Provides results of Anti-Fraud activity;
- Outlines compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Background

2022/23 – Key Findings to date (Quarter 3 Position)

The AC approved the 2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Plan at its meeting on 30 March 2022. The originally approved Plan has been reviewed to re-focus and reprioritise internal audit and investigation activity, at the request of the Chief Finance Officer, in light of the Team needing to contribute to the Council's financial savings requirements in this financial year. As such, there has been a reduction in audit and investigation days for the 2022/23 financial year as a vacant Senior Auditor position has been frozen until 31 March 2023. This is to be a temporary measure. The revised 2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Work Programme to 31 March 2023 was agreed by Audit Committee on 28 September 2022.

The 2022/23 revised Internal Audit and Investigation Plan detailed the proposed Internal Audit and Investigation activity and sought to:

- provide key stakeholders with independent assurance that the risks within the Council’s fundamental systems and processes are being effectively and efficiently managed;
- allow the Council to demonstrate that it is complying with the relevant legislation and applicable professional standards;
- demonstrate the Council’s commitment to good governance; and
- set out that the Team’s resources are being properly utilised.

The AC received a Quarter 1 Progress Report at its meeting on 28 September 2022 and Quarter 2 Progress Report on 30 November 2022 showing progress against the 2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Plan to 30 September 2022. The report at Appendix A, with supporting Appendices A(I) and A(II) included, is provided for AC to note the progress of work against the revised Plan to 31 December 2022.

In this current period, the team is focused on a number of audits in progress. To date, there have been no new audits finalised from the 2022/23 Plan or audits carried forward from the 2021/22 financial year where the audit assurance was less than level 2, i.e. internal controls “substantially complete and effective.”

It should be noted that an Internal Audit review of the Council’s Self-Assessment against the CIPFA Financial Management Code was work in progress at the end of December 2022 but has progressed during early Quarter 4 and the outcome of our audit has been forwarded to the Assistant Director of Finance to inform his separate report on this subject to this Audit Committee.

Further quarterly update reports on progress on delivering the revised Plan will be reported to the Committee in line with the Council’s reporting cycle.

The revised Work programme is based on the resources available to deliver internal audit activity and to be able to provide minimal assurance over key risk areas and provide the Head of Internal Audit Annual Audit Opinion at the end of the year on the Council’s internal control, risk management and governance processes. In order to inform that opinion, assurances will also be taken, where appropriate, from other assurance activity across the Council. There will be no impact on the work already committed with our external clients.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	N/A	Yes	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	Yes	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	Yes	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
Not applicable

List of Background Papers
2022/23 Internal Audit & Investigation Plan (approved by AC 30 March 2022) 2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Plan In-Year Review (approved by AC 28 September 2022) 2022/23 Quarter 1 Audit and Investigation Progress Report (AC 28 September 2022) 2022/23 Quarter 2 Audit and Investigation Progress Report (AC 30 November 2022)

Contact: Catherine Hickman, Head of Internal Audit & Investigation	Service: Governance Services
Telephone No: Catherine Hickman, 07885 983378	Email: Catherine.hickman@wokingham.gov.uk
Date 28 February 2023	Version No. v1

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
Internal Audit & Investigation
2022/23 Quarter 3 Progress Report
(to 31 December 2022)

2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Plan

The purpose of this report is to present to the Audit Committee (AC) the progress in delivering the 2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Plan to the end of Quarter 3 of the financial year as part of our regular reporting and the key findings from our work. This is to ensure that the AC discharges its responsibilities in relation to governance, internal control and risk management.

The report includes areas of significant risk identified during our audit reviews and mitigating actions to address those risks. In addition, a summary of the Action Tracker to give Members of the Audit Committee assurances that concerns are being addressed and followed up regularly.

The internal audit programme of work aims to provide sufficient and appropriate coverage to enable the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation (fulfils the role of Chief Audit Executive) to provide an annual internal audit opinion on the Council's governance, internal control and risk management framework.



Summary

The Audit Committee (AC) approved the 2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Plan and Strategy at its meeting on 30 March 2022. The original Plan was subject to an In-Year review due to a request from the Chief Financial Officer to freeze a vacant Senior Auditor post to contribute towards the Council's savings requirements for 2022/23. This is a temporary measure. A revised Plan was agreed by AC on 28 September 2022. The revised Plan continues to remain flexible as the Council responds to its changing risk profile.

This report is provided as part of the quarterly reporting mechanism to AC and is to note the progress of the Team's work as at 31 December 2022.

Appendix A(I) lists the audits completed, at draft stage or work in progress in the period to 31 December 2022, as well as the Audit Opinion given for each review. Progress on audits since the last reporting to AC are highlighted in yellow. Completed internal audit assignments are given an 'overall Internal Audit Opinion rating, with '1' being the highest category of audit assurance and '4' the lowest. Audit Opinion definitions are summarised at Appendix A(II).

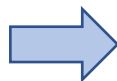
For those audits falling into the lower two categories of audit opinion, a summary is provided within this report and copies of the respective Internal Audit reports are provided to the Chair of the AC.

Follow up work is undertaken on all audits attracting the lowest two categories of audit opinion and on those concerns categorised as being Very High or High risk. This report also summarises the activity regarding fraud and irregularities.

The work undertaken during the period contributes to informing the Head of Internal Audit's overall opinion on the Council's internal control, governance and risk framework, as required under the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Internal Audit and Investigation Plan Status as at 31 December 2022

Appendix A(I) shows the Internal Audit and Investigation Work Plan status as at 31 December 2022. This details audits finalised, at draft report stage or in progress. In addition, the overall category of Audit Opinion given for each audit. Where audits have received the lower two categories of Audit Opinion (refer Appendix A(II) for definitions), a summary is provided within the Progress Report and a full copy of the respective reports is provided to the Chair of the Audit Committee.



As part of the annual Internal Audit and Investigation Plan, we aim to cover a number of Key Corporate Risks to the Council each year. The table opposite details all of the Councils Key Corporate Risks (as at November 2022) and highlights progress on approved to be audited during the year. The aim is that there is a link of the Internal Audit work directly into the Corporate Risk Register (CRR). This will build over time. There is also flexibility in the Internal Audit Plan to reflect new risks coming into the CRR and those being reduced in risk status or removed from the CRR.

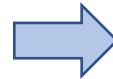
The results of follow up activity are also included within this report and any audits where there are outstanding responses from management to draft reports. We are currently on track to deliver the revised 2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Plan.

Ref	Key Corporate Risks as at November 2022	Audit in 2022/23
1	Budget & Financial Resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial Management - Review of Self-Assessment against the CIPFA Financial Management Code 	Q3 – in progress Q3 – in progress
2	Corporate Governance	Ongoing through Statutory Officer's Group and results from LGA Peer Review
3	Workforce	
4	Uncontrolled Development (Local Plan Update)	
5	Outcomes and Costs for Children with SEND	Deferred as part of In-Year Review of Plan
6	Failure to meet statutory duties	CS Assurance Mapping
7	ASC Supplier Sustainability and Sufficiency	
8	Cyber Attack	Review of Corporate Self-Assessment against best practice completed
9	Climate Emergency	Review of Governance arrangements completed
10	Major Emergency Response e.g., Pandemic	
11	High Needs Block overspend	Deferred as part of In-Year Review of Plan
12	Health & Social Care Reform	
13	Adult Safeguarding	Review completed
14	Children's Safeguarding	
15	Inward migration	
16	Public Transport	
17	Education Provision Mainstream	
18	Electoral Reform	
19	Information Governance	

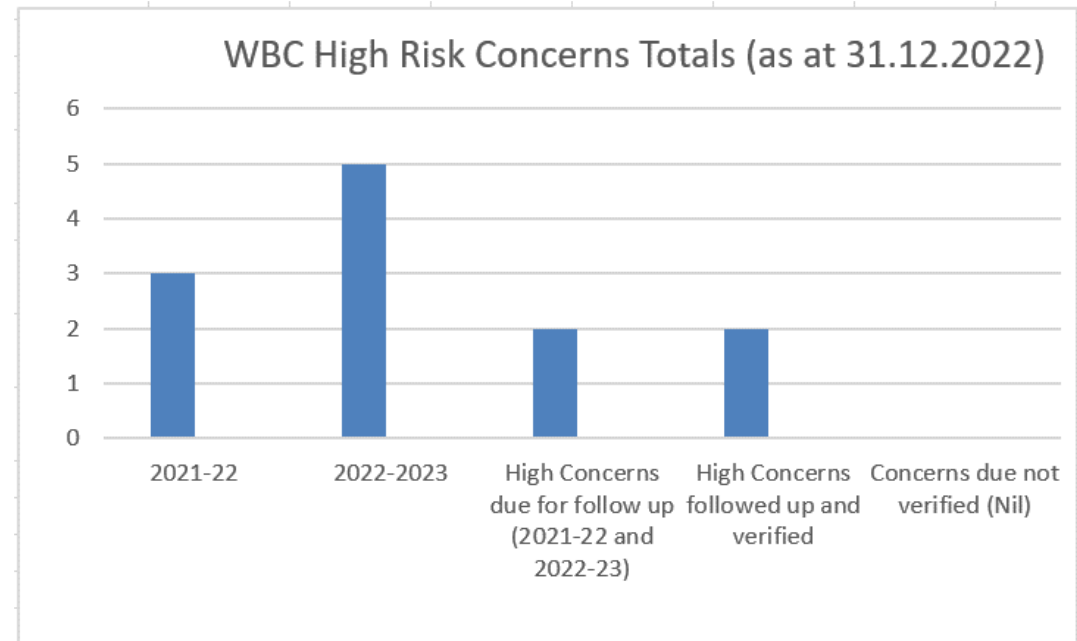
Follow Up Activity

An Action Tracker is maintained to record all High and Medium concerns identified during our audit reviews. Low risk concerns are reported to management verbally at the exit meeting. The Action Tracker is shared with the Chair of the Audit Committee.

The graph opposite and table below show totals and follow up activity for High-Risk concerns. At the time of reporting, all high-risk concerns due to be followed up have been confirmed and verified as being actioned by their due date with evidence to support this.



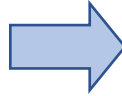
High Risk Concerns Follow Up



	High
2021-22	3
2022-2023	5
High Concerns due for follow up (2021-22 and 2022-23)	2
High Concerns followed up and verified	2
Concerns due not verified	0

Follow Up Activity

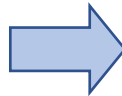
The table opposite shows the total number of High concerns in 2021-22 and 2022-23 and their status of Open or Closed.



Open / Closed Concerns		
Concern	Status	Total
High	Open / Not Yet Due	6
	Closed	2
Total		8

249

The table opposite shows the total number of High actions, the number of new audit actions raised since the last AC, and the number of High-risk concerns that were Open and Overdue compared to the Previous Quarter. There were no Overdue High-risk concerns.



	Audit Committee 30.11.22 (Q2)	New audit Concerns (in Q3)	Audit Concerns closed (in quarter)	Audit Committee 13/03/23 (Q3)
Total High Concerns	6	2		8
Total open High Concerns	4	2	0	6
Overdue	0			0
Not yet due	4	2		6

High Risk Concerns and Agreed Management Countermeasures

Audit	No. of High Risk concerns	Agreed Management Countermeasure	Actions due and status verified	Proposed Implementation date
2021/22				
Adult Safeguarding	1	Design and implement a local Quality Assurance Framework and devise a tool to ensure that quality learning takes place. Appoint to new grade 11 role.	Complete	30/06/2022
Recruitment and Safeguarding	2	a) Children's and Adults - Remind managers and verify that safer recruitment training is completed b) HR - Monthly reports to the HR Business Partners on completion of the mandatory training. Resourcing Team (from January 2023) to ensure that training is undertaken.	Complete	01/12/2022
			Not yet due	31/03/2023
		a) Children's and Adults - Managers to forward all successful candidates recruitment documentation to HR Enquiries mailbox and retain unsuccessful recruitment documentation. b) HR - Review of all HR operational processes ongoing. Checklist for new starters will require team leader sign-off. Explore IT tracking methods and back-up options.	Complete	14/11/2022
			Not yet due	31/03/2023
2022/23				
Debtors	5	Training issue to be highlighted to all Services. AR to create new policies and procedures / training workshops with Service users.	Not yet due	31/03/2023
		a) Revenues and Recovery Manager to review the Debtors SLA, processes, and procedures and will engage with service users.	Not yet due	31/03/2023
		b) Robust performance measures were put in place and from 31 st July 2022, the invoices raised data will be shown on the reports.	Complete	31/07/2022
		Senior Management intervention and debtors restructure will assist improvements. AR team now allocated certain 'patches' and will work with their service counterparts.	Complete	30/09/2022
		The Council needs to consider further innovation in its methods for receiving income.	Not yet due	31/03/2023
		A reconciliation in 2018 matched payments and is still updated. AR are guided by Building Control re: write-offs, etc. Will continue to seek resolution with the Service.	Ongoing	Ongoing

Key:

Implementation verified as complete
Combined Concern with part completed
Target date not yet due

Category 3 / 4 Audit Opinions

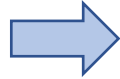
For reporting to Audit Committee, we provide a summary of audits falling into the lowest two categories of Audit Opinion. Directors help inform the Audit Plan and, as part of that, ask Internal Audit to focus on areas that require more intense scrutiny to help them make improvement. Where audits do fall into the lower two categories of Audit Opinion this may be a reflection of the Audit Plan being targeted at the highest risk areas.

Full copies of audits falling into the Category 3 or 4 Audit Opinion are provided to the Chair of the Audit Committee. In the year to date, one audit (Debtors), has attracted the third category of audit opinion and was reported at the last AC. There are no new audits finalised in Quarter 3 that attracted the third or fourth category of Audit Opinion.

Fraud and Irregularities

The Internal Audit and Investigation Plan includes provision for undertaking reactive and proactive investigations.

There have been no incidences of material fraud, irregularities or corruption discovered or reported during the year. The work undertaken by the team has included re-active investigations as well as developing pro-active anti-fraud drives. A summary of the key areas activity since we last reported is provided here.



Anti-Fraud Activities

National Fraud Initiative Data Matching Exercise – The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) is a data matching exercise conducted by the Cabinet Office to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud. Data for the NFI is provided by participating organisations from the public and private sectors including government departments. The bi-annual upload of data for the NFI for 2021/22 was completed and reported in this financial year. The 2022/23 exercise is currently underway with data sets being uploaded to the Cabinet Office secure systems. Data matches are due to be returned at the end of January 2023 for investigation by the team.

Fraud and Irregularities Contd./...

Contd./...



Anti-Fraud Activities

Covid grant post payment assurance work - Evidence has been obtained and submitted to the Department for Business, Energy and Industry Strategy (BEIS) in accordance with the requirements of Covid grant conditions for various Covid business grants paid as follows. Additional grants audited in the quarter include: -

- Local Restrictions Grant Schemes Pre and Post Payment Assurance (PPAS) – Part 2
- Restart Grant Pre and Post Payment Assurance (PPAS)

Police Data Protection Act (DPA) requests - These requests are received on an ad-hoc basis and require immediate response to ensure that we are working efficiently with the Police for the prevention and detection of crime, the prosecution and/or apprehension of offenders and/or protecting the vital interests of a person. As at 31st December 2022, 49 DPA requests have been received in the year to date (18 received in quarter 3) and all have been completed and returned.

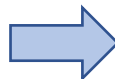
Freedom of Information Requests - We aim to ensure that these requests are responded to within the legal timescale requirements. Freedom of Information requests relating to internal audit and investigation work include fraud and whistleblowing. There have been 2 FOI requests received and responded in the year to date.

Whistleblowing Referrals – there have been 6 Whistleblowing referrals in the year to date, one of which was a new referral that was received in quarter 3, which is being investigated by Legal Services. For the other 5 referrals, two have been resolved by the relevant service and 3 are being investigated.

Public Sector Internal Audit Standards

The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), as revised in April 2017, define the service and professional standards for public sector internal audit services.

Compliance is monitored on a regular basis, as part of the review process for individual audits and as part of annual self-assessment reviews of the internal audit service. An external review of the service is required to be undertaken every five years in accordance with the PSIAS.



Compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards

The PSIAS, as revised in April 2017, define the service and professional standards for public sector internal audit services.

Key, specific PSIAS provisions include:

PSIAS: 2010 - *“The Chief Audit Executive must establish risk-based plans to determine the priorities of the internal audit activity, consistent with the organisation’s goals.”*

PSIAS: 2450 – *“The Chief Audit Executive must deliver an annual internal audit opinion and report that can be used by the organisation to inform its governance statement. The annual internal audit opinion must conclude on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation’s framework of governance, risk management and control.”*

The Internal Audit Service is designed to conform to the PSIAS. Under the PSIAS there is a requirement for internal audit services to have an external quality assessment every five years. The last external review was undertaken in 2018, with an ongoing self-assessment exercise being undertaken annually. A further external review of the Service against the PSIAS is planned for early 2023/24.

Appendix A(I)

2022/23 WBC Internal Audit and Investigation Plan - Quarter 3 Status as at 31 December 2022

Key Financial Systems

Audit title	Directorate	Status	Final audit report opinion
Debtors	Resources & Assets	Final	3
Housing Rents	Place & Growth	Final	2

Key Corporate Risks

Audit title	Directorate	Status	Final audit report opinion
Budget & Financial Resilience - Financial Monitoring	Resources & Assets	WIP	
Budget & Financial Resilience - Review of Self-Assessment against the CIPFA Financial Management Code*	Resources & Assets	WIP*	
Information Governance & Cyber Security – Self Assessment of Council's Arrangements (Advisory)	Communities, Insights & Change	Draft (Awaiting final sign off by Senior Management)	

Key Operational Risks

Audit title	Directorate	Status	Final audit report opinion
New Enforcement & Safety Service	Place & Growth	Final	2
Contract / Client Management Compliance	Place & Growth	WIP	

*Audit was WIP at end December 2022 but has progressed during early Quarter 4 and a draft report has been provided to the Assistant Director Finance to inform his report to this Audit Committee on this subject area

Appendix A(I) Contd./...

Servicing the Business

Audit title	Directorate	Status	Final audit report opinion
Annual Governance Statement preparation 2021/22	Cross Cutting	n/a	n/a
Bearwood School	Children's Services	Final	2
Effectiveness of System of Internal Audit / Public Sector Internal Audit Standards External Assessment Preparation	Cross Cutting	WIP	
Follow Up Countermeasures /Testing	Cross Cutting	Ongoing	
Assurance Mapping	Cross Cutting	WIP	

Appendix A(I) Contd./...

Grant Certifications

Audit title	Directorate	Status	Final audit report opinion
Protect & Vaccinate	Adult Services	Certified	n/a
Supporting Families (Quarter 1)	Children's Services	Certified	n/a
Supporting Families (Quarter 2)	Children's Services	Certified	n/a
Supporting Families (Quarter 3)	Children's Services	Certified	n/a
Homelessness Prevention	Place & Growth	Certified	n/a
DfT Transport Capital Grant	Place & Growth	Certified	n/a
Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme	Place & Growth	Certified	n/a
Disabled Facilities Grant	Adult Services	Certified	n/a
Test and Trace Support	Resources & Assets	Certified	n/a
Covid Grants – Post Payment Assurance Checks	Resources & Assets		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Restrictions Covid-19 Business Grant Scheme • Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Covid-19 Business Grant Scheme • Local restrictions support Grant (LRSG) Closed Addendum – November Grant Scheme • LRSG – Closed Addendum – 5th January Onwards Grant Scheme • Closed Business Lockdown Grant Scheme • LRSG (Closed) Addendum Tier 4 Grant Scheme • Restart Grant Scheme • Local Restrictions Grant Schemes Pre and Post Payment Assurance (PPAS) – Part 2 • Restart Grant Pre and Post Payment Assurance (PPAS) 		Certified Certified Certified Certified Certified Certified Certified Certified Certified	n/a n/a n/a n/a n/a n/a n/a n/a n/a

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Contingency/Consultancy/Management Requests

Audit title	Directorate	Status	Final audit report opinion
S106 Agreements	Place & Growth	Draft	

Appendix A(I) Contd./...

Investigations

Audit title	Directorate	Status	Final audit report opinion
National Fraud Initiative Data Matching Exercise (2022/23 Exercise)	Cross Cutting	In progress	
National Fraud Initiative Data Matching Exercise (2020/21 Exercise – delayed due to Covid)	Cross Cutting	Completed	Results reported in Q2 Progress Report
Empty Property Relief	Resources & Assets	Completed	Results reported in Q2 Progress Report
Whistleblowing Preliminary Investigation	Adults	Completed	n/a
Revenues & Benefits Fraud Awareness Training	Resources & Assets	Completed	n/a
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act – Policy and Procedures Refresh	Cross Cutting	Completed	n/a
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Training	Cross Cutting	Completed	n/a
Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office Inspection	Cross Cutting	Completed	IPCO Report received 15/11/22 – results reported in Q2 Progress Report
Police Disclosure of Personal Data Requests	Resources & Assets	Ongoing	n/a

Appendix A(I) Contd./...

2021/22 Audits Completed in 2022/23

Audit title	Directorate	Status	Final audit report opinion
Climate Emergency	Place & Growth	Final	2
Benefits & CTRS	Resources & Assets	Final	1
Reconciliation (Consultancy)	Resources & Assets	Draft	
Public Protection Partnership Review (Advisory)	Place & Growth	Final	n/a
Recruitment & Safeguarding (Management Request)	Chief Executive	Final	2
Diversity & Equality Self-Assessment Verification	Cross Cutting	Final	n/a
Equality Data	Cross Cutting	Final	2

Indicates progress since Quarter 2 Audit and Investigation Report (presented to Audit Committee 30 November 2022)

Appendix A(II)**Audit Opinions**

1 - Complete and Effective

2 - Substantially Complete and Generally Effective

3 - Range of Risk Mitigation Controls is incomplete, and risks are not effectively mitigated

4 - There is no effective Risk Management process in place

Legend

C - Certification

E – Exempt

WIP – Work in Progress

Draft – Draft Report stage

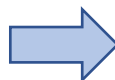
Final – Final Report issued

Appendix A(II)

Audit Opinion Definitions

The Audit Opinion stated in the audit report provides management with a brief objective assessment of the status of current Treatment Measures which have been put in place to reduce identified risks to the operation or strategy under review. It is not a statement of fact.

In reaching the Audit Opinion for this audit, the majority of the criteria for the relevant definition apply.



Complete and Effective

- ♦ All necessary Treatment Measures are in place and are operating effectively.
- ♦ Residual risks have been reduced to an acceptable level
- ♦ There are no unacceptable financial implications.
- ♦ Concerns reported are minor.

(Risk management processes are strong, and controls are adequate and effective).

Substantially Complete and Generally Effective

- ♦ Most key Treatment Measures are in place, and these operate effectively.
- ♦ The majority of residual risks have been reduced to an acceptable level.
- ♦ There are minor unacceptable financial implications.
- ♦ The majority of concerns are of a predominately moderate impact/likelihood.

(Risk management processes are good, and controls are adequate although only partially effective).

Range of Risk Mitigation Controls is incomplete, and risks are not effectively mitigated

- ♦ Not all key Treatment Measures are in place and / or do not operate effectively
- ♦ Residual risks have not all been reduced to an acceptable level
- ♦ There are some unacceptable financial implications associated with more than one risk mitigation control or because of a lack of risk mitigation control.
- ♦ There are a number of concerns that are predominantly of a major impact/likelihood.

(Risk management processes and controls are adequate but not effective in mitigating the identified risks).

There is no effective Risk Management process in place

- ♦ There are no appropriate Treatment Measures in place.
- ♦ Residual risks remain at an unacceptable level.
- ♦ Reported concerns are predominantly of a catastrophic or major impact/likelihood.

(Risk management processes and controls are weak).

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TITLE	2023/24 Draft Internal Audit Plan, Strategy and Internal Audit Charter
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Audit Committee on 13 March 2023
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Public assurance about the Council's risk, control, and governance environment.

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee is asked to:-

- 1) Review and scrutinise the 2023/24 draft Internal Audit and Investigation Plan and Strategy (attached as Appendices A and AI).
- 2) Approve the 2023/24 Internal Audit Charter (Appendix A(II)).

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report recommends that the Audit Committee considers and approves the draft Internal Audit and Investigation Plan and Strategy for the 2023/24 financial year. In addition, that it approves the 2023/24 Internal Audit Charter. This recommendation is being made to ensure that the Internal Audit and Investigation Service (IAIS) plans its work to assist the Council in meeting its statutory requirements and ensures that there is an ongoing focus on the Council's key corporate priorities and risks, whilst also remaining flexible and agile in the planning of its work.

The 2023/24 Internal Audit Charter is presented alongside the Internal Audit and Investigation Plan. It incorporates the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2017 with the arrangements for the provision of Internal Audit Services and is being presented, with small changes since the last revision, for annual approval.

The Internal Audit Charter includes the reporting lines for Internal Audit.

Background

Internal Audit supports the Council's S151 Officer (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources and Assets) in discharging his statutory duties: -

- I. Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. The Council's Section 151 Officer is responsible under the Local Government Act for ensuring that there are arrangements in place for the proper administration of the authority's financial affairs. The work of internal audit is an important source of information for the S151 Officer in exercising their responsibility for financial administration. Reliance upon Internal Audit and their annual programme of work in reviewing the operation of systems of internal control and financial management is fundamental to the fulfilment of that responsibility.
- II. The Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015) state that: 'A relevant authority must 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'.

Each financial year, a relevant authority must:-

- a) Conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control required by Regulation 3; and
- b) Prepare an annual governance statement.

2023/24 Draft Internal Audit Plan and Strategy

The 2023/24 Draft Internal Audit and Investigation Plan and Strategy provides the mechanism through which the Chief Audit Executive (a role fulfilled by Head of Internal Audit and Investigation) can ensure that there is the most appropriate use of internal audit resources to provide a clear statement of assurance on the Council's risk management, internal control and governance arrangements.

Internal Audit provides an independent and objective opinion to the Council on the degree to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievement of the Council's objectives. Internal Audit contributes to the Council achieving its key priorities by helping to promote a secure and robust internal control environment, which enables a focus on achieving the key priorities.

The 2023/24 Draft Internal Audit and Investigation Plan and Strategy are attached as Appendices A and A(I) to this report. The Strategy (Appendix A) outlines the role, scope and purpose of Internal Audit, the 2023/24 Audit Planning process, resourcing, reporting arrangements and Internal Audit's requirements to conform with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), 2017.

Developing the programme of work has included managements' assessment of risk, as well as our own risk assessment of the Council's major systems, strategic and operational areas, other auditable areas and work undertaken to date.

It has involved consultation with the Corporate Leadership Team, Directorate Management Teams, the review of risk registers and external guidance (where appropriate), the Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan, 2021/22 Peer Review Action Plan and 2022/23 Peer Review Follow Up, comparison with other authorities and Audit Group Networks.

The Plan is based on the work deemed necessary to be able to provide the annual Head of Internal Audit opinion and for the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources and Assets (S151 Officer) to be able to fulfil their legislative responsibilities.

Appendix A(I) presents the audit topic areas identified during the audit planning process.

The 2023/24 Draft Internal Audit and Investigation Plan and Strategy, once approved, will come into effect from 1 April 2023. Progress on delivering the Plan will be reported to the Committee on a regular basis in line with the Council's reporting cycle.

2023/24 Internal Audit Charter

The Internal Audit Charter is a formal document that defines the internal audit purpose, authority and responsibility. The Internal Audit Charter establishes the internal audit's position within the organisation, including the nature of the Chief Audit Executive's (fulfilled by Head of Internal Audit and Investigation) functional reporting relationship with the board (Audit Committee); authorising access to records; personnel and physical properties relevant to the performance of engagements; and defining the scope of internal audit activities.

The Internal Audit Charter sets out to communicate key information around the following areas: -

- The purpose or authority of Internal Audit and its definition.
- The role, purpose and function of Internal Audit with a stress on independence to preserve objectivity.
- The objectives of internal audit and the scope of the audit function.
- The professional standards and ethics to be followed by Internal Audit and its employees.
- Reference to the responsibilities retained by Council's management.
- Internal Audit style content including reference to a prepared audit protocol.
- Internal Audit resources and training.
- Internal Audit reporting.

The 2023/24 Internal Audit Charter is presented at Appendix A(II), with tracked changes, and Appendix A(III), clean version, to this report.

Analysis of the Issues

The Internal Audit Charter provides the authority for the practice of Internal Audit in the Council and is a key governance document in this respect. The Audit Committee should consider whether the Internal Audit Charter provides Internal Audit with the necessary authority to enable it to fulfil its responsibilities in providing independent and objective assurance to the Audit Committee.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision			
None			

Cross-Council Implications
Internal Audit works across all areas of the Council – effective internal audit is one of the ways assurance is provided that the Council’s key priorities and objectives will be achieved.

Public Sector Equality Duty
The Equality Act 2010 places a statutory duty on the council to ensure that when considering any new or reviewed strategy, policy, plan, project, service or procedure the impacts on particular groups, including those within the workforce and customer/public groups, have been considered. In undertaking our audit and investigative work, we ensure we have regard for equalities.

Climate Emergency – <i>This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030</i>
This report has a positive impact on the climate emergency agenda, as it provides public assurance about the Council’s risk, control and governance environment and includes specific reviews of key corporate risks that have been undertaken in respect of Net-Zero Carbon (Climate Emergency).

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2
Not applicable.

List of Background Papers
2023/24 Internal Audit and Investigation Strategy - Appendix A 2023/24 Draft Internal Audit and Investigation Plan - Appendix A(I) 2023/24 Internal Audit Charter – Appendix A(II) Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2017

Contact Catherine Hickman Head of Internal Audit and Investigation	Service Governance
Telephone No Tel: 07885 983378	Email catherine.hickman@wokingham.gov.uk

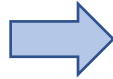
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
Internal Audit & Investigation Plan and Strategy
2023-24

The Internal Audit Plan Strategy

This report provides an overview of Internal Audit's proposed work plan and strategy for 2023/24 for the Internal Audit Service from 1 April 2023.

The internal audit programme of work aims to provide sufficient and appropriate coverage to enable the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation (who fulfils the role of Chief Audit Executive) to provide a well-informed and comprehensive year-end annual internal audit opinion on the Council's governance, internal control and risk management framework.

This feeds into the Annual Governance Statement(AGS) and provides assurances on the implementation of the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance.



Introduction and Objective

Internal Audit 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.

The Internal Audit and Investigation Plan provides the mechanism through which the Head of Audit and Investigation can ensure most appropriate use of internal audit resources to provide a clear statement of assurance on risk management, internal control, and governance arrangements. In addition, the work of internal audit aims to provide an independent and objective opinion to the Council on the level to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievement of the Council's objectives.

Prior to the start of each financial year, the Head of Audit and Investigation, in conjunction with senior management, put together a proposed plan of audit work. The objective of our planning process enables the service to provide a well-informed and comprehensive annual audit opinion, based on sufficient and appropriate coverage of key business objectives, associated risks, and risk management processes.

The outcomes of each of the audits in our planned programme of work, will provide senior management and Members with assurance that the current risks faced by the Council in these areas are adequately controlled and managed.

Internal audit is only one source of assurance, and the outcomes of internal audit reviews should be considered alongside other assurance sources.

The Internal Audit Plan Strategy

Methodology

In developing the Internal Audit and Investigation Plan, a review has been undertaken of the potential risk areas for review including consideration of:

- Risk in Focus 2023: Hot topics for internal auditors published by a consortium of institutes of internal auditors that includes the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors (UK & Ireland)
- Council Corporate Plan and Vision
- Council Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers
- Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan
- WBC Governance Toolkit
- 2021/22 Council Peer Review Action Plan and 2022/23 Follow Up work.
- Various Council Inspection Reports and Lessons Learned re Governance
- Audit Group Networks, Better Governance Forum for 'hot topic' areas

Additionally, consultation has been undertaken with officers to confirm our assessment of the risks, determine areas of audit input that can add value to managers and to ensure that a clear understanding of how Internal Audit work fits with other known sources of assurance:

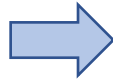
- The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)
- Directorate Management Teams
- Section 151 Officer
- Monitoring Officer



The Internal Audit Plan Strategy

The internal audit activity must evaluate and contribute to the improvement of the organisation's governance, risk management, and control processes using a systematic, disciplined, and risk-based approach. Internal audit's credibility and value are enhanced when auditors are proactive, and their evaluations offer new insights and consider future impact.

Risk-based plans need to be developed to determine the priorities of the internal audit activity, consistent with the organisation's goals.



The Audit Plan Key Features

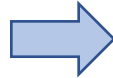
The Internal Audit Plan reflects some of the highest risk areas to the Council and is designed to ensure that assurance is targeted effectively to enable provision of an opinion on the governance, risk, and control framework. Significantly, this year, approaches include:

- **Wokingham Centric** – focus on key priorities and key corporate assurances for the Council for 2023/24, for example, Budget and Financial Resilience, Governance of Companies.
- **Strategic Focus** – Audit will focus on management assurance on key risks versus the reliance on Internal Audit to provide direct assurance. Audits focussed on quality outcomes that increase the likelihood that Community Vision is delivered.
- **Proactive Risk Identification** – identifying potential and emerging risks to the Council through horizon scanning and working with partners. Suggesting emerging risks to senior managers from insights from other clients, professional networks, and case studies of other local authorities.
- **Governance Arrangements:** Internal Audit have a key role in assessing the effectiveness of governance arrangements by comparison with principles contained in the CIPFA/SOLACE Governance Framework. A number of audits will support this assessment and will take account of any emerging governance arrangements, for example, Risk Management - to review the Council's Risk Management arrangements to assess how embedded they are across the Council and how this can be driven forward.

The Internal Audit Plan Strategy

The internal audit activity must evaluate and contribute to the improvement of the organisation's governance, risk management, and control processes using a systematic, disciplined, and risk-based approach. Internal audit's credibility and value are enhanced when auditors are proactive, and their evaluations offer new insights and consider future impact.

Risk-based plans need to be developed to determine the priorities of the internal audit activity, consistent with the organisation's goals.



The Audit Plan Key Features contd./...

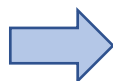
- **Consultancy and Value Added** – Management periodically identifies areas where audit input is beneficial e.g. new system/procedures/controls developments. This work is designed to support management in delivering aspirations and problem resolution and as such is included, not as work that will support the annual audit opinion but as value added work. No assurance opinions will be given in consultancy engagements.
- **Grant Certifications** – Mandatory/Statutory certification of grants received from Central Government.
- **Advisory and Support** - Periodic briefings for CLT on governance internal control, risk management, for example, Lessons learnt from review of recent financial failures in local government.
- **Fraud, Corruption and Financial Irregularities:** The service will investigate fraud and irregularity arising during the year.
- **Follow up work:** Follow up work on outstanding 'Management actions' will be regularly undertaken. Where Internal Audit reports conclude that a Category 3 or 4 assurance level (bottom two categories of audit opinion), the reviews will be revisited at an appropriate time to establish the effectiveness of agreed management actions in improving control and mitigation of risks. Progress will be reported to Audit Committee.

The Internal Audit Plan and Strategy

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The Table opposite shows the Council's KCRs and proposed Internal Audit coverage. This aims to demonstrate that Internal Audit activity is focussed on the key risks to the Council, in addition to other required audit activity, e.g. Key Operational Risks, Governance Building Blocks, Fraud and Grant work (as set out at Appendix A(I)), which is required to inform the Head of Internal Audit Annual Opinion. It is not possible to cover all KCRs each year but they will be reviewed on a rolling programme. For 2023/24, risks being covered will include a mix of detailed reviews, follow up activity and also a focus on specific aspects of risks, as requested by Directorate Management Teams. The aim is to ensure that all KCRs have coverage over a fixed time period.

The Corporate Risk Register is a live document and risks enter and leave the register during the course of the year. Therefore, the Internal Audit Plan aims to be dynamic and flexible in order to respond to these changes to ensure Internal Audit activity remains focussed on the key risks to the Council.



Key Corporate Risks (KCRs) as at January 2023					
1	1	Budget and Financial Resilience - Financial Management - Review of Self-Assessment against the CIPFA Financial Management Code	✓	✓	✓
2=	5	Outcomes and Costs for Children with SEND * (External Assurance – Safety Valve)	* EA		✓
2=	7	ASC Supplier Sustainability and Sufficiency			✓
2=	8	Cyber Security	✓	✓	
5	17	Sufficiency of School Places		✓	
6	12	Health & Social Care Reform			✓
7=	3	Workforce		✓	
7=	4	Uncontrolled Development (Local Plan Update)			✓
7=	15	Inward Migration		✓	
10	16	Public Transport			
11=	2	Corporate Governance	✓	✓	
11=	14	Children's Safeguarding			✓
13=	9	Implementation of Climate Emergency Action Plan	✓		
13=	20	Website replacement (New)			✓
15=	6	Failure to meet statutory duties (Health & Safety)	✓		
15=	19	Information Governance		✓	
17	10	Major Emergency Response (e.g. Pandemic)		✓	
18	18	Elections Act Implementation (Voter ID)			✓
19	13	Adult Safeguarding	✓		

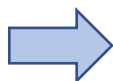
The Internal Audit Plan and Strategy

Resources should be appropriate, sufficient, and effectively deployed to achieve the approved plan.

The Internal Audit Plan will be delivered by the in-house team.

Appendix A(I) sets out the proposed coverage for 2023/24. It should be noted that this plan is flexible and could change in the event of new key risks emerging during the year.

Risk assessment is used to inform the amount of staff resource dedicated to each area and the extent, frequency and depth of testing undertaken, with high risk areas being examined more frequently.



Resources

The Internal Audit and Investigation Plan is based on judgement of the Chief Audit Executive (role fulfilled by the Head of Internal Audit (HoIA)) in order to be able to inform their Annual Opinion on the Council's internal control, governance and risk management framework, a requirement under the PSIAS. It is compiled on the basis of the recruitment to the Senior Auditor post that was frozen during 2022/23 in order to contribute to the council's financial savings for that year. In addition, recruitment to the Apprentice post that has been vacant through the year. Further, recruitment to a new Corporate Investigation post that has been approved by Resources and Leadership Team and this role be appointed on an 'Invest to Save' basis. The assumption is that these posts will be filled part way through the year after a recruitment process.

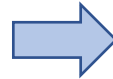
The appointment of an Apprentice will assist in building further resilience within the service, by developing and implementing succession plans that are underpinned by the principle of growing our own skilled professionals through the apprenticeship and graduate trainee route. This approach not only supports the Council's wider objectives but also helps to address difficulties currently faced in recruiting experienced and qualified internal audit staff. Where possible, we will also use a Guest Auditor programme to offer opportunities for skills across the Council to be shared.

Should these posts not be filled, then the Internal Audit and Investigation Plan will need to be reviewed and amended, which will impact on the HoIA's ability to inform their annual opinion on the Council's internal control, governance and risk management framework, a requirement under the PSIAS.

In addition to the WBC Audit and Investigation activity, internal audit work is undertaken for our client councils under S113 Agreements, which generates income for the Council, and the structure agreed by CLT takes account of that requirement.

The Internal Audit Plan Strategy

Performance against completion of the internal annual plan will be measured and reported in Internal Audit Activity reports.



Plan Monitoring

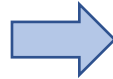
Potential performance indicators are: -

- **Percentage Key Corporate Risks audited**
 - Focus of internal audit activity on key corporate/operational risks of Council
- **Delivery of Internal Audit Plan**
 - % Audits completed to at least draft report stage 90%
- **Compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards**
 - Annual Self-assessment
 - Five Year External independent review of Internal Audit Service against the PSIAS (Quarter 1 / 2 - 2023/24)
- **Client Satisfaction**
 - Audit satisfaction surveys regarding benefits and value of audit service
- **Audit Effectiveness (Making a Difference)**
 - Annual like-for-like comparison of audit opinions over previous 3 years

The Internal Audit Plan Strategy

The Head of Internal and Investigation (fulfils the role of Chief Audit Executive) must deliver an annual internal audit opinion and report that can be used by the organisation to inform its governance statement. The annual internal audit opinion must conclude on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's framework of governance, risk management and control.

Regular periodic updates will be provided to CLT and Audit Committee throughout the year that will culminate in the production of an annual report and Annual Head of Internal Audit Opinion on the council's governance, internal control, and risk management framework.



Reports to Corporate Leadership Team and Audit Committee

A status report on internal audit work will be presented to the CLT and Audit Committee on a regular basis throughout the year. The purpose of these reports is to provide an update on the progress made against the delivery of the 2023/24 Internal Audit and Investigation Plan, the status of audits, i.e. those completed to date, at draft stage or work in progress, with the audit assurance opinions given. The reports will also provide a summary of internal audit performance, the planning and resourcing position.

Annual Assurance Report

A formal annual report to the Audit Committee, presenting the Head of Audit and Investigation (fulfils the role of Chief Audit Executive) opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control, will be published to enable it to be taken into account within the annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit and in preparing the AGS.

The Internal Audit Plan Strategy

The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), as revised in April 2017, define the service and professional standards for public sector internal audit services.

Compliance will be monitored on a regular basis, as part of the review process for individual audits and as part of annual self-assessment review of the internal audit service and for 2023/24, an External review of the Service, as required to be undertaken every five years, in accordance with the PSIAS.



Compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards

The PSIAS, as revised in April 2017, define the service and professional standards for public sector internal audit services.

Key, specific PSIAS provisions include:

PSIAS: 2010 - *“The Chief Audit Executive must establish risk-based plans to determine the priorities of the internal audit activity, consistent with the organisation’s goals.”*

PSIAS: 2450 – *“The Chief Audit Executive must deliver an annual internal audit opinion and report that can be used by the organisation to inform its governance statement. The annual internal audit opinion must conclude on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation’s framework of governance, risk management and control.”*

The Internal Audit Service is designed to conform to the PSIAS. Under the PSIAS there is a requirement for audit services to have an external quality assessment every five years. The last external review was undertaken in 2018, with an ongoing self-assessment exercise being undertaken annually. A further external review of the Service against the PSIAS is planned for Quarter 1/2 of 2023/24.

Details**ASSURANCE ACTIVITY**

Section 1- Corporate Risks		
With reference to the Council's Corporate Risk Register, these audits are intended to provide assurance to management that the expected mitigating actions and controls to manage risks are operating as expected. All key corporate risks are expected to be covered over a two-to-three-year period.		
Audit	Reason for Audit	Outline Scope
Financial Resilience/Compliance with CIPFA Financial Management Code (Follow Up)	Budget & Financial Resilience (Key Corporate Risk 1)	The CIPFA Financial Management Code (FM Code) is designed to support good practice in financial Management and to assist local authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability. The FM Code, therefore, for the first time, sets the standards of financial Management for local authorities. A review of the self-assessment against this Code was undertaken by Internal Audit in 2022/23 financial year. The 2023/24 audit will review progress on implementing the agreed actions. This review will give assurance on the internal controls, Risk Management and governance against the CIPFA Financial Management Code.
Capital Monitoring	Budget & Financial Resilience (Key Corporate Risk 1)	Review of controls and processes in respect of the council's Capital Expenditure arrangements.
Key Financial Systems	Budget & Financial Resilience (Key Corporate Risk 1)	To determine specific audits using risk-based approach to identify specific areas (Link into Financial Systems Assurance Mapping). Potential areas for 2023/24 and reason (reviewing areas of weakness to ensure they have/are being dealt with/ or where management think controls are strong to test the robustness): - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debtors • Creditors • Reconciliation – follow up of 2022/23 Internal Audit, commissioned by Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources and Assets (S151 Officer) • Treasury Management (2022/23 Part I covered Loans; 2023/24 Part II to cover day to day operations)

Audit	Reason for Audit	Outline Scope
Corporate Governance	Corporate Governance (Key Corporate Risk 2) & Peer Review	Provide assurance on the application of the Local Code of Corporate Governance (using new Governance Monitoring Toolkit), reviewing evidence to validate assessment strands. Reviewing areas of strength to confirm that assessment is correct or looking at areas of weakness to provide assurance that they are being addressed. This will complement the AGS work below.
Human Resources	Workforce (Key Corporate Risk 3) and DMT request	<p>Due to the national challenges in recruiting permanent staff with the right levels of skills, competence and experience, there is a risk to the council's ability to deliver its community vision, which could, if not managed, lead to fines and reputational risk. Audit activity will focus on: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer Recruitment – revisit the 2021/22 Internal Audit. • Recruitment and Retention Process and References – review of new procedures. • Service Level Agreements – review of processes and compliance.
Self-Assessment of Council's Arrangements Information Governance and Cyber Security Arrangements (Follow Up)	Information Governance & Cyber Security (Key Corporate Risk Ref 8)	<p>Due to an external cyber-attack, there is a risk of unavailability of key information and/or disclosure of personal sensitive data causing inability to deliver services, increased costs, fines, reputational damage and loss of trust.</p> <p>An audit review of the Self-Assessment of Council's arrangements against the National Audit Office Cyber Security and Information Risk Guidance, National Cyber Security Centre guidance, ISO27001:2013 and good practice was undertaken in 2022/23 and a follow up audit will be undertaken in 2023/24 to confirm whether agreed actions have been implemented as prescribed.</p>
Civil Contingency Act Emergency Planning Preparedness & Crisis Management & Central Government Return	Major Emergency Response (Key Corporate Risk 10) Cross Cutting; DMT Request	Due to an unlikely but high impact major emergency the Council is required to lead a large-scale community response leading to impact on business as usual and requirement to focus on key priorities. The audit will focus on the assessment of preparedness for completing the required Central Government Returns in this respect.
Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children	Inward Migration (Key Corporate Risk 15) and DMT request	Due to the arrival of Ukraine and Hong Kong nationals, refugees from other countries and the now mandatory National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), there is a risk of increasing costs to the Council of provision of effective support, including a significant increase in the cost of statutory accommodation for CARE Leavers as UASCs reach the age of 18. The audit will review systems and controls in light of Home Office directive to all local authorities.

Audit	Reason for Audit	Outline Scope
School Place Planning	Education Provision Mainstream (Key Corporate Risk 17) and DMT request	Due to increased numbers of children moving into the borough, including international arrivals in both primary and secondary phases; peak primary rolls passing into the secondary sector; and too few places for girls (secondary phase), there are risks of (i) breach in statutory place sufficiency duty and (ii) new capital programme requirements. The audit will review arrangements to provide sufficient statutory school and early years places across the borough.
Information Governance	Information Governance (Key Corporate Risk 19)	The audit will review the council's arrangements to reduce risk of disclosure of personal sensitive data, which could result in individual distress, fines, reputational damage and loss of trust and controls to ensure that Subject Access Requests are responded to within statutory timescales, to minimise exposure to litigation. Fines, reputational damage and loss of trust.

Section 2- Key Operational Systems

With reference to the Council's Directorate Risk Registers, these audits are intended to provide assurance to management that the expected mitigating actions and controls to manage risks are operating as expected. All key directorate risks are expected to be covered over an agreed time period.

Audit	Reason for Audit	Outline Scope
Procurement & Commissioning	Resources & Assets - CIPFA Contracts and Commissioning Report recommendations; Organisational Foundations Programme	Undertake a programme of audits to comply with requirements of a CIPFA Report on the Council's Contracts and Commissioning in terms of enhancing the extent and frequency of work in monitoring adherence to the procurement rules. In addition, the audit work will be scoped to complement the Council's Organisational Foundations Programme.
Enforcement and Safety Service (Part II)	Place and Growth – audit deferred in 2022/23	Anti-Social Behaviour Service - review of new service now it has been operational for over a year to assess whether we are meeting the expectations for the new service.

Audit	Reason for Audit	Outline Scope
Community & Infrastructure Levy	Place & Growth – DMT request	Review of Governance and control arrangements.
Public Health	Adults Service and Health – deferred from 2022/23	Review to give management assurances on risk management and control framework e.g., Governance arrangements, Public Health contracts/arrangements, Budgets, Financial procedures, Performance Management (Deferred from 2022/23)
S106 Agreements (Follow Up)	Place & Growth	The audit will be a follow up to review progress in implementing 2022/31 agreed audit actions.
Use of Temporary Accommodation and Bed and Breakfast	Place & Growth – DMT request	The audit will review the use of contractors and spot purchasing to ensure these are being used effectively and economically.

Section 3 - Governance Building Blocks

These reviews cover the key governance elements and are necessary for the formation of the Chief Audit Executive (CAE) and Annual Governance Statement (AGS)

Audit	Reason for Audit	Outline Scope
Risk Management	Governance Building Block; AGS Improvement Plan Ref. 21.1	Follow up of actions from Peer Review in respect of Risk Management. To assess how well embedded Risk Management is across the organisation and how that can be driven forward.

Audit	Reason for Audit	Outline Scope
Governance of Companies	Governance Building Block	To review the governance systems in place for the four trading companies (LATCOs) that WBC wholly owns and in particular, to assess whether they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are in line with CIPFA guidance; • minimise the risks identified from lessons learned reports by CIPFA and other relevant organisations.
Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2022/23	Governance Building Block	To support and advise management on the completion of the 2022/23 AGS and provide assurance on the follow-up actions taken in respect of the 2021/22 AGS.

Section 4 - Fraud and Investigation

Activity	Outline Scope
National Fraud Initiative Data Matching	Management of Council's provision of data and investigation of matches.
Other Fraud Activities	To include, for example monitoring the Whistleblowing Hotline, monitoring of fraud and WB email addresses, proactive investigations, Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Fraud Policies Refresh, provision of fraud statistics for relevant external and internal bodies e.g., Transparency Statistics, Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office statistics; Police Information and Data Request, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Monitoring and review.

Section 5 - Auditor Judgement and Servicing the Business	
Activity	Outline Scope
Grant Certification	Mandatory certification of grants received from central government e.g., Troubled Families Grants, Disabled Facilities Grants
Effectiveness of System of Internal Audit (Public Sector Internal Audit Standards	Ongoing self-assessment against Public Sector Internal Audit Standards in preparation for External review of compliance for new Internal Audit Service in Q1 2023/24 (requirement of PSIAS every 5 years)
Advice on demand	Requests for ad-hoc advice on control, risk management and governance issues
Contingency	Member/Management requests
Follow up countermeasures/ testing	Very high/High priority only

Section 6 – Advisory Activity	
Activity	Outline Scope
Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) Briefings	Periodic briefings for CLT on governance internal control, risk management, for example, lessons learnt from review of recent financial failures in local government
Statutory Officer Group	Quarterly Corporate Governance Toolkit updates



INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER

2023/24 (With Tracked Changes)

1. Introduction

This Charter describes for the Council the purpose, authority and responsibilities of the Internal Audit function in accordance with the UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

The PSIAS require that the Charter must be reviewed periodically and presented to “senior management” and “the board” for approval. For the purposes of this charter “senior management” will be Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and the board will be the Audit Committee.

The Charter will be reviewed annually and approved by CLT and the Audit Committee. The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation (fulfils the role of Chief Audit Executive) is responsible for applying this Charter and keeping it up to date.

2. Internal Audit Purpose

The mission of Internal Audit is to enhance and protect organisational value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight.

Internal Audit is defined in the PSIAS as “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.”

Internal Audit supports the whole Council to deliver economic, efficient, effective and equality services and achieve the Council’s vision, priorities and values.

3. Statutory Requirement

Internal Audit is a statutory service in the context of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended in 2020 in respect of the Coronavirus Act requirements). Under these Regulations, the “Council” ‘must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control which:

- (a) facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives;
- (b) ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and
- (c) includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.

The Council ‘must, each financial year (a) conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control’ and ‘(b) prepare an annual governance statement.’

In addition, the Council ‘must 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’, described below.

This statutory role is recognised and endorsed within the Council’s Financial Regulations. In addition, the Council's S151 Officer has a statutory duty under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to establish a clear framework for the proper administration of the authority's financial affairs. To perform that duty the Section 151 Officer relies, amongst other things, upon the work of Internal Audit in reviewing the operation of systems of internal control and financial management.

4. Internal Audit Responsibilities and Scope

Annually, the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation is required to provide to the Audit Committee an overall opinion on the Council’s internal control environment, risk management arrangements and governance framework to support the Annual Governance Statement.

Internal Audit is not responsible for control systems. Responsibility for effective internal control and risk management rests with the management of the Council.

Internal Audit activity must be free from interference in determining the scope of activity, performing work and communicating results.

Internal Audit will have right of access to all records, assets, personnel and premises and authority to obtain such information and explanations as it considers necessary to fulfil its responsibilities.

The scope of Internal Audit includes the entire control environment and therefore all of the Council's operations, resources, services and responsibilities in relation to other bodies. In order to identify audit coverage, activities are prioritised based on risk, using a combination of Internal Audit and management risk assessment (as set out within Council risk registers). Consultation also takes place with key stakeholders and horizon scanning is undertaken to ensure that audit activity is proactive and future focussed.

Internal audit activity will include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the organisation's risk management arrangements and risk exposures relating to:

- Achievement of the organisation's strategic objectives;
- Reliability and integrity of financial and operational information;
- Efficiency and effectiveness of operations and activities;
- Safeguarding of assets; and
- Compliance with laws, regulations, policies, procedures and contracts.

The Internal Audit and Investigation Service undertakes audit reviews for external clients and where this happens, the clients internal audit governance policies, procedures and processes are followed as stipulated in the S113 agreements.

5. Independence

The Internal Audit and Investigation Service sits within the Resources and Assets Directorate under Governance Services. The Service is managed by the Head of Internal Audit and Investigations who reports to the Assistant Director, Governance. The Assistant Director of Governance reports to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources and Assets (S151 Officer).

Internal Audit will remain sufficiently independent of the activities that it audits to enable auditors to perform their duties in a way that allows them to make impartial and effective professional judgements and identify concerns. Internal auditors should have no operational responsibilities.

Internal Audit is involved in the determination of its priorities in consultation with those charged with governance. The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation has direct access to, and freedom to report in their own name and without fear or favour to, all officers and Members and particularly those charged with governance. This independence is further safeguarded by ensuring that the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation's formal appraisal/performance review is not inappropriately influenced by those subject to audit. This is achieved by ensuring that both the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Audit Committee have the opportunity to contribute to this performance review.

All Internal Audit staff are required to make an annual declaration of interest to ensure that objectivity is not impaired and that any potential conflicts of interest are appropriately managed.

Where the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation undertakes non audit duties, arrangements will be put in place to ensure the independence of the Internal Audit function, for example, reporting directly to the Assistant Director, Governance. Currently, the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation does not have any non-audit duties.

Where internal auditors undertake non-audit activities the Head of Internal Audit and Investigations will ensure that independence is maintained. This will entail internal auditors not undertaking internal audit reviews in areas where they have responsibility for or undertake non-audit activities.

6. Reporting Lines

Regardless of line management arrangements, the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation has free and unfettered access to report to the S151 Officer; the Monitoring Officer; the Chief Executive; the Chair of the Audit Committee; the Leader of the Council and the Council's External Auditor.

The responsibility of the board and also the role of the statutory officers (such as the CFO, the monitoring officer and the head of paid service) will be established with regards to internal audit.

The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation will have regular 1-2-1 meetings with the Chair of the Audit Committee and Chief Executive prior to each Audit Committee meeting and where required to discuss audit and investigation issues.

The Audit Committee will receive reports on a periodic basis – as agreed with the Chair of the Audit Committee – on the results of audit activity and details of Internal Audit performance, including progress on delivering the audit plan.

7. Fraud & Corruption

Managing the risk of fraud and corruption is the responsibility of management. Internal Audit will, however, be alert in all its work to risks and exposures that could allow fraud or corruption and will investigate allegations of fraud and corruption in line with the Council's Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy.

The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation should be informed of all suspected or detected fraud, corruption or irregularity in order to consider the adequacy of the relevant controls and evaluate the implication for their opinion on the control environment.

Internal Audit will promote an anti-fraud and anti-corruption culture within the Council to aid the prevention and detection of fraud.

8. Consultancy Work

Internal Audit may also provide consultancy services, generally advisory in nature, at the request of the organisation. In such circumstances, appropriate arrangements will be put in place to safeguard the independence of Internal Audit and, where this work is not already included within the approved audit plan and may affect the level of assurance work undertaken, this will be reported to the Audit Committee.

9. Resources

The work of Internal Audit is driven by the annual Internal Audit Plan, which is approved each year by the Audit Committee. The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation is responsible for ensuring that Internal Audit resources are sufficient to meet its responsibilities and achieve its objectives.

Internal Audit must be appropriately staffed in terms of numbers, grades, qualifications and experience, having regard to its objectives and to professional standards. Internal Auditors need to be properly trained to fulfil their responsibilities and should maintain their professional competence through an appropriate ongoing development programme.

The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation is responsible for appointing Internal Audit staff and will ensure that appointments are made in order to achieve the appropriate mix of qualifications, experience and audit skills. The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation may engage the use of external resources where it is considered appropriate, including the use of specialist providers.

10. Due Professional Care

The work of Internal Audit will be performed with due professional care and in accordance with the UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2017 (PSIAS), the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015), as amended 2020 and with any other relevant statutory obligations and regulations.

In carrying out their work, Internal Auditors must exercise due professional care by considering:

- The extent of work needed to achieve the required objectives;

- The relative complexity, materiality or significance of matters to which assurance procedures should be applied;
- The adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes;
- The probability of significant errors, fraud or non-compliance; and
- The cost of assurance in proportion to the potential benefits.

Internal Auditors will also have due regard to the Seven Principles of Public Life – Selflessness; Integrity, Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Honesty; and Leadership.

11. Quality Assurance

The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation will control the work of Internal Audit at each level of operation to ensure that a continuously effective level of performance – compliant with the PSIAS, is maintained.

A Quality Assurance Improvement Programme (QAIP) is in place which is designed to provide reasonable assurance to its key stakeholders that Internal Audit:

- Performs its work in accordance with its Charter;
- Operates in an effective and efficient manner; and,
- Is adding value and continually improving the service that it provides.

The QAIP requires an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of Internal Audit to be conducted. Instances of non-conformance with the PSIAS, including the impact of any such non-conformance, must be disclosed to the Audit Committee. Any significant deviations must be considered for inclusion in the Council’s Annual Governance Statement.

March 2023



INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER 2023/24

1. Introduction

This Charter describes for the Council the purpose, authority and responsibilities of the Internal Audit function in accordance with the UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

The PSIAS require that the Charter must be reviewed periodically and presented to “senior management” and “the board” for approval. For the purposes of this charter “senior management” will be Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and the board will be the Audit Committee.

The Charter will be reviewed annually and approved by CLT and the Audit Committee. The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation (fulfils the role of Chief Audit Executive) is responsible for applying this Charter and keeping it up to date.

2. Internal Audit Purpose

The mission of Internal Audit is to enhance and protect organisational value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight.

Internal Audit is defined in the PSIAS as “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.”

Internal Audit supports the whole Council to deliver economic, efficient, effective and equality services and achieve the Council’s vision, priorities and values.

3. Statutory Requirement

Internal Audit is a statutory service in the context of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended in 2020 in respect of the Coronavirus Act requirements). Under these Regulations, the “Council” ‘must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control which:

- (a) facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives;
- (b) ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and
- (c) includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.

The Council ‘must, each financial year (a) conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control’ and ‘(b) prepare an annual governance statement.’

In addition, the Council ‘must 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’, described below.

This statutory role is recognised and endorsed within the Council’s Financial Regulations. In addition, the Council's S151 Officer has a statutory duty under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to establish a clear framework for the proper administration of the authority's financial affairs. To perform that duty the Section 151 Officer relies, amongst other things, upon the work of Internal Audit in reviewing the operation of systems of internal control and financial management.

4. Internal Audit Responsibilities and Scope

Annually, the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation is required to provide to the Audit Committee an overall opinion on the Council’s internal control environment, risk management arrangements and governance framework to support the Annual Governance Statement.

Internal Audit is not responsible for control systems. Responsibility for effective internal control and risk management rests with the management of the Council.

Internal Audit activity must be free from interference in determining the scope of activity, performing work and communicating results.

Internal Audit will have right of access to all records, assets, personnel and premises and authority to obtain such information and explanations as it considers necessary to fulfil its responsibilities.

The scope of Internal Audit includes the entire control environment and therefore all of the Council's operations, resources, services and responsibilities in relation to other bodies. In order to identify audit coverage, activities are prioritised based on risk, using a combination of Internal Audit and management risk assessment (as set out within Council risk registers). Consultation also takes place with key stakeholders and horizon scanning is undertaken to ensure that audit activity is proactive and future focussed.

Internal audit activity will include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the organisation's risk management arrangements and risk exposures relating to:

- Achievement of the organisation's strategic objectives;
- Reliability and integrity of financial and operational information;
- Efficiency and effectiveness of operations and activities;
- Safeguarding of assets; and
- Compliance with laws, regulations, policies, procedures and contracts.

The Internal Audit and Investigation Service undertakes audit reviews for external clients and where this happens, the clients internal audit governance policies, procedures and processes are followed as stipulated in the S113 agreements.

5. Independence

The Internal Audit and Investigation Service sits within the Resources and Assets Directorate under Governance Services. The Service is managed by the Head of Internal Audit and Investigations who reports to the Assistant Director, Governance. The Assistant Director of Governance reports to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources and Assets (S151 Officer).

Internal Audit will remain sufficiently independent of the activities that it audits to enable auditors to perform their duties in a way that allows them to make impartial and effective professional judgements and identify concerns. Internal auditors should have no operational responsibilities.

Internal Audit is involved in the determination of its priorities in consultation with those charged with governance. The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation has direct access to, and freedom to report in their own name and without fear or favour to, all officers and Members and particularly those charged with governance. This independence is further safeguarded by ensuring that the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation's formal appraisal/performance review is not inappropriately influenced by those subject to audit. This is achieved by ensuring that both the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Audit Committee have the opportunity to contribute to this performance review.

All Internal Audit staff are required to make an annual declaration of interest to ensure that objectivity is not impaired and that any potential conflicts of interest are appropriately managed.

Where the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation undertakes non audit duties, arrangements will be put in place to ensure the independence of the Internal Audit function, for example, reporting directly to the Assistant Director, Governance. Currently, the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation does not have any non-audit duties.

Where internal auditors undertake non-audit activities the Head of Internal Audit and Investigations will ensure that independence is maintained. This will entail internal auditors not undertaking internal audit reviews in areas where they have responsibility for or undertake non-audit activities.

6. Reporting Lines

Regardless of line management arrangements, the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation has free and unfettered access to report to the S151 Officer; the Monitoring Officer; the Chief Executive; the Chair of the Audit Committee; the Leader of the Council and the Council's External Auditor.

The responsibility of the board and also the role of the statutory officers (such as the CFO, the monitoring officer and the head of paid service) will be established with regards to internal audit.

The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation will have regular 1-2-1 meetings with the Chair of the Audit Committee and Chief Executive prior to each Audit Committee meeting and where required to discuss audit and investigation issues.

The Audit Committee will receive reports on a periodic basis – as agreed with the Chair of the Audit Committee – on the results of audit activity and details of Internal Audit performance, including progress on delivering the audit plan.

7. Fraud & Corruption

Managing the risk of fraud and corruption is the responsibility of management. Internal Audit will, however, be alert in all its work to risks and exposures that could allow fraud or corruption and will investigate allegations of fraud and corruption in line with the Council's Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy.

The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation should be informed of all suspected or detected fraud, corruption or irregularity in order to consider the adequacy of the relevant controls and evaluate the implication for their opinion on the control environment.

Internal Audit will promote an anti-fraud and anti-corruption culture within the Council to aid the prevention and detection of fraud.

8. Consultancy Work

Internal Audit may also provide consultancy services, generally advisory in nature, at the request of the organisation. In such circumstances, appropriate arrangements will be put in place to safeguard the independence of Internal Audit and, where this work is not already included within the approved audit plan and may affect the level of assurance work undertaken, this will be reported to the Audit Committee.

9. Resources

The work of Internal Audit is driven by the annual Internal Audit Plan, which is approved each year by the Audit Committee. The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation is responsible for ensuring that Internal Audit resources are sufficient to meet its responsibilities and achieve its objectives.

Internal Audit must be appropriately staffed in terms of numbers, grades, qualifications and experience, having regard to its objectives and to professional standards. Internal Auditors need to be properly trained to fulfil their responsibilities and should maintain their professional competence through an appropriate ongoing development programme.

The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation is responsible for appointing Internal Audit staff and will ensure that appointments are made in order to achieve the appropriate mix of qualifications, experience and audit skills. The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation may engage the use of external resources where it is considered appropriate, including the use of specialist providers.

10. Due Professional Care

The work of Internal Audit will be performed with due professional care and in accordance with the UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2017 (PSIAS), the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015), as amended 2020 and with any other relevant statutory obligations and regulations.

In carrying out their work, Internal Auditors must exercise due professional care by considering:

- The extent of work needed to achieve the required objectives;

- The relative complexity, materiality or significance of matters to which assurance procedures should be applied;
- The adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes;
- The probability of significant errors, fraud or non-compliance; and
- The cost of assurance in proportion to the potential benefits.

Internal Auditors will also have due regard to the Seven Principles of Public Life – Selflessness; Integrity, Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Honesty; and Leadership.

11. Quality Assurance

The Head of Internal Audit and Investigation will control the work of Internal Audit at each level of operation to ensure that a continuously effective level of performance – compliant with the PSIAS, is maintained.

A Quality Assurance Improvement Programme (QAIP) is in place which is designed to provide reasonable assurance to its key stakeholders that Internal Audit:

- Performs its work in accordance with its Charter;
- Operates in an effective and efficient manner; and,
- Is adding value and continually improving the service that it provides.

The QAIP requires an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of Internal Audit to be conducted. Instances of non-conformance with the PSIAS, including the impact of any such non-conformance, must be disclosed to the Audit Committee. Any significant deviations must be considered for inclusion in the Council’s Annual Governance Statement.

March 2023

TITLE	CIPFA Management Code
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Audit Committee on 13, March 2023
WARD	None Specific;
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

<p>OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY To ensure good practice in financial management that support's financial sustainability for the organisation.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION</p> <p>The Committee is asked to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) note the findings of the review and associated internal audit report, 2) note and comment on the actions identified to further improve the approach going forward.
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>The CIPFA Financial Management Code (CIPFA FM Code) is a discretionary tool designed to support good practice in financial management and to assist local authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability. The code sets a standard of financial management for local authorities.</p> <p>The Code is based on a series of principles supported by specific standards and statements of practice to provide the strong foundation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financially manage the short, medium and long-term finances; • Manage financial resilience to meet foreseen demands on services; and • Financially manage unexpected shocks in financial circumstances. <p>In reviewing itself against the code each local authority should demonstrate that the requirements of the Code are being satisfied. Demonstrating this compliance with the CIPFA FM Code is a collective responsibility of elected members, the Chief Finance Officer and professional colleagues in the leadership team.</p> <p>DETAIL</p> <p>The CIPFA FM Code applies a principle-based approach. It does not prescribe the financial management processes that local authorities should adopt. Instead, the Code requires that a local authority demonstrate that its processes satisfy the principles of good financial management for an authority of its size, responsibilities and circumstances. Good financial management is proportionate to the risks to the authority's financial sustainability posed by the twin pressures of scarce resources and the rising demands on services.</p>

The principles focus on an approach which will assist in determining whether, in applying standards of financial management, an authority is financially sustainable:

- Organisational leadership - demonstrating a clear strategic direction based on a vision in which financial management is embedded into culture
- Accountability - based on medium-term financial planning which drives the annual budget process supported by effective risk management, quality supporting data and whole life costs
- Financial management is undertaken with transparency at its core using consistent, meaningful and understandable data, reported frequently with evidence of periodic officer action and elected member decision making
- Adherence to professional standards is promoted by the leadership team and is evidenced.
- Sources of assurance are recognised as an effective tool mainstreamed into financial management and includes political scrutiny and the results of both external audit, internal audit and inspection.
- The long-term sustainability of local services is at the heart of all financial management process and is evidenced by prudent use of public resources.

Officers have undertaken a thorough review of current processes and practices against the standards set in the code and have identified a number of opportunities to improve current processes and practices. In order to validate findings, an independent internal audit review has then been undertaken against the initial officer assessment and again further findings have been added to the list of opportunities. A further internal audit review is planned for 2023/24 to check progress in developing those opportunities identified through the process.

Appendix A shows the councils current assessment against each of the standards. It provides a RAG rating for each area and identifies opportunity for improvement.

Appendix B presents the internal audit report made against the initial assessment, showing any high and medium areas of concern and associated actions to address those risks. (Those actions have been included in Appendix A to reflect the overall approach)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

There are no direct additional financial costs from this report. However, the appropriate financial management skills, governance and processes are critical to the organisations overall financial sustainability and decision making

Cross-Council Implications

The financial management and overall financial sustainability of the organisation are critical across all services

Public Sector Equality Duty

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report

Climate Emergency – This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030

There are no direct climate emergency implications from this report

List of Background Papers

none

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Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement	
Section 1 – The Responsibilities of the Chief Finance Officer and Leadership Team				
<p style="text-align: center;">299</p> <p>A</p>	<p>The leadership team is able to demonstrate that the services provided by the authority provide value for money</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the authority have a clear and consistent understanding of what value for money means to it and to its leadership team? Does the authority have suitable mechanisms in place to promote value for money at a corporate level and at the level of individual services? Is the authority able to demonstrate the action that it has taken to promote value for money and what it has achieved? 	<p>Service delivery and associated resourcing is informed by our Corporate Vision and Council Plan which sets out our local priorities and how we will deliver against them. This plan is based on an assessment of local need and is approved by officer and political leadership teams. Further detail is then explained in local service plans.</p> <p>The MTFs delivers a robust financial plan through a rigorous budget setting process which includes extensive member engagement and challenge through Overview & Scrutiny Cttee. Before all growth, savings, special items and substantial/capital schemes are agreed they are subject to a full business case and appraisal of alternative options (including “do nothing”).</p> <p>Value for money and efficiency approaches/option is further promoted through regular items at CLT/ECLT & Executive briefings, staff forums, Big Chat, wider corporate communications and Council wide commercial workshops.</p> <p>Benchmarking techniques are one of a number of tools used to measure efficiency of services and to identify opportunities for improvement, by comparing key performance measures across services internally or with other authorities. This is an area being further developed alongside other external value measures.</p> <p>The Council's performance framework includes regular monitoring of key projects and our overall budget position to ensure that the key aims of the council are progressed to budget, timescales, and delivering priority outcomes. These are reported to the Corporate Management Team and through Executive</p> <p>The council has a strong record of identifying and delivering financial savings through efficiency, income maximisation and alternative service delivery models. The current efficiency programme (Organisational Foundations) has a strong governance and reporting framework into the Corporate Leadership team and aligned to budget setting.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None <p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop use of benchmarking and other external value measures (Oct 2023)

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement	
	<p>The council's constitution explains how the Council operates and makes decisions efficiently and effectively, clarifying key officer roles, and responsibilities.</p> <p>The MTFP has specific section that details VFM arrangements and there is a Commercial strategy and Procurement strategy agreed by Executive/Council.</p> <p>External auditors provide annual assurance that Value for Money is achieved, through their external VFM opinion.</p> <p>The Council abides by the Transparency Regulations 2015 and provides detailed information on its website in order for external interested parties to undertake their own views as to our efficiency and effectiveness and VFM.</p> <p>All decisions include an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure we do not deliberately or inadvertently discriminate against certain groups or individuals.</p> <p>The organisation has recently implemented a Strategic Procurement and Commissioning board (Officer led) to further ensure improved value for money and cost savings through its procurement, commissioning and contract management processes. This Board is supported through the Contract Management Support, Learning & Working Group, which is a Council wide forum which upskills services & ensure best practice is adopted.</p>			
<p>B</p>	<p>The authority complies with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the authority's CFO a key member of the leadership team, involved in, and able to bring influence to bear 	<p>The Chief Finance Officer (the Deputy Chief Executive) is a key member of the Corporate Leadership Team, chairs CLT in the absence of the CEO, chairs and sponsors a numerous Council Wide Programmes including OFP, Strategic Procurement Board, Corporate Transport. He is actively leads in shaping and delivering the Council's Corporate Business Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as well as ensuring there are sufficient resources to deliver the Strategies. All significant investment decisions are subject to scrutiny by the CFO and is challenged where the project is not aligned to the strategic vision of the council.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Finance Team have recently seen investment to ensure the appropriate resources to best support the organisation. A program of work to improve budget managers skills around financial management and to further understand their roles and accountability is underway (Sept 2023)

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement
<p>on, all material business decisions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the CFO lead and champion the promotion and delivery of good financial management across the authority? Is the CFO suitably qualified and experienced? Is the finance team suitably resourced and fit for purpose? 	<p>The CFO is ACCA qualified with over 30 years experience in local government finance and over 15 years as Section 151. He chairs the Berkshire Treasurers group and is a member of SUM, SMT, SOLACE. As well as significant experience of local government finance and he has a longstanding understanding of the local Political and financial position of the Borough.</p> <p>He is supported by an experienced Deputy 151 Officer, who as well as being CIPFA qualified has over 30 years local government experience, working to Assistant Chief Executive Level and across a number of London Boroughs, Unitary, County and District Councils.</p> <p>The CFO is supported by a highly skilled team which include qualified accountants (CCAB/CIMA) and technician qualified (AAT) accountants. All qualified officers undertake continuing professional development as required by their accounting bodies.</p> <p>All finance staff are encouraged to attend technical training.</p> <p>The CFO sponsors regular budget monitoring reports, reviewed by CLT and the Councils Political leadership, to ensure the financial position of the council is understood and managed as a priority.</p> <p>Arrangements are in place for specialist financial advice to assist the finance team in meeting their statutory requirements (technical accounting, treasury management, financial management & planning and taxation).</p> <p>The Governance and the Procurement and Commissioning functions are embedded into the Resources and Assets Dept, led by the CFO, to further ensure alignment with financial governance and good practice.</p>		<p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to review the effectiveness of training plans and improvements to career planning (Sept 2023) We will introduce an approach to ensure records of qualification and continual professional development are held centrally (July 2023)
Section 2 – Governance and Financial Management Style			
<p>C The leadership team demonstrates in its actions and behaviours responsibility for governance and internal control</p> <p>Key questions:</p>	<p>The leadership team champion the Nolan Principles of Selflessness, Integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.</p> <p>The Council has in place a constitution that sets out how it operates, how decisions are made and how the Council ensures that its activities are appropriate, transparent and accountable to local people.</p>	Green	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement
<p style="text-align: right; margin-right: 10px;">302</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the leadership team espouse the Nolan principles? • Does the authority have in place a clear framework for governance and internal control? • Has the leadership put in place effective arrangements for assurance, internal audit and internal accountability? • Does the leadership team espouse high standards of governance and internal control? • Does the leadership team nurture a culture of effective governance and robust internal control across the authority? 	<p>The Council has in place a formal governance structure that is appropriate to the way in which it operates. This includes relevant committees and reporting lines, terms of references and conduct, including provision for scrutiny of decisions taken. The Council has in place a formal scheme of delegation, which sets out which individuals or committees are entitled to make which decisions.</p> <p>Our committees, member working groups and other elements of our governance structure have formal, agreed terms of reference, setting out the scope of their responsibilities.</p> <p>The Council has formal codes of conduct for officers and members. The Council maintains an up-to-date register of interests for all senior officers and members.</p> <p>There are effective arrangements for assurance, internal audit and internal accountability. Any areas of concern raised through those arrangements are managed robustly and transparently. Both the internal and external auditor attend and provide regular reports and updates to the Standards and Audit Committee. All recommendations are acted upon promptly.</p> <p>Internal Audit works to an agreed plan, which is based on a robust analysis of the Council’s governance, risk management and internal control arrangements, the environment within which the Council operates and the risks and challenges that it faces.</p> <p>The Council adopts a robust approach to the identification, assessment and management of risks to the achievement of its objectives and to the delivery of services. The Corporate Risk Register is owned by CLT with responsibility for the management of individual risks allocated clearly across the organisation.</p> <p>A strong Statutory Officers Group (CFO,CEX,MO) is in place to further monitor and support arrangements.</p> <p>The council has adopted the Local Code of Corp Governance and has a number of Governance policies based on best practice signed up to by CLT and the Executive.</p>		<p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the financial regulations is underway to further clarify and reinforce the roles of officers across the organisation with regard to financial management and governance. (Aug 2023) • Improvements to the approach for the assurance process through the Annual Governance process will be reviewed (Mar 23)

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement
<p>D</p> <p>The authority applies the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the authority sought to apply the principles, behaviour and actions set out in the framework to its own governance arrangements? • Does the authority have in place a suitable local code of governance? • Does the authority have a robust assurance process to support its AGS? 	<p>The council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS) sets out the principles of 'delivering good governance' and sets out how we have demonstrated them for the year.</p> <p>The AGS is reviewed and challenged by the audit committee. The audit committee is a key component of our corporate governance as it provides an independent and high-level focus on the arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.</p> <p>A local Code of Corporate Governance is in place based on the CIPFA/SOLACE framework. THE AGS includes a compliance assessment against the Code.</p> <p>The audit committee now includes an independent member and its effectiveness is reviewed each year and reported to Council.</p> <p>The authority has a robust process in place for the leadership team to provide assurance to support the AGS.</p> <p>The Head of Internal Audit works proactively with the audit committee to review 'lessons learned' from other LA's to review our own process of governance and assurance.</p> <p>Our Internal Audit Team assess their compliance against the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. An External Quality Assessment is planned for 2023. The Head of Internal Audit has completed a self-assessment against the CIPFA role requirements.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
<p>E</p> <p>The financial management style of the authority supports financial sustainability</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the authority have in place an effective framework of financial accountability? 	<p>The Council has an effective framework of financial accountability. Our Financial Regulations and procedures are part of the constitution and set out financial decision requirements.</p> <p>Financial Procedures set out officer responsibilities. Schemes of Authorisation set out delegation of financial responsibility. Appropriate authorisations are built into our systems and processes. The control environment is reviewed regularly by Internal Audit.</p> <p>The finance team provide support and training to officers with delegated financial responsibility and e-learning is also available to support</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst there are good communication and information sharing arrangements in place across Berkshire CFO's, steps are being taken to widen networks across Financial services (July 2023)

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement
<p>304</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the authority committed to continuous improvement in terms of the economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity of its services? • Does the authority’s finance team have appropriate input into the development of strategic and operational plans? • Do managers across the authority possess sufficient financial literacy to deliver services cost-effectively and to be held accountable for doing so? • Has the authority sought an external view on its financial style, for example through a process of peer review? • Do individuals with governance and financial management responsibilities have suitable delegated powers and appropriate skills and training to fulfil these responsibilities? 	<p>financial literacy. All budget codes have clear ownership and accountability which is reflected in our reporting.</p> <p>Regular budget monitoring reports are provided to the council's leadership team and members and financial sustainability and emerging risks are commented upon as part of this reporting.</p> <p>The finance team are aligned to specific service areas, to ensure service knowledge is obtained to support service developments and continuous improvement.</p> <p>We manage our finance function through a series of devolved budget managers. These managers understand they are responsible for delivering services cost effectively and are held accountable for doing so. Finance staff provide support and challenge to these managers by interpreting and explaining performance as well as advising and supporting on key business decisions.</p> <p>Financial sustainability is a key fundamental of the MTFS, which is refreshed annually (and monitored monthly). The MTFS includes three year revenue and capital programmes. This includes realistic estimates of funding available and budget growth required over the medium term and appropriate levels of contingencies and reserves required based on an assessment of risks it faces.</p> <p>The Council recognises that effective financial planning, option appraisal, risk management and governance processes are essential in achieving a prudent approach to capital expenditure, investment and debt. Therefore, all investment decisions (treasury and non-treasury) are taken in light of the Council’s Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy all off which are prepared jointly with the Council’s senior officers.</p> <p>We have an effective framework of financial accountability set out in our Financial Procedures that is understood clearly and applied throughout the organisation, from the leadership team through to front line service managers. The MTFP also details the “Budget Manager Protocol” and there is a number of established processes and practices including effective budget monitoring process, extensive use of the Overview & Scrutiny Cttee.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more formal approach to financial training will be put in place for all budget managers • Job descriptions will be reviewed to ensure they include more specific budget responsibilities and value for money responsibilities

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement	
	<p>There is an ongoing programme of training in Finance and specific areas such as Procurement and Commercialisation.</p> <p>Financial management is embedded into our improvement and efficiency programmes including customer excellence, innovation, improvement and commercialisation.</p> <p>The Council employs financial consultants where prudent to do so, including in respect of HRA and treasury management, to help it ensure it meets all its statutory obligations and to help assess future funding options. As well as utilising an internal corporate change team to support continuous improvement the council also utilises wider external support where required for corporate programmes or specific service focused approaches.</p> <p>The external auditor reviews the financial statements and gives an opinion on the financial sustainability of the Council.</p> <p>An LGA Peer Review was undertaken in November 2021 that included an assessment of financial arrangements. There is currently an improvement plan in place to support recommendations from that work and a recent review of progress has been very complimentary about the work undertaken to date.</p>			
Section 3 – Medium to Long Term Financial Management				
<p>F</p>	<p>The authority has carried out a credible and transparent financial resilience assessment</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the authority undertaken a financial resilience assessment? • Has the assessment tested the resilience of the authority’s financial plans to 	<p>A detailed and well-established MTFS process ensures the early identification of issues including the long term sustainability of funding. The MTFS includes prudent modelling of estimates of income and funding sources, local government funding, service drivers and growth, risks and contingencies. The MTFS is contributed to and agreed by SLT, has extensive consultation through Overview & Scrutiny Cttee before approval by the Council. The MTFS is a three year forward looking plan covering the revenue and capital programmes and includes a number of strategies mentioned earlier in this assessment, as recommended by the FM Code.</p> <p>The annual CFO letter further and more specifically details the risks identified, mitigations and the overall strategic financial position.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will consider further processes and measures can be put in place to monitor the overall financial resilience of the org (Oct 23)

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement
<p>a broad range of alternative scenarios?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the authority taken appropriate action to address any risks identified as part of the assessment? 	<p>The Corporate Risk register identifies strategic financial risks and is monitored alongside of the Councils ongoing financial management arrangements, where Finance Business Partners inform and understand risks.</p> <p>CIPFA Financial Resilience Index 2021 puts Wokingham at the lower end of the risk matrix for Financial Stress. This measure alongside other such as the Grant Thornton Resilience data is kept under close monitor as part of our overall management process</p> <p>The external auditor reviews the financial statements and gives an opinion on the financial sustainability of the Council.</p> <p>The council has a robust risk management approach which includes financial issues and impacts; which is reported through its Corporate Leadership Team, Executive, and Audit Committee.</p> <p>Investments and efficiency programs are initially taken through detailed business case approval processes and then are supported with regular monitoring and reporting governance.</p>	Green	
<p>G The authority understands its prospects for financial sustainability in the longer term and has reported this clearly to members</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the authority have a sufficiently robust understanding of the risks to its financial sustainability? Does the authority have a strategic plan and long-term financial strategy that adequately address these risks? 	<p>The Council produces a 3-year MTFS, 5 year capital programme and a 4 year Housing Strategy incorporating revenue and capital models using a range of assumptions for economic factors and service related factors.</p> <p>The Council retains appropriate reserve balances, general fund and earmarked funds (e.g. insurance reserves) to manage risks over the medium term. Reserve balances are agreed as part of the MTFS and are integral to ensuring we have the resources we need.</p> <p>The current high levels of uncertainty around future funding for local government, and some legacy impacts of COVID-19, make producing a meaningful long term plan very challenging. This risk to financial planning is clearly set out in the MTFS, CFO letter and has been communicated to the Leadership Team and Members.</p> <p>The Council has a Corporate Business Plan that sets out its aim and vision for the future. The three year MTFS which is updated annually supports the Business Plan and sets out the medium term financial position</p>		Green

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the authority sought to understand the impact on its future financial sustainability of the strategic, operational and financial challenges that it might face (e.g. using a technique such as scenario planning)? Has the authority reported effectively to the leadership team and to members its prospects for long-term financial sustainability, the associated risks and the impact of these for short and medium-term decision making? 	<p>of the authority, including various strategies and policies that explain how risks are managed over the medium/ longer term.</p> <p>As an example of the approaches engaged, the council has utilised scenario planning, following the peer review, to identify its Organisational Foundations Programme and is developing a long-term forecast for the DSG as part of an approach to utilise the safety valve programme.</p>		
<p>H</p> <p>The authority complies with the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the authority prepared a suitable capital strategy? Has the authority set prudential indicators in line with the Prudential Code? Does the authority have in place suitable mechanisms for monitoring its performance against the prudential indicators that it has set? 	<p>The Council complies with the CIPFA Prudential Code. The CIPFA Prudential Code requires councils to ensure that capital spending plans are affordable, sustainable and prudent.</p> <p>Our capital strategy is approved with our budget each year and supports a ten year rolling capital programme. The strategy sets out the key principles and objectives of our capital spending to support decision making and ensure the programme is affordable over the longer term.</p> <p>In line with the code, the Council sets Prudential Indicators and has monitoring procedures to ensure that the authority stays within authorised limits.</p> <p>Treasury Management performance (including prudential indicators) is reported 6 monthly to the Audit Committee.</p>	Green	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None <p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steps are in place to further align the Asset strategy/plan to the capital programme and longer-term finance planning. Ensuring need is aligned to financial sustainability and that deliverables align to future revenue budgets

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement	
	<p>The Council recognises that effective financial planning, option appraisal, risk management and governance processes are essential in achieving a prudent approach to capital expenditure, investment and debt. All investment decisions are therefore taken with detailed business cases and in light of the Council’s Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy</p> <p>Embedded in the councils overall financial management approach is a regular capital programme monitoring process, which is reported up through CLT and Executive. Any variances are detailed and required mitigations reported and agreed.</p> <p>The Council also has a 4-year Housing Strategy which outlines the key priorities, required outcomes and the key activity to deliver those outcomes.</p> <p>Commercial investments were undertaken in line with the Council’s Commercial Property Investment Strategy and funded through prudential borrowing.</p>			
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">308</p> <p>I</p>	<p>The authority has a rolling multi-year medium-term financial plan consistent with sustainable service plans</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the authority have in place an agreed medium-term financial plan? Is the medium-term financial plan consistent with and integrated into relevant service plans and its capital strategy? Has the medium-term financial plan been prepared on the basis of a robust assessment of 	<p>The Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is drafted in light of the Council’s Corporate Plan, individual service plans, the Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy to ensure all areas are accounted for and are financially sustainable.</p> <p>The MTFS is updated and reported annually to Full Council and updated regularly throughout the year for management reporting purposes.</p> <p>The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for identifying initiatives and opportunities for savings in order to bridge the financial gap in the MTFS. Where additional budget is required (Growth) the MTFS and business planning process ensures that these amounts are reviewed and challenged to determine whether there are potential mitigations to reduce costs and that they are realistic and sufficient and ensure that key requirements of services are met.</p> <p>Although the plan is set on a rolling 3-year basis, plans are monitored throughout the and where the latest data indicates that there have been material changes to assumptions, as demonstrated in recent years they are updated and reported in the financial monitoring reports to Members.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are currently developing additional approaches to manage budget pressures and growth and to better utilise benchmarking data to understand cost (Oct 23) <p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We continue to develop how the Risk Register and financial reporting can earlier identify and allow the mitigation of future cost pressures (Jul 23).

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement
<p>relevant drivers of cost and demand?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the medium-term financial plan been tested for resilience against realistic potential variations in key drivers of cost and demand? Does the authority have in place a suitable asset management plan that seeks to ensure that its property, plant and equipment including infrastructure assets contribute effectively to the delivery of services and to the achievement of the authority's strategic aims? 	<p>Savings targets are only included in the approved budget if there is confidence in their delivery. Delivery of savings is monitored in revenue monitoring reports and through specific governance for larger projects.</p> <p>Capital & Revenue budgets are collectively presented to Overview & Scrutiny Cttee to show connective impact and impacts are shown in MTFP. Service plans are produced in accordance with the MTFP and activity data analysis used for future projections.</p>		
Section 4 – The Annual Budget			
<p>J The authority complies with its statutory obligations in respect of the budget setting process</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the authority aware of its statutory obligations in respect of the budget-setting process? Has the authority set a balanced budget for the current year? Is the authority aware of the circumstances under which it should issue a Section 	<p>The Council understands its obligation in respect of the budget setting process and has set a balanced budget for the current year, understanding what is required for future years in order to allow further planning and options analysis.</p> <p>The Local Government Act 2000 requires the full council to approve the annual budget, on the recommendation of the executive or equivalent, together with the associated council tax demand (before 11 March each year). The Local Government Act 2003, Section 25 requires the authority's CFO to report to the council on the robustness of the estimates made in the annual budget and on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves assumed in the budget calculations. The Council meets this requirement by reporting these items to the January Executive Committee prior to submission to a full council meeting in February each year.</p>	Green	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None <p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement
	<p>The authority is aware of the circumstances under which it should issue a section 114 notice and how it would go about doing so.</p> <p>There is an extensive member scrutiny process as part of budget setting with specific meetings to review and understand Growth, Savings and Capital programmes for each directorate.</p> <p>The Chief Finance Officer role is clearly communicated and enforced through statutory officer group. Various communications channels as already detailed (Big Chat, ECLT etc) are also utilised to ensure a clear and consistent message.</p> <p>The CFO, who is very experienced in public finance, liaises continually with other CFOs who have enacted S114 or have considered such measures. The CFO is also aware that S114 is a sign of organisational failure and ensures of all those responsible for financial viability are aware of what must be done in order to not be in such a position.</p>		
<p>K</p> <p>The budget report includes a statement by the chief finance officer on the robustness of the estimates and a statement of the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the authority's most recent budget report include a statement by the CFO on the robustness of the estimates and a statement of the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves? Does this report accurately identify and consider the most significant estimates used to prepare the budget, 	<p>The Section 25 Report is compiled annually by the section 151 officer and is reported along with, or as part of, the annual budget, MTFs and Capital and Treasury strategies to the Executive each January. It deals with the robustness of the estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of reserves and covers the key risks for the organisation in line with CIPFA Guidance.</p> <p>The Council has set up earmarked reserves to mitigate the risks of the main (known) financial risks crystallising. Substantial earmarked reserves are also set aside for specific risks such as for Business Rate income to offset any major fluctuations in these areas; More generally the Council also sets a Prudent General Fund Working Balance of £8m for any other issues resulting in a financial consequence.</p> <p>The MTFs includes a statement in relation to the robustness of estimates made and on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.</p> <p>The Council monitors its position against other external measures such as CIPFA resilience index and Grant Thornton data as well as utilising external auditor reports to further understand and collaborate the overall position and level of resilience.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None <p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement
<p>the potential for these estimates being incorrect and the impact should this be the case?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the authority have sufficient reserves to ensure its financial sustainability for the foreseeable future? Does the report set out the current level of the authority's reserves, whether these are sufficient to ensure the authority's ongoing financial sustainability and the action that the authority is to take to address any shortfall? 			
Section 5 – Stakeholder Engagement and Business Cases			
<p>L The authority has engaged where appropriate with key stakeholders in developing its long-term financial strategy, medium-term financial plan and annual budget</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How has the authority sought to engage with key stakeholders in developing its long-term financial strategy, its medium-term financial plan and its annual budget? How effective has this engagement been? 	<p>The Council's Constitution ensures we consult with Members of the Public and its partner organisations in accordance with our legal obligations.</p> <p>We engage with key stakeholders when setting the annual budget and for larger items of change will undertake appropriate consultation.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan engagement provided significant local insight and understanding to help shape resource priorities and future change initiatives.</p> <p>Widespread engagement with the public on council spending is hard for residents to engage with in a meaningful way and is not effective in influencing the budget plans. Engagement is therefore focussed on development of the Council's Corporate Plans and feeding in growth bids to the business planning and MTFs cycles to meet emerging needs.</p>	Amber	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None <p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to continually review approaches to engage and help improve awareness of the councils budget process and resourcing with residents (Nov 2023) We will consider how to improve the inclusion of equalities impacts at the earlier budget Bids stage (May 23)

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What action does the authority plan to take to improve its engagement with key stakeholders? 	<p>Engagement with residents/service users is conducted in line with individual service changes proposed within the budget, as part of the development and delivery of those proposals, rather than detailed engagement on the whole budget. This allows the engagement to be more targeted to affected groups and ensures that the engagement is meaningful.</p>		
<p>M The authority uses an appropriate documented option appraisal methodology to demonstrate the value for money of its decisions</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the authority have a documented option appraisal methodology that is consistent with the guidance set out in IFAC/PAIB publication <i>Project and Investment Appraisal for Sustainable Value Creation: Principles in Project and Investment Appraisal</i>? Does the authority offer guidance to officers as to when an option appraisal should be undertaken? Does the authority's approach to option appraisal include appropriate techniques for the qualitative and quantitative assessment of options? Does the authority's approach to option appraisal include suitable 	<p>Option appraisals form an essential part of the development of the Council's capital programme and all capital and revenue growth schemes have to undertake a business case appraisal through a "bid" process. Options appraisals are also mandated for procurement requirements over £50k, in line with the Councils Constitution and require approval from Finance & Procurement Business Partners.</p> <p>The Council has set up a Project Management Office (PMO) who have responsibility for embedding a project management approach across the organisation to support, monitor and report on the progress of projects within the Council's Project Portfolio. Support and advice are offered to project managers in all aspects of project management. The team also lead on major transformation programmes in relation to providing project resourcing as well as appropriate governance.</p> <p>The criteria for a key decision is set out in the council's constitution, and the format of the decision report requires input from relevant professionals, and has a format that gives clear recommendations and outlines associated risks. The report will consider options available and reasons for recommended option.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None <p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop service managers business case skills and appropriate tools to support approach and governance.

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement
<p>mechanisms to address risk and uncertainty?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the authority report the results of option appraisals in a clear, robust and informative manner that gives clear recommendations and outlines the risk associated with any preferred option(s)? 			
Section 6 – Monitoring Performance			
<p>N The leadership team takes action using reports, enabling it to identify and correct emerging risks to its budget strategy and financial sustainability</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the authority provide the leadership team with an appropriate suite of reports that allow it to identify and to correct emerging risks to its budget strategy and financial sustainability? Do the reports cover both forward and backward-looking information in respect of financial and operational performance? Are there mechanisms in place to report the performance of the authority's significant delivery partnerships such 	<p>All budget managers and senior managers have access to the Council's Financial Management System (BWO) where they can look up reports and enquiries showing real time information. This is supplemented by management reports being provided regularly to all budget managers as part of a monthly dialogue and discussion with finance business partners.</p> <p>Budget managers are provided ongoing system and financial skills training and support (formal and informal) to assist the process and value of reporting.</p> <p>Monitoring information (revenue and capital) is then fed into a monthly report which is sent to CLT on a monthly basis showing the current position against budget and the likely outturn for the year, alongside reasons for variances and mitigations being considered or enacted.</p> <p>Reports are taken to informal Executive monthly and formal Executive quarterly.</p> <p>The Corporate Risk Register further ensures an understanding of key risks including financial implications and is aligned to ongoing budget monitoring – ensuring any required mitigations are identified and managed effectively.</p>	Green	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None <p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continue to review the format of reporting to maximise information to senior managers to ensure appropriate mitigation and support is provided to address issues, Where possible linking finances to demand and cost comparisons (benchmarking detailed earlier in the plan)

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement
<p>a contract monitoring data?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the reports provided to the leadership team in a timely manner and in a suitable format? • Is the leadership team happy with the reports that it receives and with its ability to use these reports to take appropriate action? 			
<p>O</p> <p>The leadership team monitors the elements of its balance sheet which pose a significant risk to its financial sustainability</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the authority identified the elements of its balance sheet that are most critical to its financial sustainability? • Has the authority put in place suitable mechanisms to monitor the risk associated with these critical elements of its balance sheet? • Is the authority taking action to mitigate any risks identified? • Does the authority report unplanned use of its reserves to the leadership team in a timely manner? 	<p>All major issues are identified in the Council’s Risk Register and monitored as a whole by SLT on a quarterly basis. All financial issues are monitored through the monthly budget monitoring process.</p> <p>The Council has set up earmarked reserves to mitigate the risks of the main (known) financial risks crystallising. Specific earmarked reserves are in place for substantial risks such as Business Rate income to offset any major fluctuations in these areas; More generally the Council also sets a Prudent General Fund Working Balance of £8m for any other issues resulting in a financial consequence.</p> <p>Debt management is managed through monthly reporting and meetings with service users. Regular cashflow monitoring/forecasting is undertaken to ensure that the Council has enough resources to meet its requirements</p> <p>Borrowing and investments are reported to the Audit committee through the year.</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A further review of cashflow management and future borrowing strategy is being supported by external experts

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the monitoring of balance sheet risks integrated into the authority's management accounts reporting processes? 			
Section 7 – External Financial Reporting			
<p>P The chief finance officer has personal responsibility for ensuring that the statutory accounts provided to the local authority comply with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the authority's CFO aware of their responsibilities in terms of the preparation of the annual financial statements? Are these responsibilities included in the CFO's role description, personal objectives and other relevant performance management mechanisms? Have the authority's financial statements hitherto been prepared on time and in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Code of Practice on Local Authority</i> 	<p>The Statement of Accounts is prepared on an annual basis in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the local authority accounting Code). The CFO personally certifies the annual Statement of Accounts indicating their personal and statutory responsibility.</p> <p>The authority's leadership team and the CFO are aware of the CFO's responsibilities in terms of the preparation of the annual financial statements and the finance team produce an annual Closing timetable, to ensure that the Council meets its obligations in regard to the production of its financial statements.</p> <p>The Council has consistently received an unqualified audit opinion from the external auditors.</p> <p>Whilst we understand there are currently delays in the sign-off of annual accounts, in the main the reasons for this are beyond the Council's controls with national issue in terms of infrastructure (now agreed in the short-term) and assurances in respect of the Pensions body accounts. We continue to work closely with our external auditor to progress all matters we can (in respect of 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23) and there are no significant issues being raised.</p>	Green	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None <p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None

Financial Management Standard	Current Assessment	RAG	Areas for improvement
	<i>Accounting in the United Kingdom?</i>		
316	<p>Q The presentation of the final outturn figures and variations from budget allow the leadership team to make strategic financial decisions</p> <p>Key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the authority's leadership team provided with a suitable suite of reports on the authority's financial outturn and on significant variations from budget? • Is the information in these reports presented effectively? • Are these reports focused on information that is of interest and relevance to the leadership team? • Does the leadership team feel that the reports support it in making strategic financial decisions? 	Green	<p>COMPLIANT</p> <p>Areas for improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None <p>Areas for enhancement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None



INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT (1706)

**Financial Resilience/Compliance
with CIPFA Financial Management
Code
2022-23**

Resources and Assets Directorate

Report Distribution

Name	Title
Graham Cadle	Assistant Director of Finance
Andrew Moulton	Assistant Director, Governance
Graham Ebers	Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Resources and Assets (Section 151 Officer)
Susan Parsonage	Chief Executive

Auditor

Sheldon Hall, Senior Auditor

Report Approved by

Catherine Hickman, Head of Internal Audit and Investigation

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This audit has been undertaken as part of the approved Annual Internal Audit Plan 2022/23, in accordance with the:

- Audit Charter
- Audit Protocol
- Agreed Terms of Reference previously issued

1.2 The format of this report is based on the Lean Systems Thinking Methodology. Management is therefore requested to specify and explain the countermeasure to the concerns raised, as detailed in the Management Action Plan.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

AUDIT OPINION

Based upon our review of the controls in place for Financial Resilience/CIPFA Financial Management Code, we have concluded that controls are:

Substantially Complete and Generally Effective
2nd highest out of 4 Audit Opinions

- Most key Treatment Measures are in place and these operate effectively.
- The majority of residual risks have been reduced to an acceptable level.
- There are minor unacceptable financial implications.
- The majority of concerns are of a predominately moderate impact/likelihood.

(Risk management processes are good and controls are adequate although only partially effective).

2.1 The principal objective of this audit was to determine whether the self-assessment undertaken by the Assistant Director, Finance against the CIPFA Financial Management (FM) Code is reasonable, including supporting evidence.

2.2 The scope of this audit included:

- Providing assurances that actions, as detailed as a result of the self-assessment against the Assessed Level of Compliance with the CIPFA FM Code, based on a series of principles supported by specific standards which are considered necessary to provide strong foundation for financial management, are reasonable and appropriate and, where appropriate, are in the process of being implemented in accordance with the target dates.
- Verifying a sample of areas shown as compliant on the self-assessment against the assessed Level of Compliance with the CIPFA FM Code.

- 2.3 CIPFA's FM Code, and its supporting guidance notes, are not intended to be prescriptive in any way and all authorities are encouraged to use the notes in a way that best reflects their structure, type, function and size. Consequently, these guidance notes do not purport to set out the only way to comply with the requirements of the CIPFA FM Code. They seek simply to provide ideas and suggestions as to how local authorities might comply with the CIPFA FM Code and how they might demonstrate that compliance has been achieved. Ultimately though, it is for each local authority to ensure that it complies with the CIPFA FM Code in a way that is appropriate – and proportional – to its own circumstances. The authority's Chief Finance Officer must interpret the definition of what constitutes a robust and sustainable budget based on the circumstances of their own authority and should monitor income and expenditure throughout the year to make sure that the finances are on target, as required by the Local Government Finance Act 2003.
- 2.4 Authorities should be able to provide evidence that they have reviewed their financial management arrangements against the standards and that they have taken such action as may be necessary to comply with them.
- 2.5 This audit has identified that the actions identified as areas for improvement and areas for enhancement as part of the self-assessment are reasonable and that those areas sampled where no actions had been identified were verified to be correct, demonstrating current financial resilience. In addition, the audit has identified, through testing, other areas that can be added as areas for improvement (medium risk category) and areas for enhancement (low risk category).
- 2.6 There are 15 concerns identified in this Audit Report. There are no high-risk concerns and 9 are medium risk concerns. There were 6 low risk concerns that have been discussed with the relevant officers.
- 2.7 It is important to note that the concerns are raised in the spirit in which the CIPFA FM Code is written with the sole purpose to enhance the financial resilience standing of the council by strengthening appropriate governance, risk management and control measures. It is also important to note that to avoid duplication, the content included in the significant financial reports, such as the MTFP have not been extensively reviewed as this is a function of external audit.
- 2.8 There are sound mechanisms in place to ensure that the council complies with the principles of good financial management of; organisational leadership, accountability, transparency, adherence to professional standards, assurance and sustainability.
- 2.9 A follow up audit review has been included within the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan to establish progress against the self-assessment and this report's action plans.

Audit Opinion

The opinion stated in the audit report provides management with a brief objective assessment of the status of current Treatment Measures which have been put in place to reduce identified risks to the operation or strategy under review. It is not a statement of fact.

In reaching the Audit Opinion for this audit, the majority of the criteria for the relevant definition apply.

AUDIT OPINION DEFINITIONS
<p>Complete and Effective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All necessary Treatment Measures are in place and are operating effectively.• Residual risks have been reduced to an acceptable level• There are no unacceptable financial implications.• Concerns reported are minor. <p>(Risk management processes are strong and controls are adequate and effective).</p>
<p>Substantially Complete and Generally Effective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most key Treatment Measures are in place and these operate effectively.• The majority of residual risks have been reduced to an acceptable level.• There are minor unacceptable financial implications.• The majority of concerns are of a predominately moderate impact/likelihood. <p>(Risk management processes are good and controls are adequate although only partially effective).</p>
<p>Range of Risk Mitigation Controls is incomplete and risks are not effectively mitigated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not all key Treatment Measures are in place and / or do not operate effectively• Residual risks have not all been reduced to an acceptable level• There are some unacceptable financial implications associated with more than one risk mitigation control or because of a lack of risk mitigation control.• There are a number of concerns that are predominantly of a major impact/likelihood. <p>(Risk management processes and controls are adequate but not effective in mitigating the identified risks).</p>
<p>There is no effective Risk Management process in place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are no appropriate Treatment Measures in place.• Residual risks remain at an unacceptable level• Reported concerns are predominantly of a catastrophic or major impact/likelihood. <p>(Risk management processes and controls are weak).</p>

Management Action Plan

Financial Resilience/Compliance with CIPFA Financial Management Code — 2022/23

	COUNTER MEASURE	
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Ref	Concern	Risk	Finding	Treat	Tolerate	Transfer	Terminate	Counter Measure Action / Explanation	Responsible Officer	Target Date
1 321	<p>Without access to the right reports/tools and training, there is a risk that appropriate staff will not carry out their financial responsibilities effectively. This may impact on the council's ability to identify and address emerging risks to its budget strategy and financial sustainability.</p> <p>There may be non-compliance with Standard E of CIPFA's FM Code if those individuals with specific responsibility for aspects of the authority's governance and financial management have the appropriate training to fulfil their responsibilities.</p>	Area for Improvement (Medium)	The current training arrangements are informal and provided as required/identified. There is no formal finance training programme/framework in place for appropriate staff, including budget holders, members of Corporate Leadership Team excluding the Chief Finance Officer and Council Members and the training currently given does not include specifically the area of value for money.	√				Further resources are now in place within the finance team to bolster the support across the organisation. A formal training programme, including on-line support is planned to be introduced in 2023/24.	Assistant Director of Finance	30/9/23

Ref	Concern	Risk	Finding	Treat	Tolerate	Transfer	Terminate	Counter Measure Action / Explanation	Responsible Officer	Target Date
2	<p>Staff may not be qualified in accordance with the recommended best practice with CIPFA's FM Code.</p> <p>The promotion of financial literacy throughout the authority, including championing training and the development of relevant skills at all levels. The responsibility for learning and development amongst finance staff, in order to ensure that both current and likely future finance skills needs may not be addressed.</p>	Area for Improvement (Medium)	There is no central record held within Finance of qualifications and continual professional development for appropriate finance staff.	√				<p>Individual managers ensure all staff in the finance service have the appropriate skills, experience and formal qualifications. This allows both formal qualifications and work experience to be considered alongside performance in setting supporting staff and agreeing individual development plans.</p> <p>Finance and HR will liaise to agree the best way forward to hold a more centralised record.</p>	Assistant Director of Finance/ Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development	31/7/23
3	The Council will not be espousing high standards of governance and internal control as stated in CIPFA's FM Code	Area for Improvement (Medium)	There is no checking and assurance element for the register of interests for senior management in place.	√				We have identified the opportunity to improve the checking and assurance element of the register of interests and this will be put in place this year – through the Annual Governance Statement process.	Assistant Director, Governance	31/3/23

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Ref	Concern	Risk	Finding	Treat	Tolerate	Transfer	Terminate	Counter Measure Action / Explanation	Responsible Officer	Target Date
4	<p>CIPFA's FM Code states the following: In CIPFA's view, an assessment of an authority's financial management style can best be undertaken by means of peer review.</p> <p>The CIPFA FM Code sets out that, having carried out a finance resilience assessment, the authority should demonstrate how the risks identified have informed the development of its longer-term financial strategy. The authority should, furthermore, report the implications of these risks on its future financial sustainability to its leadership team, including its elected members.</p>	Area for Improvement (Medium)	There has not been a recent supplementary financial resilience assessment exercise undertaken including consideration as to how this is undertaken to ensure that a report is completed and presented on the long-term financial sustainability of the Council to the Corporate Leadership Team and Council Members.	√				The council regularly monitors its position in the CIPFA resilience index and indicators continue to be strong across the board. In 2019/20 MJ published data showing Wokingham Borough Council to be in the top 20 most resilient upper tier Councils. We are hoping that an external exercise will be repeated in 2023/24 but will consider further analysis if it is not.	Assistant Director of Finance	31/10/23

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Ref	Concern	Risk	Finding	Treat	Tolerate	Transfer	Terminate	Counter Measure Action / Explanation	Responsible Officer	Target Date
5	<p>The authority has a clear governance structure, with well-defined roles for all members of the Leadership Team.</p> <p>The Leadership Team and managers can discharge their financial management responsibilities, alongside their wider responsibilities in relation to risk and performance management.</p>	Area for Improvement (Medium)	The Director's Job Description states within its management responsibilities to participate and collaborate as a member of CLT to ensure Council plans and targets are achieved which the financial plans and targets could be included in this. However, there is no specific mention with the Director's Job Description of specific financial responsibilities.	√				Whilst we are comfortable Job Descriptions include reference to financial responsibilities as part of the wider roles, as job descriptions are reviewed going forward we will work with Human Resources to ensure more specific reference to financial responsibilities are included in Job Descriptions. Financial responsibilities are further clarified in the constitution and budget managers protocols.	Assistant Director of Finance/ Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development	31/3/24
6	Internal Control and Corporate Governance findings through Internal Audit reports will not be included in the risk management process which could lead to risks not being managed effectively.	Area for Improvement (Medium)	The results of internal audits are not fed back into the risk management process.	√				This will be picked up as part of the remit of the officer Risk Management Group.	Assistant Director, Governance	31/3/23

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Ref	Concern	Risk	Finding	Treat	Tolerate	Transfer	Terminate	Counter Measure Action / Explanation	Responsible Officer	Target Date	
325	7	'The Role of the Asset Management Plan in the MTFP' section of the CIPFA FM Code may not be complied with.	Areas for Improvement (Medium)	There is not currently an up-to-date asset management plan. There is one in draft form that is currently being worked through, but it's been delayed on a couple of occasions due to the pandemic and then the political and organisational changes the Council has gone through over the last few years. An up-to-date asset management plan needs to be aligned with the capital programme and longer-term finance planning to ensure asset need is aligned to financial sustainability, including future revenue budgets and identified savings.	√				The next version of the Asset Management Plan needs to be informed by the Asset Opportunities Organisational Foundation Programme (OFP). The Assets Opportunities OFP is identifying opportunities for the future management and rationalisation of our property portfolio to deliver financial efficiencies by reducing the financial burden of maintaining the property portfolio and align assets to future business need.	Assistant Director, Commercial Property	31/12/23
	8	While equity is a relatively recent addition to the concept of value for money, there are nevertheless things that the authority could do to ensure that its services are accessible to all those who could benefit from them.	Area for Improvement (Medium)	The Revenues Business Case template does not contain a specific section for Equality Impact Considerations.	√			All service changes require the appropriate equalities assessment – this will be included in specific service reports and is also covered both as a blanket review and individually in the MTFP and budget setting. We will consider how we further include information in the business case document itself.	Assistant Director of Finance	31/5/23	

Ref	Concern	Risk	Finding	Treat	Tolerate	Transfer	Terminate	Counter Measure Action / Explanation	Responsible Officer	Target Date
9	Progress against the action plans will not be monitored and thus agreed actions may not be implemented.	Area for Improvement (Medium)	There is no action plan, that includes target dates and responsible officer in place to record and monitor the areas of improvement and enhancement that are detailed in the FM self-assessment. This should include target dates and responsible officers.	√				This initial assessment against the code will inform and set an ongoing improvement plan, which will be monitored and reported appropriately.	Assistant Director of Finance	31/3/23

TITLE	Audit Committee Annual Report 2022-23
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Audit Committee on 13 March 2023 Council on 23 March 2023
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

This is the annual report of the Audit Committee and covers the municipal year 2022/23. The format of the report has been developed to enable the reader to form a view about the effectiveness of the Committee's activities during the year and its oversight of the Assurance and Risk Management Frameworks within which Wokingham Borough Council operates.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) The Audit Committee is recommended to review the draft annual report for 2022/23 (at Appendix 1), agree any amendments and finalise in preparation for presentation to Council on 23 March 2023 by the Chair of the Audit Committee.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

In accordance with CIPFA (The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy) Audit Committee Guidelines for Local Authorities 2018, it is recommended practice for an annual public report to be produced and reported to Council demonstrating how the committee has discharged its responsibilities.

Background to Annual report of Audit Committee

A draft report of the activities of the committee for the financial year 2022/23 has been prepared and is included within Appendix 1. It has previously been circulated for review and comment to Audit Committee members. It is proposed that any suggested amendments/additional comments are discussed and agreed at the committee.

The final report will then be produced for the Chair of the committee, to schedule and present to Council on 23 March 2023.

Compliance with CIPFA's guidance for Local Authority Audit Committees 2018, demonstrates the committee's commitment to high standards and the production of the annual report demonstrates the role the committee exercises in being a key component of good governance for Wokingham Borough Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Cross-Council Implications

Public Sector Equality Duty

Please confirm that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken and if an equalities assessment has been completed or explain why an equalities assessment is not required.

Climate Emergency – ***This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030***

Please state clearly what the impact of the decision being made would be on the Council's carbon neutral objective.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

Not applicable.

List of Background Papers

Contact Andrew Moulton	Service Governance
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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23

Foreword by Councillor Rachel Burgess - Chair of Audit Committee

I am delighted to introduce the annual report of the Audit Committee, summarising the contribution the committee made during the 2022/23 Municipal Year to the achievement of good governance, effective internal control and strong public financial management within the Council.

All Members of the committee bring a balanced, independent and objective approach to business of the committee. The committee is well supported by several officers who regularly attend meetings and offer their expertise, and I would like to thank both members and officers for their contributions this year.

The committee has provided robust challenge and meaningful review of the Council's arrangements for risk, governance and audit, and in particular has:

- Overseen the production of the Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22 and monitored the progress of improvement actions;
- Received and reviewed in detail assurance reports on the key aspects of the Council's internal control arrangements, including risk management, complaints governance and financial governance, providing robust challenge to our arrangements and monitoring for areas in need of improvement;
- Provided oversight to the Council's internal audit function, receiving the annual report and opinion alongside regular updates on progress against the internal audit plan, including follow up in relation to limited assurance reviews.
- Monitored progress of the Council's statutory accounts subject to completion of the external audit; and
- Received regular updates and formal reports from the Council's External Auditor.

The committee continues to work hard with officers to understand and strengthen governance arrangements across the Council, and to ensure that risks are escalated appropriately. During the year the committee has built upon the cycle of internal control approach to officer reporting introduced in the 20/21 municipal year, with a continued focus on ensuring that governance arrangements are robust and that there is appropriate democratic oversight.

The committee seeks to continually improve in its role. Following formal annual evaluation of the committee, a number of improvements have been introduced during the year 2022/23. These include the recruitment and subsequent appointment of an independent member of the committee, closer links and interaction between the committee Chair and the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation, a full revision of the committee's terms of reference in line with CIPFA best practice, and effective training of members, in particular with regard to risk management and the role of an effective audit committee. The appointment of a committee Chair who is not a member of the ruling party is also a positive step towards independence from politically-motivated discussion. Further improvements are planned for the forthcoming year as the committee continues to adopt a varied work programme,

receiving annual assurance reports to provide routine oversight of arrangements, but taking a flexible and agile approach, adapting to emerging issues and concerns.

Councillor Rachel Burgess

Chair Audit Committee

1. INTRODUCTION

This annual report to full council demonstrates the importance the Council places on the authority's governance arrangements. The Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) describes the overall aim of good governance as:

“to ensure that resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities that there is sound and inclusive decision making and that there is clear accountability for the use of those resources in order to achieve desired outcomes for service users and communities”

CIPFA Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition (the Good Governance Framework)

Good governance is ultimately the responsibility of Full Council as the governing body of Wokingham Borough Council. This report provides assurance as to the way in which the Audit Committee has discharged its role to support Full Council in this responsibility. In addition, the report underpins the Annual Governance Statement, whose production is overseen by the committee, and will be provided to all Members. In particular, the report on the work of the Council's Audit Committee demonstrates how the committee has:-

- Fulfilled its terms of reference;
- Complied with national guidance relating to local government audit committees; and
- Contributed to strengthening risk management, internal control and governance arrangements.

2. COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Role of Audit Committee

The audit committee is appointed by Council to support the discharge of its functions in relation to good governance by providing a high-level focus on audit, assurance and reporting. CIPFA defines the purpose of an audit committee as follows:

1. Audit committees are a key component of an authority's governance framework. Their function is to provide an independent and high-level resource to support good governance and strong public financial management.
2. The purpose of an audit committee is to provide to those charged with governance independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and annual governance processes. Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (2018)

The Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee are reviewed regularly against current regulations, CIPFA position statement and guidance for audit committees and best practice in comparable authorities.

The latest review of the Committee's effectiveness took place in February 2023 resulting in proposed changes to the Committee's terms of reference which are included in the "Changes to the Constitution" found separately on the 23 March 2023 Council agenda.

The core functions of the committee, reflected in its Terms of Reference, are to:

- Consider the Council's arrangements relating to the Accounts;
- Consider the Council's arrangements relating to external audit requirements;
- Review the adequacy of policies and practices to ensure compliance with statutory and other guidance;
- Review the adequacy of the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements (including matters such as internal control and risk management);
- Consider the Council's arrangements relating to internal audit requirements.

Membership

The committee has seen a significant change in membership for the 2022/23 municipal year, with 6 elected members new to the committee (since 2021/22) along with the independent member appointed with effect from the September 2022 meeting. For the 2022/23 municipal year there were seven elected members and one non-voting independent member appointed to the committee:

- Councillor Rachel Burgess (Chair)
- Councillor Maria Gee (Vice Chair)
- Councillor David Davies
- Councillor Peter Harper
- Councillor John Kaiser
- Councillor Tahir Maher
- Councillor Mike Smith
- Mike Drake (Independent Member)

Independence of the committee

As a Council appointed committee, the Audit Committee is appointed in accordance with the requirements of political balance but, in line with CIPFA guidance and best practice, strives for political neutrality. Michael Drake was appointed in September 2022 as a non-voting Independent Member to the committee. The introduction of an independent member to the committee has enhanced the independence of the committee as it discharges its functions. In addition, the professional experience and knowledge of its independent member, give depth and insight to the robust challenge the committee provides in considering the assurances received.

Knowledge and Skills Framework

Members bring with them a range of knowledge and skills from their working life and elected representative roles to the work of the committee. The skills and knowledge of the committee are further complemented by those of the Independent Member, who has brought with him a wealth of knowledge and experience in an audit setting and applies this knowledge, skill and experience to Wokingham Borough Council. A programme of development has been undertaken during the year to ensure that new members of the committee have the necessary knowledge and skills to discharge the functions of the committee – this has included specific training in Risk Management (November 2022) and more general training from CIPFA on the role and functions of Audit Committees in December 2022.

Further e-briefings have been provided to the committee from, for example CIPFA, to ensure that all Members remain up to date and informed to enable fulfilment of the committee's role.

In addition the Chair attends meetings of the South East Regional Audit Forum, a body set up to share good practice and topical information with expert speakers.

The committee looks forward to participating in further development opportunities over the 2023/24 municipal year which will commence with an introductory session led by CIPFA on 25 May 2023.

Operation of the committee

The committee has met on six occasions during the year with meeting dates structured around the receipt of annual assurance reports, external and internal audit reporting cycles, and the statutory requirements for production of the Accounts and Annual Governance Statement. This frequency of meetings ensures the committee can fulfil its responsibilities in an efficient and effective way.

Following the easing of social distancing restrictions, arrangements were made to return to a full programme of in person meetings in the 2022/23 municipal year. Live streamed webcasts of each meeting allowed members of the press and public to continue accessing meetings remotely.

The committee is supported by several officers who attend regularly and bring expertise in relation to finance, corporate governance, internal audit, legal compliance, and risk management. In addition, during the year the Committee has been attended by the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive (and Chief Finance Officer), and various directors from the Corporate Leadership Team.

The work undertaken by the committee to support their approval of the Annual Governance Statement and Accounts, and in furtherance of the core functions of audit committees identified by CIPFA, is summarised in this section. The Accounts and Annual Governance Statement Council has delegated to the committee the authority to approve the Council's Annual Governance Statement and the audited Statement of Accounts on behalf of the Council.

The committee considered the 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement in July 2022, and went on to monitor implementation of improvement actions at its November 2022 meeting. As part of its review, the committee considered the Local Code of Corporate Governance, reflecting the seven principles of good governance set out in CIPFA Good Governance Framework. The committee noted that a Corporate Governance Framework which articulates the arrangements in place to meet the principles and commitments set out in the Code, will be received together with an assurance map prior to approval of the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23.

The committee has received regular updates through the year on the auditors' sign off of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts. During consideration of the accounts the committee sought assurance from officers on matters including the Council's MRP (minimum revenue provision) method for paying debt and received confirmation that the method is recognised in statutory guidance and in line with other authorities. Members also sought and received assurance on changes to the accounting treatment of infrastructure assets.

External Audit

The committee plays a significant role in overseeing the Council's relationship with its external auditors, and takes an active role in reviewing the external audit plan, progress reports and annual report setting out the findings of the value for money review. Ernst & Young (EY) is the Council's current appointed auditor, and will continue to audit the 2022/23 accounts, after which the appointment will come to an end.

Following consideration of other options, the committee concluded that participation in the national audit appointment scheme for appointing the external auditor from 2023/24 would produce the best outcomes for the council. The Council accepted the invitation to opt in to the appointment scheme (in January 2022) and was notified in December 2022 that the appointed external auditors from 2023/24 would be KMPG.

During the year, the committee has received regular reports and verbal updates from the external auditor setting out progress against the external audit plan for the 2021/22 accounts.

Internal Control

The committee has responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control and management of corporate risks. Through robust consideration of annual assurance reports in relation to a wide range of internal controls the committee has obtained assurance that relevant systems and processes are documented and defined; clearly communicated; effectively embedded; meaningfully monitored; and reviewed and refined.

Internal Audit

The committee works closely with the internal audit function, both overseeing the independence and effectiveness of the service, and receiving assurance from the service as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control environment.

The committee has received and considered regular reports from the Head of Internal Audit and Investigation throughout the year providing updates on progress against the 2022/23 Internal Audit and Investigation Plan, together with information relating to the wider work of the Internal Audit section. The committee are advised of the outcomes of every internal audit review, with greater depth, and follow up reviews, provided in relation to reviews resulting in limited assurance (category 3 level of assurance).

During the course of the 2022/23 municipal year the committee has considered one review (to date) identifying limited assurance overall:

- Debtors

The committee also receives a wide range of assurance in relation to the soundness of the council's arrangements through the reporting of Internal Audit work in addition to the formal reviews undertaken, for example

- work to support the Council's Covid-19 and other support grant claims, providing assurance that internal controls are in place and good governance is adhered to.

In June 2022, the committee received and considered the Internal Audit & Investigation Annual Report and noted a satisfactory overall opinion for 2021/22. The committee was satisfied that the work undertaken to support the opinion has been conducted in accordance with an established methodology that promotes quality and conformance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing – what about PSIAS. The committee reviewed and agreed the annual risk based audit plan for the 2022/23 year in March 2022.

LOOKING FORWARD

The committee will approve its work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year at its June 2023 meeting setting out the receipt of regular update reports and annual assurance reports. Through the continuing receipt of regular reports the Audit Committee will provide the usual level of robust challenge to corporate governance and audit practice and procedure across the authority to ensure that our arrangements are up to date and fit for purpose, communicated, embedded and routinely complied with.