

Public Document Pack

Date of meeting Monday, 9th November, 2020
Time 7.00 pm
Venue Audit and Standards - Virtual Meeting - Conference
Contact democraticservices@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk



**NEWCASTLE
UNDER LYME**
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Castle House
Barracks Road
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 1BL

Audit and Standards Committee

AGENDA

PART 1 – OPEN AGENDA

- 1 APOLOGIES**
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive Declarations of Interest from Members on items included in the agenda
- 3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING** (Pages 3 - 6)
To consider the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th September 2020.
- 4 AUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2019/20** (Pages 7 - 122)
This item includes 2 supplementary reports.
- 5 QUARTER 2 CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT 2020** (Pages 123 - 140)
- 21
- 6 INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE QUARTER 2** (Pages 141 - 146)
- 7 TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEARLY REPORT 2020/21** (Pages 147 - 158)
- 8 HEALTH AND SAFETY SIX MONTHLY REPORT 2020-21** (Pages 159 - 168)
- 9 BACK ON TRACK - CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE** (Pages 169 - 176)
- 10 COMMITTEE WORK PLAN** (Pages 177 - 178)
- 11 URGENT BUSINESS**
To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972

Members: Councillors Paul Waring (Chair), Kenneth Owen (Vice-Chair), Sylvia Dymond, Sarah Pickup, Mike Stubbs, Gillian Burnett and Barry Panter

Members of the Council: If you identify any personal training/development requirements from any of the items included in this agenda or through issues raised during the meeting, please bring them to the attention of the Democratic Services Officer at the close of the meeting.

Meeting Quorums :- 16+= 5 Members; 10-15=4 Members; 5-9=3 Members; 5 or less = 2 Members.

SUBSTITUTE MEMBER SCHEME (Appendix 9, Section 4 of Constitution)

The Constitution provides for the appointment of Substitute members to attend Committees. The named Substitutes for this meeting are listed below:-

Substitute Members:	Mark Holland	Kyle Robinson
	Graham Hutton	Gillian Williams
	Andrew Parker	Bert Proctor

If you are unable to attend this meeting and wish to appoint a Substitute to attend in your place you need go:

- Identify a Substitute member from the list above who is able to attend on your behalf
- Notify the Chairman of the Committee (at least 24 hours before the meeting is due to take place) NB Only 2 Substitutes per political group are allowed for each meeting and your Chairman will advise you on whether that number has been reached

Officers will be in attendance prior to the meeting for informal discussions on agenda items.

AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Monday, 28th September, 2020
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Paul Waring (Chair)

Councillors: Kenneth Owen Sarah Pickup Gillian Burnett
Sylvia Dymond Mike Stubbs Barry Panter

Officers: Jan Willis Interim Executive Director -
Resources and Support
Services and Section 151
Officer
Daniel Dickinson Head of Legal & Governance
/Monitoring Officer
Sarah Wilkes Head of Finance
Clare Potts Chief Internal Auditor
Denise French Democratic Services Team
Leader

Also in attendance: Councillor Stephen Sweeney,
Portfolio Holder for Finance
and Efficiency

21. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Phil Butters.

22. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

23. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27th July be approved as a correct record subject to one amendment to delete resolution 19 (b) relating to the future Work Plan as this had already been dealt with at the meeting.

24. **INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

The Chief Internal Auditor, Clare Potts of Stoke on Trent City Council, introduced the Internal Audit Annual Report 2019-20. The overall summary showed the Council had an adequate, effective and well controlled framework of internal control. There had been 58 recommendations made during the Audit period of which 65.5% had been implemented.

Clare Potts summarised the findings and explained that the Audit Plan had identified 33 audits to be undertaken in 2019-20 of which 15 reports had been completed and issued. There were only 2 Audits which gave a negative opinion of 'less than adequately controlled'. The detail of the 58 recommendations was presented and the

current status showed that 38 recommendations had been implemented and revised target dates agreed for the remaining 20 recommendations.

Members asked what happened about the identified audits that had not yet been carried out. Clare Potts explained that they were reprogrammed for the current year and more detail would be given in her next item 'Internal Audit Update Quarter 1'.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

25. INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE QUARTER 1

The Committee considered the Internal Audit Update Quarter 1 report presented by Clare Potts, Chief Internal Auditor. The report stated that due to Covid-19 it had not been possible for any internal audit reviews to be undertaken during this Quarter. However, the internal audit team had been available to provide advice if required and some preparatory work had been undertaken for work to commence in Quarter 2.

The report explained that a review had been undertaken of the Annual Plan and Executive Management Team (EMT) had looked at deferred audits and made proposals as outlined in the report. Clare explained that in relation to the audit of GDPR a post holder had now been appointed and time would be allowed for this to embed and the topic risk assessed for inclusion in 2021-22.

Members queried the proposal that the audit of J2 was 'no longer required'. It was suggested that a Member review of issues relating to J2 was needed based on loss of both income and goodwill. The Executive Director for Resources and Support Services explained that this was understood; the audit focus would have been looking at internal controls and financial sustainability rather than issues of the building itself and the developer. She would arrange for this to be discussed at EMT and a report prepared for an appropriate Member Committee.

Members asked if Brexit was in the list of deferred audits and Clare explained that it was on the Audit Plan for Quarter 3. The Executive Director also advised that the Officer Group that had previously met to discuss preparations for a 'no deal' Brexit had been reconstituted and an update could be made to the next meeting.

Resolved: That

- (a) The Internal Audit Update Quarter 1 be noted; and
- (b) The Quarter 2 Risk Report update submitted to the next meeting include reference to preparations for Brexit.

26. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL LETTER 2019/20

The Committee considered the Annual Review Letter 2019-20 of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Letter provided a summary of the complaints against the Council. The Head of Legal and Governance Services said there had been 10 complaints during the year compared to 20 the previous year. The Ombudsman had investigated 4 of the complaints, 4 were referred to the Council for consideration and 2 were closed after initial enquiries. Of the 4 complaints investigated by the Ombudsman one was not upheld and 3 were; the report outlined how each complaint was due to circumstances specific to each case rather than suggesting a flaw in policy or process. The report also showed the number of

complaints made using the Council's own Complaints procedures. Members asked the Head of Legal and Governance to bring forward any issues he felt should be brought to the Committee's attention at an early point.

Resolved: that the Ombudsman's Annual Letter be received.

27. COVID-19 UPDATE

The Committee considered the update report on Covid-19 as submitted to Cabinet on 9th September – 'Back on Track – Coronavirus Pandemic Recovery Plan Update'.

Resolved: That the report be received.

28. COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Committee considered the Work Plan 2020/21.

Resolved: that the Work Plan be received.

29. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

Chair

Meeting concluded at 7.40 pm

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S
REPORT TO**

**Audit & Standards Committee
09 November 2020**

Report Title: **Audited Statement of Accounts 2019/20**

Submitted by: **Interim Executive Director of Resources & Support Services**

Portfolios: **Finance and Efficiency**

Ward(s) affected: **All**

<p><u>Purpose of the Report</u> To receive the final accounts and audit findings report for the financial year 2019/20.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>That</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The final accounts for the financial year 2019/20 be received. 2. The audit findings report for the financial year 2019/20 be received.
<p><u>Reasons</u> The Council is required to publish its audited accounts for the financial year 2019/20 by the extended date of 30 November 2020 due to the Covid-19 crisis.</p>

1. Background

- 1.1 In response to the Covid-19 crisis, the Secretary of State has announced, per the Accounts and Audit Regulations (Coronavirus Amendment) 2020 that for the 2019/20 accounting period the period of publication of authority accounts is to be extended from 30 September to 30 November 2020.
- 1.2 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 govern the way in which a local authority should present its financial affairs. The regulations require the Council to produce a statement of accounts for the financial year detailing its financial transactions for the year and its position at the year end and that this Statement be scrutinised and approved by an appropriate committee, in this case the Audit and Standards Committee. The Statement is produced in a standardised form in line with CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) guidelines. They set out procedures which must be followed with regard to public inspection rights, audit, approval and publication of the statement.
- 1.3 The Regulations require the draft Statement of Accounts to be certified by the responsible financial officer, the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services), as presenting a true and fair view of the Council's financial position by 31 August and this was done on 17 July 2020. The period during which the public have the right to inspect the accounts commenced on 17 July 2020 and closed on 28 August 2020. No objections to the draft accounts were received.
- 1.4 The Council's external auditors Grant Thornton have advised that they expect to issue their Audit Findings Report and opinion on the financial statements during the first week of November and this will follow as soon as it is received.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 Since the last meeting of this Committee officers have continued to work closely with the external auditors to complete the audit.
- 2.2 The external audit is now at an advanced stage and Grant Thornton have advised that they expect to issue their Audit Findings Report including their opinion on the financial statements and the Council's value for money arrangements during the first week in November. The accounts will be recertified by the Council's s151 officer, the Interim Director of Resources and Support Services and available for Members to inspect once the external audit has been completed.
- 2.3 The Committee are now asked to formally receive the audited accounts and the final audit findings report. The annual audit letter will be presented to the Committee at the February meeting.
- 2.4 At the Committee's March meeting Grant Thornton indicated that they would be seeking supplementary audit fees of £7,500 in respect of additional audit work arising from national issues. This relates to additional audit resources required for the following:
 - Raising the bar – The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) has highlighted the quality of work by all audit firms needs to improve across local government audits.
 - Pension's valuations – The FRC has highlighted that the quality of work by all audit firms in respect of IAS 19 needs to improve across local government audits.
 - PPE Valuation – As above the FRC have also determined that auditors need to improve the quality of audit challenge on PE valuations across the sector.
 - New Standards – The requirement to respond effectively to new accounting standards and ensuring audit work in these areas is robust.

3. **Proposal**

- 3.1 The Audited Statement of Accounts for 2019/20 be received and approved by the committee together with the Audit Findings Report for 2019/20.

4. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 4.1 The Secretary of State announced that for the 2019/20 accounting period the period of publication of authority accounts is to be extended from 30 September to 30 November 2020.
- 4.2 The Regulations require the draft Statement of Accounts to be certified by the responsible financial officer, the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services), as presenting a true and fair view of the Council's financial position by 31 August and this was done on 17 July 2020.
- 4.3 The Regulations require that the publication of the final, audited Statement of Accounts be completed by 30 November 2020.

5. **Equality Impact Assessment**

- 5.1 There are no differential equality issues arising directly from this report.

6. **Financial and Resource Implications**

6.1 The audit fee for 2019/20 has increased by £7,500 due to additional audit work as a result of national issues as detailed in section 2.4 of this report.

7. **List of Appendices**

Appendix 1: Audited Statement of Accounts for the Financial Year 2019/20

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The Audit Findings for Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council

Year ended 31 March 2020

November 2020





Your key Grant Thornton team members are:

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The contents of this report relate only to those matters which came to our attention during the conduct of our normal audit procedures which are designed for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements. Our audit is not designed to test all internal controls or identify all areas of control weakness. However, where, as part of our testing, we identify control weaknesses, we will report these to you. In consequence, our work cannot be relied upon to disclose all defalcations or other irregularities, or to include all possible improvements in internal control that a more extensive special examination might identify. This report has been prepared solely for your benefit and should not be quoted in whole or in part without our prior written consent. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned to any third party acting, or refraining from acting on the basis of the content of this report, as this report was not prepared for, nor intended for, any other purpose.

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Headlines

This table summarises the key findings and other matters arising from the statutory audit of Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council ('the Council') and the preparation of the Council's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 for those charged with governance.

<p>Covid-19</p>	<p>The outbreak of the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on the normal operations of the Council, including dealing with frontline challenges and working arrangements.</p> <p>Authorities are still required to prepare financial statements in accordance with the relevant accounting standards and the Code of Audit Practice, albeit to an extended deadline for the preparation of the financial statements up to 31 August 2020 and the date for audited financials statements to 30 November 2020</p>	<p>We updated our audit risk assessment to consider the impact of the pandemic on our audit and issued an audit plan addendum on 24 April 2020. In that addendum we reported an additional financial statement risk in respect of Covid -19 and highlighted the impact on our VfM approach. Further detail is set out on page 6.</p> <p>Restrictions for non-essential travel and social distancing has meant both Council and audit staff have had to complete the audit through remote access working arrangements i.e. remote accessing financial systems, video calling and additional procedures in relation to the completeness and accuracy of information produced by the entity. Both the Council and audit team have responded well to the challenges posed to ensure the audit work will be completed to the national deadline.</p>
<p>Financial Statements</p>	<p>Under International Standards of Audit (UK) (ISAs) and the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'), we are required to report whether, in our opinion, the Council's financial statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council and its income and expenditure for the year; and • have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting and prepared in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. <p>We are also required to report whether other information published together with the audited financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement (AGS), Narrative Report), is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.</p>	<p>Our year end audit work was completed remotely between September and November. Our findings are summarised on pages 5 to 16. We have identified five adjustments to the financial statements that have resulted in a net £1.2m adjustment to the Council's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Audit adjustments are detailed in Appendix C. We have also raised recommendations for management as a result of our audit work in Appendix A. Our follow up of recommendations from the prior year's audit are detailed in Appendix B.</p> <p>Our work is substantially complete and there are no matters of which we are aware that would require modification of our audit opinion or material changes to the financial statements, subject to the following outstanding matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discussion with the Council's valuer around the valuation of car parks; • agreement of the housing benefit system parameters; • receipt of the signed management representation letter; and • review of the final and approved set of financial statements. <p>We have concluded that the other information to be published with the financial statements is consistent with our knowledge of your organisation. The financial statements we have audited is up until 31 March 2020, which was prior to the outbreak of the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>Our anticipated audit report opinion will be unqualified including an Emphasis of Matter paragraph, highlighting material uncertainties in the valuations of your property, plant and equipment and net pension liability.</p>

This table summarises the key findings and other matters arising from the statutory audit of Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council ('the Council') and the preparation of the Council's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 for those charged with governance.

Value for Money arrangements	Under the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'), we are required to report if, in our opinion, the Council has made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources ('the value for money (VfM) conclusion').	<p>We have completed our risk based review of the Council's value for money arrangements. We have concluded that Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council has proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources</p> <p>We have updated our VfM risk assessment to document our understanding of your arrangements to ensure critical business continuity in the current environment. We have not identified any new VfM risks in relation to Covid-19,</p> <p>We therefore anticipate issuing an unqualified value for money conclusion. Our findings are summarised on pages 17 to 19.</p>
Statutory duties	<p>The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ('the Act') also requires us to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • report to you if we have applied any of the additional powers and duties ascribed to us under the Act; and • To certify the closure of the audit. 	<p>We have not exercised any of our additional statutory powers or duties.</p> <p>We have completed the majority of work under the Code but are unable to issue our completion certificate until we complete the work necessary to issue our Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) Component Assurance statement .</p>

Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation for the assistance and timely collaboration provided by the finance team and other staff during these unprecedented times.

Audit approach

Overview of the scope of our audit

This Audit Findings Report presents the observations arising from the audit that are significant to the responsibility of those charged with governance to oversee the financial reporting process, as required by International Standard on Auditing (UK) 260 and the Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'). Its contents have been discussed with management and the Audit and Standards Committee.

As auditor we are responsible for performing the audit, in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and the Code, which is directed towards forming and expressing an opinion on the financial statements that have been prepared by management with the oversight of those charged with governance. The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or those charged with governance of their responsibilities for the preparation of the financial statements.

Audit approach

Our audit approach was based on a thorough understanding of the Council's business and is risk based, and in particular included:

- An evaluation of the Council's internal controls environment, including its IT systems and controls;
- Substantive testing on significant transactions and material account balances, including the procedures outlined in this report in relation to the key audit risks

We have had to alter our audit plan, as communicated to you in February 2020, to reflect our response to the Covid-19 pandemic

Conclusion

We have substantially completed our audit of your financial statements and subject to outstanding queries being resolved, we anticipate issuing an unqualified audit opinion following the Audit & Standards Committee meeting on 9 November 2020. These outstanding items include:

- discussion with the Council's valuer around the valuation of car parks;
- agreement of the housing benefit system parameters;
- receipt of the signed management representation letter; and
- review of the final and approved set of financial statements.

Our approach to materiality

The concept of materiality is fundamental to the preparation of the financial statements and the audit process and applies not only to the monetary misstatements but also to disclosure requirements and adherence to acceptable accounting practice and applicable law.

We have revised our materiality levels to reflect the actual expenditure incurred during the year. Details of our materiality levels can be found on the next page.

Audit approach

Element	Council Amount (£)	Qualitative factors considered
Materiality for the financial statements	1,185,000	<p>We determined materiality for the audit of the Council's financial statements as a whole to be £1.25m in our audit plan which equated to approximately 2% of the Council's 2018-19 gross operating expenses. This benchmark is considered the most appropriate because we consider users of the financial statements to be most interested in how it has expended its revenue and other funding.</p> <p>Following receipt of the draft accounts we have revisited materiality and revised it down to £1.185m to take account of actual gross operating expenses for 2019/20.</p>
Performance materiality – Except Property Plant & Equipment (PPE) / Employee Remuneration	829,000	<p>Performance materiality drives the extent of our testing and this was set at 75% of financial statement materiality. Our consideration of performance materiality is based upon a number of factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are not aware of a history of deficiencies in the control environment. • There has not historically been a large number or significant misstatements arising; and • Senior financial management and key reporting personnel have remained stable from the prior year audit
Performance materiality – PPE / Employee Remuneration	770,000	<p>We have set a separate performance materiality for PPE and employee remuneration of 65% of financial statement materiality. Our consideration of performance materiality is based upon a number of factors:</p> <p><u>PPE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the year, the Council have implemented a new fixed asset register system; and • There were a number of adjustment to the financial statements in 2018/19 that related to PPE. <p><u>Employee remuneration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In November 2019, the Council transferred the processing of payroll to Stoke on Trent City Council.
Trivial matters	59,000	Triviality is the threshold at which we will communicate misstatements to the Audit & Standards Committee.
Materiality for Senior Officer Remuneration	18,000	In accordance with ISA320 we have considered the need to set lower levels of materiality for sensitive balances, transactions or disclosures in the accounts. We consider the disclosures of senior manager's remuneration to be sensitive as we believe these disclosures are of specific interest to the reader of the accounts.

Significant audit risks

Risks identified in our Audit Plan

Auditor commentary

Covid-19

We:

- worked with management to understand the implications the response to the Covid-19 pandemic had on the organisation's ability to prepare the financial statements and update financial forecasts and assessed the implications for our materiality calculations. No changes were made to materiality levels previously reported. The draft financial statements were provided on time in July 2020;
- liaised with other audit suppliers, regulators and government departments to co-ordinate practical cross-sector responses to issues as and when they arose. Examples include the material uncertainty disclosed by the Council/groups' property valuation expert
- evaluated the adequacy of the disclosures in the financial statements that arose in light of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- evaluated whether sufficient audit evidence could be obtained through remote technology;
- evaluated whether sufficient audit evidence could be obtained to corroborate significant management estimates such as assets and the pension fund liability valuations ;
- evaluated management's assumptions that underpin the revised financial forecasts and the impact on management's going concern assessment;

The revenue cycle includes fraudulent transactions (rebutted)

Having considered the risk factors set out in ISA240 and the nature of the revenue streams at the Council, we determined that the risk of fraud arising from revenue recognition could be rebutted, because:

- there is little incentive to manipulate revenue recognition.
- opportunities to manipulate revenue recognition are very limited.
- the culture and ethical frameworks of local authorities, including Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, mean that all forms of fraud are seen as unacceptable.

Therefore we did not consider this to be a significant risk for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.

There were no changes to our assessment as reported in the audit plan that we need to bring to your attention.

Whilst not a significant risk, as part of our audit work we are undertaking work on material revenue items. Our work has not identified any matters that would indicate our rebuttal was incorrect.

Page 18 Significant audit risks

Risk identified in our Audit Plan

Management override of controls

Auditor commentary

We have:

- evaluated the design effectiveness of management controls over journals
- analysed the journals listing and determine the criteria for selecting high risk unusual journals
- tested unusual journals recorded during the year and after the draft accounts stage for appropriateness and corroboration
- gained an understanding of the accounting estimates, critical judgements applied and decisions made by management and consider their reasonableness with regard to corroborative evidence
- evaluated the rationale for any changes in accounting policies or significant unusual transactions.

Our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of management override of controls.

Valuation of land and buildings (rolling revaluation)

We have:

- evaluated the processes, controls and assumptions put in place by management to ensure that the PPE valuation is not materially misstated and evaluate the design of these and whether they are sufficient to mitigate the risk of material misstatement;
- assessed the competence, capabilities and objectivity of management's experts (valuers) who carried out your PPE valuations;
- evaluated the instructions issued by management to their management expert (a valuer) for this estimate and the scope of the valuer's work;
- communicated with the valuer about the basis on which the valuation is carried out and where necessary challenge the key assumptions
- reviewed and challenged the information used by the valuer to ensure it is robust and consistent with our understanding
- tested revaluations made during the year to ensure they are consistent with the valuer's report and input correctly into the Council's asset register
- evaluated the assumptions made by management for those assets not revalued during the year and how management have satisfied themselves that these are not materially different to current value

The Council's valuer has prepared their valuations as at 31 March 2020. In their reports, they have confirmed that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown and impact on market activity, less certainty – and a higher degree of caution – should be attached to their valuations than would normally be the case. Their valuations are reported on the basis of 'material valuation uncertainty'. The Council have reflected this uncertainty in Note 4 to the financial statements.

We will refer to these material valuation uncertainties in our audit report as an emphasis of matter.

Our testing to date has identified a number of amendments in relation to property, plant and equipment. Details of these amendments can be found in appendix C

Significant audit risks

Risks identified in our Audit Plan

Valuation of pension fund net liability

Auditor commentary

We have:

- updated our understanding of the processes and controls put in place by management to ensure that the Authority's pension fund net liability is not materially misstated and evaluate the design of the associated controls;
- evaluated the instructions issued to the management expert (actuary) for this estimate and the scope of the actuary's work;
- assessed the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the actuary who carried out the Authority's pension fund valuation;
- assessed the accuracy and completeness of the information provided by the Authority to the actuary, through the Pension Fund, to estimate the liability;
- tested the consistency of the pension fund asset and liability and disclosures in the notes to the core financial statements with the actuarial report from the actuary;
- undertaken procedures to confirm the reasonableness of the actuarial assumptions made by reviewing the report of the consulting actuary (as auditor's expert) and performing any additional procedures suggested within the report; and
- documented and evaluated the controls surrounding the validity and accuracy of membership data; contributions data and benefits data sent to the actuary by the pension fund and the fund assets valuation in the pension fund financial statements.

Where appropriate, we have relied on the audit work carried out by ourselves as auditors of the Staffordshire Pension Fund In undertaking the above procedures.

The Council has included disclosures in Note 4 in relation to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has created uncertainty surrounding illiquid asset values. As such, the Pension Fund property and infrastructure allocations as at 31 March 2020 are difficult to value. Professional valuers have not been actively valuing many similar sized assets in the market due to the current lockdown environment. As such values have been rolled over from the end of February with an adjustment and may be inaccurate to the true 31 March 2020 position. We will refer to this material valuation uncertainties in our audit report as an emphasis of matter.

Our other audit work has not identified any other issues in respect of the valuation of the Council's pension fund net liability

The Council have obtained an updated actuarial report to reflect the actual return on scheme assets for the year. Detailed of the amendments can be found in appendix C

Other audit risks

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Risks identified in our Audit Plan

IFRS 16 implementation has been delayed by one year

Although the implementation of IFRS 16 has been delayed to 1 April 2021, audited bodies still need to include disclosure in their 2019/2020 statements to comply with the requirement of IAS 8 para 31. As a minimum, we would expect audited bodies to disclose the title of the standard, the date of initial application and the nature of the changes in accounting policy for leases.

Auditor commentary

We have:

- Evaluated the processes the Authority has adopted to assess the impact of IFRS16 on its 2020/21 financial statements and whether the estimated impact on assets, liabilities and reserves has been disclosed in the 2019/20 financial statements.

We found that the Council have included appropriate disclosure within the financial statements.

New Fixed Asset Register System

The Authority is introducing a new fixed asset register system in 2019 moving away from its spreadsheet based system.

We have:

- Considered the Authority's arrangements in implementation of the new fixed asset register including the migration of data
- Undertaken substantive testing on the data transferred.

As part of the transfer officers identified that there were historic errors within the brought forward values in the asset register. The Council are undertaking a prior period adjustment (PPA) to correct these errors. Details of the adjustments are included in appendix C.

Transfer of Payroll Processing to Stoke on Trent City Council

The Authority transferred the processing of its payroll to Stoke on Trent City Council in November 2019.

We have:

- Considered the transfer of payroll processing to Stoke on Trent and the assurance available from the controls in place at the Authority.

Our work on the transfer of payroll processing to Stoke on Trent City Council has not identified any issues.


Significant findings – key estimates and judgements

Accounting area	Summary of management’s policy	Auditor commentary	Assessment
<p>Land and Buildings – Other – Draft £29.812m Fina £TBC</p>	<p>Operational land and buildings comprises £29.812m of assets which are valued at EUV where market data is available or if specialised i.e. schools, libraries etc depreciated replacement cost (DRC) at year end, reflecting the cost of a modern equivalent asset necessary to deliver the same service provision</p> <p>The Council has used its internal RICS qualified valuer to complete the valuation of properties as at 31 March 2020, this includes all assets which are required to be measured at fair value.</p> <p>Management have demonstrated through correspondence with the valuer their challenge of assumptions used in the estimation of asset values.</p> <p>In line with RICS guidance, the Council’s valuer disclosed a material uncertainty in the valuation of the Council’s land and buildings at 31 March 2020 as a result of Covid-19. The Council has included disclosures in relation to estimation uncertainty at Note 4.</p> <p>The valuation of properties valued by the valuer has resulted in a net surplus on revaluation of £1.475m</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluated management's processes and assumptions for the calculation of the estimate, the instructions issued to the valuation expert and the scope of their work, which has included the user of our own valuer to assist with our review and challenge evaluated the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the valuation expert written to the valuer to confirm the basis on which the valuations were carried out considered the completeness and accuracy of the underlying information used to determine the estimate tested on a sample basis revaluations of the Council's operational properties and investment properties during the year to ensure they have been input correctly into the Council's asset register and financial statements considered the Council's process for reviewing the carrying value of assets not revalued in the year. We are still discussing the appropriateness of the carrying values of car parks with the valuer. <p>Our testing to date has identified a number of amendments in relation to property, plant and equipment. Details of these amendments can be found in appendix C</p> <p>Our work in this area is ongoing, we are actively engaging with the Council’s valuer on these matters in relation to the carrying values of the Council’s car parks</p>	<p>(TBC)</p>

Assessment

- We disagree with the estimation process or judgements that underpin the estimate and consider the estimate to be potentially materially misstated
- We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management’s estimation process contains assumptions we consider optimistic
- We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management’s estimation process contains assumptions we consider cautious
- We consider management's process is appropriate and key assumptions are neither optimistic or cautious

Significant findings – key estimates and judgements

Accounting area	Summary of management’s policy	Auditor commentary	Assessment
Investment Property – Draft £17.562m Final £17.562m	<p>The Council has a number of assets that it has determined to be investment properties. Investment properties must be included in the balance sheet at fair value (the price that would be received in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date) so these assets are valued every year at 31 March. The Council has used its internal RICS qualified valuer to complete the valuation of these properties. The year end valuation of the Council’s investment property was £17.562m, a net increase/decrease of £1.147m from 2018/19 (£16.415m).</p> <p>Management and their valuer have taken into account available market data at 31 March 2020. In line with RICS guidance, the Council’s valuer disclosed a material uncertainty in the valuation of the Council’s land and buildings at 31 March 2020 as a result of Covid-19. The Council has included disclosures in relation to estimation uncertainty at Note 4.</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluated management’s processes and assumptions for the calculation of the estimate, the instructions issued to the valuation expert and the scope of their work, which has included the user of our own valuer to assist with our review and challenge evaluated the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the valuation expert written to the valuer to confirm the basis on which the valuations were carried out considered the completeness and accuracy of the underlying information used to determine the estimate and have challenged the appropriateness of the classification as investment for a sample of properties. We have not identified any issues in the current year in relation to assets being misclassified as Investment Properties Identified that £6.5m of investment properties have not been formally revalued during the year. Under the CIPFA Code of Practice and IFRS13 investment properties should be measured at fair value at the reporting date. We estimate the impact on the valuation would be a £245k downward movement. More details can be found in appendix C 	 Yellow

Assessment

- We disagree with the estimation process or judgements that underpin the estimate and consider the estimate to be potentially materially misstated
- We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management’s estimation process contains assumptions we consider optimistic
- We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management’s estimation process contains assumptions we consider cautious
- We consider management’s process is appropriate and key assumptions are neither optimistic or cautious

Significant findings – key estimates and judgements

Accounting area **Summary of management’s policy** **Auditor commentary** **Assessment**

Net pension liability –
Draft £59.846m
Final £TBC

The Council’s total net pension liability at 31 March 2020 is £59.846m (PY £76.138m) comprising the Staffordshire Local Government Pension Scheme and unfunded defined benefit pension scheme obligations.

The Council uses Hymans Robertson LLP to provide actuarial valuations of the Council’s assets and liabilities derived from (this scheme/these schemes). A full actuarial valuation is required every three years.

The latest full actuarial valuation was completed in 2019. A roll forward approach is used in intervening periods which utilises key assumptions such as life expectancy ,discount rates ,salary growth and investment return .Given the significant value of the net pension fund liability, small changes in assumptions can result in significant valuation movements. There has been a £20.489m net actuarial gain during 2019/20.

We have:

- undertaken an assessment of management’s expert
- reviewed and assessed the actuary’s roll forward approach taken,
- used an auditors expert (PWC) to assess the actuary and assumptions made by the actuary. This led to further detailed discussions with the Pension Fund and Actuary whereby we challenged these assumptions and the calculation method applied

Assumption	Actuary Value	PwC range	Assessment
Discount rate	2.3%	2.3%	●
Pension increase rate	1.9%	1.8% - 2%	●
Salary growth	2.4%	Scheme specific	●
Life expectancy – Males currently aged 45 / 65	22.2 / 21 years	Consistent	●
Life expectancy – Females currently aged 45 / 65	25.2 / 23.8 years	Consistent	●



Green

In addition to this, we have:

- identified no issues with the completeness and accuracy of the underlying information used to determine the estimate.
- confirmed there have been no changes to the valuation method since the previous year, other than the updating of key assumptions above.
- satisfied ourselves in respect of the reasonableness of:
 - the Council’s share of pension assets.
 - of the decrease in the estimate, and
 - the adequacy of disclosure of estimate in the financial statements

The Council have obtained an updated actuarial report to reflect the actual return on scheme assets for the year. Detailed of the amendments can be found in appendix C

Significant findings – going concern

Our responsibility

As auditors, we are required to “obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence about the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern assumption in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements and to conclude whether there is a material uncertainty about the entity's ability to continue as a going concern” (ISA (UK) 570).

Going concern commentary

Management's assessment process

Management has considered:

- Cash flow forecasts
- Judgements and assumptions taken

Auditor commentary

Management has undertaken their own assessment of going concern, taking into account Paragraph 2.1.2.9 of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting states that “*An authority's financial statements shall be prepared on a going concern basis; that is, the accounts should be prepared on the assumption that the functions of the authority will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future*”.

Management have also considered the following factors:

- The financial impact of Covid-19. The Council has estimated the financial impact of Covid19 to be a net overspend of £0.333m for 2020/21 and the level of reserves that can be utilised to offset this deficit.
- The current budget monitoring report for 2020-21.
- The Medium Term Financial Plan that has been updated to model the impact of Covid-19

We are satisfied that it is appropriate that management has used the going concern assumption in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements

In particular, we are satisfied that management has considered all pertinent areas relevant for consideration of the Council's ability to continue as a going concern.

Work performed

We have viewed the Council's financial assessment of the impact of Covid-19, cash flow forecasts, future financial plans and the Council's level of reserves

Concluding comments

We are satisfied the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate.

We did not identify any events or conditions during the course of our audit that casted any significant doubt on the Council's ability to continue as a going concern.

There is no impact on our audit opinion which is unmodified in relation to going concern.

Other matters for communication

We set out below details of other matters which we, as auditors, are required by auditing standards and the Code to communicate to those charged with governance.

Issue	Auditor commentary
Matters in relation to fraud	We have previously discussed the risk of fraud with the Audit & Risk Committee. We have not been made aware of any other incidents in the period and no other issues have been identified during the course of our audit procedures.
Matters in relation to related parties	We are not aware of any related parties or related party transactions which have not been disclosed
Matters in relation to laws and regulations	You have not made us aware of any significant incidences of non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations and we have not identified any incidences from our audit work.
Written representations	A letter of representation has been requested from the Council, which is included in the Audit & Standards Committee papers. Specific representations have been requested from management in respect of the unadjusted misstatements and prior period adjustments.
Confirmation requests from third parties	We requested from management permission to send a confirmation request to your bank. This permission was granted and the appropriate confirmation was obtained.
Disclosures	Our review found no material omissions in the financial statements
Audit evidence and explanations/significant difficulties	All information and explanations requested from management was provided.

Other responsibilities under the Code

Issue	Commentary
Other information	<p>We are required to give an opinion on whether the other information published together with the audited financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report), is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.</p> <p>No inconsistencies have been identified. We plan to issue an unmodified opinion in this respect.</p>
Matters on which we report by exception	<p>We are required to report on a number of matters by exception in a numbers of areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the Annual Governance Statement does not meet the disclosure requirements set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance or is misleading or inconsistent with the other information of which we are aware from our audit • If we have applied any of our statutory powers or duties <p>We have nothing to report on these matters.</p>
Specified procedures for Whole of Government Accounts	<p>We are required to carry out specified procedures (on behalf of the NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) consolidation pack under WGA group audit instructions.</p> <p>This is not required at Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council as the Council does not exceed the threshold of £500m for 2019/20.</p>
Certification of the closure of the audit	<p>We are unable to certify the closure of the 2019/20 audit of Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council in the audit report, because we have not yet completed the work required in relation to the Whole of Government Accounts audit carried out by NAO</p>

Value for Money

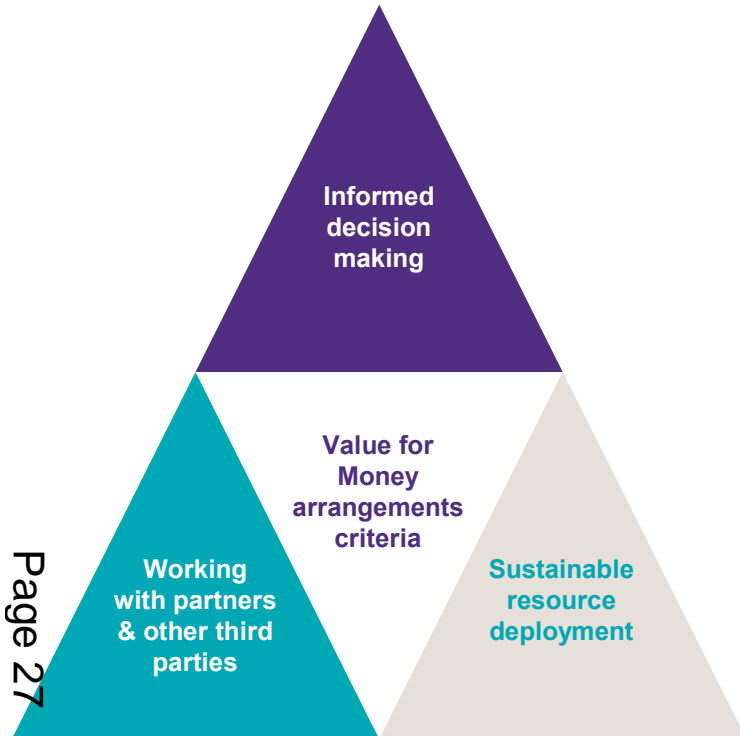
Background to our VFM approach

We are required to satisfy ourselves that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. This is known as the Value for Money (VFM) conclusion.

We are required to carry out sufficient work to satisfy ourselves that proper arrangements are in place at the Council. In carrying out this work, we are required to follow the NAO's Auditor Guidance Note 3 (AGN 03) issued in April 2020. AGN 03 identifies one single criterion for auditors to evaluate:

"In all significant respects, the audited body takes properly informed decisions and deploys resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people."

This is supported by three sub-criteria, as set out below:



Risk assessment

We carried out an initial risk assessment in January 2020 and identified a number of significant risks in respect of specific areas of proper arrangements using the guidance contained in AGN03. We communicated these risks to you in our Audit Plan dated February 2020.

We have continued our review of relevant documents up to the date of giving our report, and have not identified any further significant risks where we need to perform further work.

We carried out further work only in respect of the significant risks we identified from our initial and ongoing risk assessment. Where our consideration of the significant risks determined that arrangements were not operating effectively, we have used the examples of proper arrangements from AGN 03 to explain the gaps in proper arrangements that we have reported in our VFM conclusion.

Our work

AGN 03 requires us to disclose our views on significant qualitative aspects of the Council's arrangements for delivering economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

We have focused our work on the significant risks that we identified in the Council's arrangements. In arriving at our conclusion, our main considerations were:

- Review of the MTFs and the 2020/21 budget and assessment of the Authority's savings/income generation plans.

We have set out more detail on the risks we identified, the results of the work we performed, and the conclusions we drew from this work on pages 18 to 19.

Overall conclusion

Based on the work we performed to address the significant risks, we are satisfied that the Council had proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Significant difficulties in undertaking our work

We did not identify any significant difficulties in undertaking our work on your arrangements which we wish to draw to your attention.

Significant matters discussed with management

There were no matters where no other evidence was available or matters of such significance to our conclusion or that we required written representation from management or those charged with governance.

Key findings

We set out below our key findings against the significant risks we identified through our initial risk assessment and further risks identified through our ongoing review of documents.

Significant risk

Financial Sustainability (Based on the Audit Plan)

The Council's latest medium term financial plan has significantly reduced the funding gap over the medium term to £0.49m in 2021/22; £0.327m in 2022/23; £0.308m in 2023/24; and £0.048m in 2024/25.

The CIPFA Financial Resilience Index, which looks at a range of factors that may affect resilience and sustainability, and relies on information on earmarked reserves, shows that the Council are at a higher risk compared to its nearest neighbours based on level and use of reserves. The Index also shows that the Council's business rates growth above the baseline is below the average of its nearest neighbours, which means the Council is less exposed to the business rates reset expected in 2021.

The medium term financial planning process is challenging due to the uncertainty over future local government funding arrangements as well as uncertain economic conditions. The longer-term reforms for the local government finance system, including business rates retention and fairer funding have been delayed until 2021/22 and the Council recognises the significant risk that these reforms, including the planned Business Rates Reset, will have a significant effect on the Council's funding level from 2021/22.

Our value for money risk assessment remains in progress. However, given the in-year challenges and those anticipated looking forward we believe a residual VFM risk in respect of planning finances effectively to support the sustainable delivery of strategic priorities and maintain statutory functions remains.

Findings

2019-20 Outturn:

The unaudited outturn in respect of the General Fund Revenue Account was an adverse variance of £0.207m compared to the budget of £13.050m. Whilst there were adverse variances against some budget heads, these have mainly been offset by positive variances against others. The main reason for the overspend at the end of the was due to Covid-19 pressures that resulted in reduced income from Jubilee 2, car parks and a hold on recovery actions in March 2020.

2020-21 Position and MTFs to 2025/26:

The Council have set a balanced budget for 2020-21. The ongoing pandemic has put additional pressures on this budget. Cabinet receive regular reports on Council's response to the pandemic and the delivery of its recovery plan

The latest recovery plan update (October 2020) is forecasting a net overspend of £333k for the year, which will be funded from reserves. The main impact is due to lost income (e.g. car parking and Jubilee2 Leisure Centre), which over the first 2 quarters of the year is estimated at £2.292m. The Government is funding lost income at 75p per £1 lost above the first 5%. The Council have calculated that they will receive £1.558m leaving a shortfall of £0.734m which is included in the net overspend above.

Looking forward to 2021/22 and beyond the Council have recently updated its MTFs. This shows a gap of £5.911m over the next five years. For 2021/22 the gap is £1.790m, which is an increase from £1.367m from the previous MTFs due to pressures from Covid-19 pandemic.

The Council are working to address the 2020/21 as part of the budget setting process and to date they have identified £1.469m of savings. Draft savings proposals will be presented to Cabinet in December 2020.

Value for Money

Findings cont

To ensure that the Council is able to operate effectively and meet its strategic aims within its current environment they have commissioned consultants to undertake a review of how the Council will operate going forward. This review has recently been completed and the future operating model developed has identified circa £900k of savings. Officers are currently working through the recommendations and will incorporate them into the budget setting process.

As part of the MTFs the S151 officer has undertaken a risk based review of the minimum level of reserves required. This review identified that for 2021/22 the minimum level of reserves required is £3.116m. The Council currently have £1.584m. This risk assessment were completed prior to the second lockdown.

Conclusion

Auditor view

Like most of local government, the authority faces a challenging future driven by funding reductions and an increase in demand for services. This is further complicated by the ongoing pandemic which is placing additional pressures on the Council both financially and the challenges in providing services.

As we highlighted in 2018/19 the authority will need to continue to make tough decisions to deliver balanced budgets over the coming years, but also maintain strict budgetary control to minimise overspends and continue to monitor delivery of savings targets tightly.

The Council also need to continue to build reserves to become more financially resilience.

Independence and ethics

We confirm that there are no significant facts or matters that impact on our independence as auditors that we are required or wish to draw to your attention. We have complied with the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard and confirm that we, as a firm, and each covered person, are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements

Further, we have complied with the requirements of the National Audit Office's Auditor Guidance Note 01 issued in May 2020 which sets out supplementary guidance on ethical requirements for auditors of local public bodies.

Details of fees charged are detailed in Appendix D.

Independence and ethics

Audit and Non-audit services



For the purposes of our audit we have made enquiries of all Grant Thornton UK LLP teams providing services to the Council. The following non-audit services were identified, as well as the threats to our independence and safeguards that have been applied to mitigate these threats.

	Fees £	Threats identified	Safeguards
Audit related			
Certification of Housing Benefit Claim	11,400	Self-Interest (because this is a recurring fee) Self review (because GT provides audit services)	The level of this recurring fee taken on its own is not considered a significant threat to independence as the fee for this work is £11,400 in comparison to the total fee for the audit of £49,852 and in particular relative to Grant Thornton UK LLP's turnover overall. Further, it is a fixed fee and there is no contingent element to it. These factors all mitigate the perceived self-interest threat to an acceptable level. To mitigate against the self review threat , the timing of certification work is done after the audit has completed, materiality of the amounts involved to our opinion and unlikelihood of material errors arising and the Council has informed management who will decide whether to amend returns for our findings and agree the accuracy of our reports on grants.
Non-audit related			
None			




These services are consistent with the Council's policy on the allotment of non-audit work to your auditors. All services have been approved by the Audit & Risk Committee. None of the services provided are subject to contingent fees.

Action plan

We have identified two recommendations for the Council as a result of issues identified during the course of our audit. We have agreed our recommendations with management and we will report on progress on these recommendations during the course of the 2020/21 audit. The matters reported here are limited to those deficiencies that we have identified during the course of our audit and that we have concluded are of sufficient importance to merit being reported to you in accordance with auditing standards.

Assessment	Issue and risk	Recommendations
 Medium	<p>Investment Properties</p> <p>The Council have applied a rolling programme of revaluation for Investment Property. Investment Property assets with a carrying value of £6.5m have not been subject to a formal valuation at 31st March 2020. Per the CIPFA Code of Practice and IFRS13 Investment Property should be measured at fair value at the reporting date, therefore a rolling programme of revaluation is not appropriate.</p>	<p>The Council should ensure that all assets categorised as investment properties are revalued on an annual basis to comply with the CIPFA Code of Practice and IFRS13.</p> <p>Management response</p> <p>All of the Investment Property assets have been reviewed during the year by the Council's Valuer. The Council has noted the recommendation that all of the assets reviewed should be formerly documented even if there is no change to the value as per the CIPFA Code of Practice.</p>
 Medium	<p>Vehicles, Plant, Furniture and Equipment (VPFE)</p> <p>From our testing we identified that 75% of VPFE have been fully depreciated but are still in use by the Council. Thus we deem the useful lives currently being allocated to VPFE (5-15 years) as too short and not reflective of their actual lives.</p>	<p>That the Council review the useful lives of its VPFE assets to ensure that they more accurately reflect the actual lives.</p> <p>Management response</p> <p>As the Council wants to ensure maximum use of its vehicle, plant, furniture and equipment, it has now reviewed the life of these assets to reflect their actual lives.</p>

Controls

-  High – Significant effect on control system
-  Medium – Effect on control system
-  Low – Best practice

Follow up of prior year recommendations

We identified the following issues in the audit of Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council's 2018/19 financial statements, which resulted in five recommendations being reported in our 2018/19 Audit Findings report. We are pleased to report that management have implemented all of our recommendations.

Assessment	Issue and risk previously communicated	Update on actions taken to address the issue
✓	<p>Financial Statements Closedown</p> <p>The difficulties experienced in carrying out the audit this year suggest that there is a need to strengthen arrangements for the planning, oversight and delivery of the final accounts preparation process going into 2019-20.</p>	<p>A closedown meeting between auditors and finance staff was undertaken and example copies of working papers. In addition the majority of the working paper were ready for the commencement of the final accounts audit.</p>
✓	<p>Quality of Working Papers</p> <p>Working papers provided to audit were not all of the standard expected and in some cases needed to be reworked.</p>	<p>Overall the working papers provided this year have improved. In particular there have been improvements in the PPE working papers have improved this year due to the implementation of the CIPFA Asset Management System.</p>
✓	<p>Sickness Management Procedures</p> <p>High levels of sickness have lead to increased use of agency staff and therefore incurring higher costs for the Council.</p> <p>This suggests the need to strengthen sickness management and monitoring procedures and to develop a corporate dashboard which includes a KPI in relation to sickness absence</p>	<p>The Council have implemented a new Attendance Management Policy and payroll has now been outsourced to Stoke City Council (MyView Payroll System) which provides a suite of absence reports improving the management of sickness.</p> <p>This demonstrates that the Council has in place appropriate controls to monitor and manage sickness absence.</p>
✓	<p>Asset Register</p> <p>The Council does not have a formal capital asset register instead operating a spreadsheet based recording system.</p>	<p>The Council have procured and installed a new Asset Management System through CIPFA. This system has been used for the first time for the 2019/20 closedown and PPE working papers have improved.</p>
✓	<p>Pay Settlements</p> <p>The Council should define more clearly the scheme of delegation within its Pay Policy Statement, which should apply to payments on termination.</p>	<p>This area has been incorporated in the work programme of the Constitution Working Group and updated within the Financial Regulations.</p> <p>No issues have been identified during our audit this year.</p>

Assessment

✓ Action completed

X Not yet addressed

Audit adjustments

We are required to report all non trivial misstatements to those charged with governance, whether or not the accounts have been adjusted by management.

Impact of adjusted misstatements

All adjusted misstatements are set out in detail below along with the impact on the key statements and the reported net expenditure for the year ending 31 March 2020.

Detail	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement £'000	Statement of Financial Position £' 000	Impact on total net expenditure £'000
Land and building valuations	£292	(£292)	£292
A review of the asset register for those Land & Building assets revalued during 19-20 identified five assets where a balance remained for accumulated depreciation. All assets had additions during the year and the asset register has incorrectly calculated a revaluation loss for these assets equivalent to the value of the 19-20 additions that is being carried forward within the accumulated depreciation section, and incorrectly reduces the carrying value of the assets.			
Investment properties	(£825)	£825	(£825)
The Council have five assets where the Council act as lessor and are leased out under finance leases. Historically these assets have been included in the asset register at nil value, however they have been revalued upwards during 19/20. As the asset are leased out they should be excluded from the statement of financial position.			
Pension Liability – Update for actuals	(£947)	£947	(£947)
The LGPS net pension liability recognised in the draft accounts is based on the IAS19 report prepared by the Council's Actuary. This report incorporates actual Staffordshire Pension Fund returns for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 December 2019 and an estimate Fund return of -13.4% for the quarter to 31 March 2020. The Council commissioned a further report from the Actuary that reflected actual investment returns up to 31st March 2020 which showed an Fund return of -5.8% for the year. The overall net pension liability in the revised report has reduced by £947k.			
Overall impact c/fwd	(£1,480)	£1,480	(£1,480)

Audit adjustments

Detail	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement £'000	Statement of Financial Position £' 000	Impact on total net expenditure £'000
Overall impact b/fwd	(£1,480)	£1,480	(£1,480)
Fixed Asset Register – Jubilee 2	£280	(£280)	£280
The 19/20 valuation report shows that there are certain components that are recorded separately in the asset register. When the asset register has been updated these have not been removed from the valuation of the main asset and are therefore double counted in the asset register.			
Fixed Asset Register – Data Migration	N/A	Current Year No impact Comparatives Capital Adjustment Account 4,423 Revaluation Reserve (4,423)	N/A
As part of the implementation of the new fixed asset register officer identified entries in the Revaluation Reserve that relate to assets that have previously been disposed of.			
Overall impact	(£1,200)	£1,200	(£1,200)

Audit adjustments

Misclassification and disclosure changes

The table below provides details of misclassification and disclosure changes identified during the audit which have been made in the final set of financial statements.

Disclosure reference	Detail	Adjusted?
Prior Period Adjustment Note	During the audit we have identified errors that have impacted on prior years. Due to these errors a prior period adjustment note is required setting out the nature of the errors and the impact on the financial statements	✓
Material uncertainty in relation to the pension fund	The Staffordshire Pension Fund have included a material uncertainty in their accounts relating to the valuation of its property assets. The Council need to include a similar paragraph within its Defined Benefit Pension Schemes / Assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty notes to reflect the impact of this issue on the net pension liability.	✓
CIES / Note 6 Expenditure and Funding Analysis	Following a restructure Environmental Services now sits within the Operational Services Directorate, whereas previously this fell within Regeneration & Development. Gross income and Gross expenditure for this service is material and a PPA is required to restate the comparatives in the CIES/EFA. This should be explained in a separate PPA disclosure note.	✓
Note 13 Income and Expenditure analysed by Nature	The net position for in Note 13 is consistent with the CIES there is a difference of £3,279k for both income and expenditure. The disclosure at Note 13 should be consistent with the CIES.	✓
Note 19 Property, plant and equipment	In line with RICS guidance, the Council's valuer disclosed a material uncertainty in the valuation of the Council's land and buildings at 31 March 2020 as a result of Covid-19. The Council have included a general disclosure of this issue within Note 4 but a specific disclosure is required within the PPE note.	✓
Note 19 Property, plant and equipment	Within the rolling revaluation table the analysis of Land & Buildings valuations across the 5 year rolling period was found not to be in line with supporting records, and details of assets valued provided by the valuer.	✓
Note 19 Property, plant and equipment	Within Impairment losses carried forward includes a balance of £1,236k. We have reviewed the nature of these and they consist of a combination of assets created in relation to the flexible use of capital receipts, and capital spend incurred during the year where the valuer has deemed that they do not increase the value of the related asset. These are not true impairments, and should not therefore be carried forward in this section of the note. Instead they should be shown as a revaluation movement within the cost section of the note.	✓
Note 29 Defined Benefit Pension Schemes	The note requires updating to reflect the revised actuarial report received from the actuary	✓
Other disclosures	We identified a number of minor improvements required to other disclosures, none of which we consider merit reporting separately to Those Charged With Governance	✓

Audit adjustments

Impact of unadjusted misstatements

The table below provides details of adjustments identified during the 2019/20 audit which have not been made within the final set of financial statements. The Audit & Standards Committee is required to approve management's proposed treatment of all items recorded within the table below:

Detail	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement £'000	Statement of Financial Position £'000	Impact on total net expenditure £'000	Reason for not adjusting
<p>Flexible Use of Capital Receipts</p> <p>During 2019/20 the Council incurred revenue expenditure on reform projects totalling £501k. Under directions issued by DCLG this expenditure has been financed flexibly from capital receipts. The accounting treatment adopted was to treat the expenditure as an addition to PPE, and then revalue downwards and reverse out through the CAA. This expenditure however should properly be accounted for as REFCUS as set out in section 4.6 of the Code.</p>	£501	(£501)	£501	Accounting treatment is consistent with prior years and this is the last year that flexible use of capital receipts was used for the related projects.
<p>Investment property- Assets not revalued in 2019/20</p> <p>Investment Properties not subject to valuation during 2019/20. We have undertaken our own assessment using the 5 highest value assets as these account for £5.16m of the assets not valued. We obtained details of the date these assets were last revalued and then applied the appropriate index from Gerald Eve and have estimated the expected impact. The calculated movement using the Residential development land index is a reduction in value of £245k</p>	£245	(£245)	£245	All Investment Property Assets have been reviewed and there have been no alterations to the values of the assets referred to in the recommendation.
<p>Depreciation correction - Assets not depreciated in prior years</p> <p>The approach taken to account for a prior year issue whereby a number of VPFE assets were not depreciated, does not fully capture the error but instead defers this into 2020-21. Officers have reviewed the useful economic life of the affective assets (as per our recommendation in Appendix A). This error can analysed between understatement of depreciation in prior years £1,047k, and understatement of the 2019-20 depreciation charge £181k.</p>	£181	(£181)	£181	Due to the low value of the depreciation amendment and the fact that it will not change the outturn figure, this correction will be made in readiness for the next years accounts.
Overall impact	£927	(£927)	£927	

We confirm below our final fees charged for the audit and provision of non-audit services.

Audit fees	Proposed fee	Final fee
Council Audit	£49,852	£TBC
Total audit fees (excluding VAT)	£49,852	£TBC

Covid-19 has impacted on the audit of your financial statements in several ways. These impacts include:

- 1. Revisiting planning** - we have needed to revisit our planning and refresh risk assessments, materiality and testing levels. This has driven additional areas of audit work
- 2. Management's assumptions and estimates** - there is increased uncertainty over many estimates including property, pension and other investment valuations. Many of these valuations are impacted by the reduction in economic activity and we are required to understand and challenge the assumptions applied by management. There are similar challenges for management and ourselves on areas such as credit loss allowances, financial guarantees, and other provisions.
- 3. Financial resilience assessment** – we are required to consider the financial resilience of audited bodies. I know from our discussions over the last few months that Covid-19 has had a major impact on the Council's finances. This has increased the amount of work that we need to undertake on going concern and value for money (financial sustainability).
- 4. Remote working** – the most significant impact in terms of delivery is the move to remote working (both our teams and yours). We, as other auditors, are experiencing considerable delays as a result of remote working, including the delays in receiving accounts, quality of working papers, and delays in responses. These are understandable and arise from the availability of the relevant information and/or the availability of relevant staff (due to shielding, being diverted to other essential functions, or other additional Covid related demands). In many instances the delays are caused by our inability to sit with an officer to discuss a query or working paper. Gaining an understanding via Teams or phone is more time-consuming. The Government's current expectation to work from home as the default position is now likely to make this a greater issue for the audit than if we had been able to gradually return to our offices and council premises over the autumn of this year, as originally anticipated.

We have been discussing the impact Covid-19 has been having on audits with PSAA over the last few months and note that these issues are similar to those experienced in the commercial sector and NHS. In both sectors there has been a recognition that audits will take longer with commercial audit deadlines being extended by 4 months and NHS deadline by a month. The FRC has also issued guidance to companies and auditors setting out its expectation that audit standards remain high and of additional work needed across all audits. The link attached <https://www.frc.org.uk/covid-19-guidance-and-advice> (see guidance for auditors) sets out the expectations of the FRC.

To date, we estimate that the issues highlighted above are increasing the time taken on audits by an average of 25%, in some cases higher. We understand from discussions with the ICAEW that this is similar to other firms.

Pls be assured that we are trying to mitigate this as far as possible through reduced travel time and travel costs and will be looking how we can absorb some of the remaining overrun ourselves. However, it is unlikely that this will not be sufficient to cover the full additional cost. We are aware that the Council's finances are constrained and we will seek to minimise these costs as best we can and will also consider our own performance in delivering to the November deadline. We will discuss any variations to the planned audit fee with the Director of Finance before reporting to the Audit Committee at its next meeting.

Fees

Non-audit fees for other services	Proposed fee	Final fee
Audit Related Services	£11,400	TBC
• Housing Benefit (Subsidy) Assurance Process		
Non- Audit Related Services	N/A	N/A
• None		
Total non- audit fees (excluding VAT)	£11,400	TBC



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Statement of Accounts

2019/20



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Guide to the Statement of Accounts

The Statement of Accounts contains a number of different elements which are shown in the following table, together with an explanation of the purpose of each item. Throughout the Statement, various unusual or technical terms are employed which may not be familiar to all readers. A Glossary (page 75) has therefore been provided which explains the meaning of such items.

Page	Item	Purpose
5	Narrative Report	A guide to the main features of the accounts and a commentary on the Council's financial position and the factors affecting its finances.
15	Statement of Responsibilities	Sets out the responsibilities of the Council and the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) in relation to financial administration and accounting.
16	Annual Governance Statement	Explains the processes and procedures in place to enable the Council to carry out its functions effectively. Produced following a review of the Council's governance arrangements.
24	Financial Statements	The Financial Statements which the Council must publish.
24	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	Shows the accounting cost of providing services in accordance with accounting practice.
25	Movement in Reserves Statement	Shows movements in reserves split between usable and unusable reserves. It also reconciles the outturn on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) to the General Fund balance.
26	Balance Sheet	Sets out the Council's financial position on 31 March 2020. Provides details of the Council's balances, reserves and assets employed in Council operations together any liabilities.
27	Cash Flow Statement	Details the total cash movement of the Council's transactions.
28	Notes to the Financial Statements	Provide additional information in relation to the Financial Statements and outline technical issues such as the Council's accounting policies.
71	Collection Fund	Records details of receipts of council tax and business rates and the associated payments to precepting authorities/central government.
74	Audit Certificate	The external auditor's opinion on the accounts and of the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.
75	Glossary	Explanation of technical or unusual terms used in the Statement of Accounts.

Narrative Report

Commentary by the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services)

a. Introduction

Welcome to Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2019/20. The accounts give a summary of the money that the Council has received, what it has been spent on during the year, and its financial position at 31 March 2020. This Narrative Report provides a context to the accounts by presenting a summary of the Council's financial activities and its prospects for future years.

Regulations governing the production of the Statement of Accounts

The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis and in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the requirements of the "Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom" published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). Under the provisions of Sections 25/26 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations (Coronavirus Amendment) 2020, the accounts were made available for inspection between 17 July 2020 and 28 August 2020, as notified on the Council's website.

The accounts are scheduled to be approved by the Audit and Standards Committee on 9 November 2020 in accordance with paragraph 9 (2) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations (Coronavirus Amendment) 2020. The signature of the Committee Chair (who presided over the meeting) will be included at the conclusion of this report in line with these regulations as evidence of approval of the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts.

General Accounting Policies

The accounting policies adopted by the Council comply with the relevant recommended accounting practice. The Council's service costs have been analysed in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement according to the Council's management reporting structure. Materiality considerations follow the policies set out in the CIPFA Code of Accounting Practice. In addition, the analysis of capital expenditure follows CIPFA's recommendations showing non-current and intangible assets separately. These recommended practices are all designed to meet the requirements of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

There have been no changes in the Council's statutory functions during the year.

The Executive Director of Resources and Support Services informed the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by letter on 5 December 2018 of the Council's intention to make flexible use of up to £0.500m of capital receipts in each of the financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20. The flexible use of capital receipts has been utilised in 2018/19 and 2019/20 for expenditure that meets the eligibility criteria, in that it relates to initiatives that are forecast to generate, or have generated, on-going revenue savings through reducing the costs of service delivery.

Statement of Accounts

The information contained within these accounts is presented as simply and clearly as possible. However, the accounts of a local authority are both technical and complex, which does not always lead to a style which is easily understood. Accordingly a Guide to the Statement of Accounts (page 4) has been provided.

Accountability/financial reporting

Local authorities are governed by a rigorous structure of controls to provide stakeholders with confidence that public money has been properly accounted for. As part of the process of accountability, the Council is required to produce a Statement of Accounts, in order to inform stakeholders that it has properly accounted for all the public money received and spent, and that the financial standing of the Council is secure.

The Statement of Accounts concentrates on clear and accurate reporting of the financial position of the Council in relation to a particular year. It does not, however, aim to fulfil the role of an annual report of a company.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council

The Council is a second tier district council within the County of Staffordshire, with a population of around 129,500. It consists of the urban areas of Newcastle and Kidsgrove, with a town council, and an extensive rural area containing nine parishes, each with a parish council.

The Council has 44 members representing residents in 21 wards following elections in May 2018. Full Council, consisting of all members, is responsible for setting Council policy, whilst other decisions within the policy framework set by Full Council are determined by a Cabinet, currently consisting of 6 members.

Operational management is carried out under the direction of the Chief Executive and three Executive Directors who currently comprise the Executive Management Team (EMT).

The Council employed 528 people (437 full time equivalents), as at 31 March 2020.

The Council Plan 2018-2022, which can found on the Council's website, details the Council's plans for the period. The plan sets out the Council's aspirations and priorities.

It sets out the new vision of the Council as, 'good local services, a prosperous borough, and safe and welcoming places for all'. It also focuses the work of everyone in the Council on four key priorities:

- Local services that work for local people
- Growing our people and places
- A healthy, active and safe borough
- A town centre for all

The plan sets out how the Council will work to make the borough an even better place for everyone who lives, works, studies or visits here. The Council's aims can only be achieved by taking advantage of every opportunity available and developing new ones through innovation and a more collaborative approach.

The Council is committed to strong and sustainable economic growth for the borough, focusing upon opportunities around Keele University, Newcastle Town Centre and Kidsgrove.

Equally the Council is committed to achieving visible improvements in service delivery. The most recent can be seen with the opening of the impressive Castle House, the new home for the Council and other public services set in Queen's Gardens. This move has allowed the Council to embrace a new way of working and opportunities for better service delivery both amongst our own teams and with our partners who share the space with us. It also sets the standard for future developments and partnership working in the borough.

Details of the services which the Council provides and their budgets are set out in budget books for each financial year which are available on the Council's website.

Financial summary 2019/20

The financial activities of the Council can be categorised as either revenue or capital. Revenue spending represents the cost of providing services delivered by the Council in its day to day business during the year. Capital spending relates to items which will provide benefit to the Borough over a number of years such as buildings, plant and equipment.

Revenue expenditure and income

General Fund Revenue Budget outturn

The outturn position in relation to the General Fund Revenue Budget was an adverse variance (deficit) of £0.207m, i.e. expenditure was £0.207m more than the net budget. This amount relates to the additional expenditure and loss of income as a result of COVID-19. The adverse variance has been transferred out of the General Fund Reserve.

Prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, the Council was forecasting a balance outturn position. However due to the closure of facilities during March, including Jubilee 2 and Car Parks, and the non-summonsing to Court of Council Tax and Business Rates debtors, a loss of income amounting to £0.207m was incurred.

Whilst the impact of COVID-19 in 2019/20 was limited to March and a £0.207m loss of income, the financial impact for 2020/21 and the medium term is significant, this is commented on further under section h, Financial prospects.

The main adverse variances (overspends) incurred relate to shortfalls of income in Jubilee 2, Planning Applications and Car Parks (town centre car parks) and overspends regarding the provision of interim staff pending senior management recruitment and housing benefits payments for which the Council is unable to claim full subsidy.

These adverse variances have been offset by a number of underspends which include employee costs in respect of restructuring, a number of vacant posts and flexible retirements that have taken place across the Council. Income from the Business Rates pilot that the Council participated in is in excess of the amount budgeted for and additional contributions have been made from usable reserves.

The Executive Director of Resources and Support Services informed the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government by letter on 5 December 2018 of the Council's intention to make flexible use of up to £0.500m of capital receipts in each of the financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20. The flexible use of capital receipts has been utilised in 2018/19 and 2019/20 for expenditure that meets the eligibility criteria, in that it relates to initiatives that are forecast to generate, or have generated, on-going revenue savings through reducing the costs of service delivery.

A reconciliation of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the deficit declared above can be seen in the table below, further information can be obtained from the statements and notes referenced:

	£000
Service provision (per CIES-p24)	4,486
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis (note 8-p48)	(4,930)
Movement in useable reserves (excluding transfer of deficit) (note 9-p50)	651
Deficit for 2019/20	207

Where does the money come from, and where is it spent?

Local authorities receive income from a variety of sources, from the Government in the form of grants, from households in the form of Council Tax (a property based charge payable by local residents dependent upon the Valuation Office's valuation band for their property), from consumers in respect of fees and charges and rents and from a share of business rates from occupiers of commercial premises within the Borough (based upon the rateable value set by the Valuation Office in respect of the properties concerned).

In accordance with the Business Rates Retention Scheme, the Council retains a share of the business rates collected after paying part over to the Government, Staffordshire County Council and the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

The gross income (£40.646m) and expenditure (£59.444m) attributable to management reporting areas is shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (page 24).

Capital expenditure

Capital expenditure includes expenditure such as the acquisition, construction, repair and maintenance of fixed assets. As capital spending contributes to the Council's priorities and vision over the short, medium and long term, the Council plans and budgets for expenditure by means of a rolling programme.

In 2019/20 the Council planned to spend £5.606m. Of this total £3.606m related to the total cost of new schemes for 2019/20 together with £1.000m for schemes funded by external sources (Disabled Facilities Grants) and a £1.000m contingency. In addition £1.327m was brought forward from the 2018/19 Capital Programme, resulting in a total Capital Programme of £6.948m for 2019/20.

Actual capital expenditure during 2019/20 was £2.923m, leaving a balance of £4.025m (including £1.000m contingency) to be carried forward to 2020/21. This underspend was due to a number of projects being commenced later than anticipated including the acquisition of the new Waste Recycling Fleet. The expenditure incurred during 2019/20 was financed entirely by capital receipts and government grants and other contributions. Borrowing to finance the 2019/20 expenditure was not required. The capital investment and financing of this expenditure is shown in Note 26 (page 61).

Financial prospects

Revenue

The Council is committed to the delivery of high quality services. Integral to this is the need to effectively target financial resources in line with stated aims and objectives working against the background of an adverse economic situation.

The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest single risk to the health and economic wellbeing of the country since the Second World War. In February 2020 the Council established an Incident Management Team to plan the Council's response, ensuring that support to local residents and businesses was provided, that Council services were maintained, and the welfare of officers and members protected. Informal Cabinet have been regularly briefed on the work being progressed, including a daily briefing with the Leader. The approach adopted is based on existing business contingency arrangements and has put the Council in a good position in terms of stepping up its response.

The Incident Management Team interfaces with a range of groups which have been set up countywide to co-ordinate the response to the pandemic, including the Strategic Coordinating Group, and working groups on mortality management and vulnerability. Cabinet has received reports at its April, May, June and July meetings detailing the work of the Incident Management Team. At May's Cabinet meeting, Members emphasised that the Council was firmly focused on recovery, with key elements of the response running in parallel.

Five areas of recovery work have been, and continue to be addressed:

- Reopening safe, successful retail centres
- Supporting health and wellbeing
- Economic recovery
- Stepping up Council services
- Financial recovery

With the lockdown beginning to be eased, efforts are now be focused on recovery, and ensuring that both the Council and the Borough get "Back on Track" – getting the economy back to its pre-lockdown position as swiftly and safely as possible. This plan is delivered through more detailed action plans, with the Cabinet overseeing implementation through portfolio holders working closely with the Executive Management Team colleagues leading on each work stream.

Key work undertaken to date is detailed below.

Reopening Safe, Successful Retail Centres

Arrangements were put in place to facilitate the safe re-opening of Newcastle and Kidsgrove town centres and the various district centres across the borough. This included provision of advice to all businesses about "Covid Secure" arrangements that they will need to put in place, and deploying signage wherever necessary.

A key step towards the reopening of Newcastle town centre was the relaunch of the market on Friday 5 June, which served as a “soft re-opening”. Good social distancing was in evidence, with a number of long standing traders returning to the town centre to benefit from the Council’s offer of 6 weeks of trading without incurring pitch fees.

Supporting Health & Wellbeing

The Council continues to operate a helpline and online facility for individuals to reach out for assistance. The helpline is staffed by colleagues from Jubilee 2 and links into the national, and County support arrangements, as well as support arrangements established with the Realise Foundation and Support Staffordshire. Demand for this service fluctuates but is generally reducing.

Homeless & Rough Sleepers - In March the Government required District and Borough councils to provide emergency accommodation for any rough sleepers in their area and provided funds to support this. The Council is providing emergency accommodation for 22 individuals in a mix of bed and breakfast and a range of temporary accommodation, with support tiered according to need.

To ensure that vulnerable people, and people made vulnerable by the pandemic, continue to receive the support that they require, the Council’s help line facilities have been retained and an action plan for the ongoing support for each homeless person has been submitted to the Government.

Economic Recovery

The Council has paid out £20.575m to 1788 businesses as at 10 July 2020 under the Government’s grant schemes for small businesses and businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. With regards to the Government’s Discretionary Grant Scheme, payments totalling £1.005m have been made to 183 businesses out of the £1.178m allocation. The Council has paid out grants to over 90% of eligible businesses. Applications for these grant programmes continue to be received, and an ongoing effort to encourage applications continues.

The initial grant programmes were specifically related to the rateable value of the business premises, and as such excluded businesses which operated from shared premises where they paid a rent inclusive of rates (e.g. a business centre, or shared office space). To support this cohort of businesses, the Government launched an additional scheme, with a degree of local discretion, including on the level of grants paid.

The Council’s economic recovery programme will involve a mix of immediate direct developments, alongside longer term strategic initiatives. The longer term initiatives include the Town Deals for Newcastle and Kidsgrove and the Future High Streets Fund bid for Newcastle. In terms of direct developments, the focus will be on:

- Ryecroft.
- Kidsgrove Sports Centre.
- Sidmouth Avenue housing project.
- Newcastle Mortuary Site.

Stepping-up Council Services

Since the commencement of the lockdown, staff who have been able to effectively work from home have done so. This has meant that the majority of services have continued with minimal disruption. However, a number of services have been significantly impacted either due to the risk associated with continuing business as usual, the additional demands placed on the service, or due to Government guidance. The services experiencing the most significant change are:

- J2 – remains closed to the public but will be reopening on 25 July on a phased basis.
- Museum – remains closed to the public however will be reopening on 27 July.
- Castle House & Kidsgrove Customer Contact facilities – closed to the public, with all services being provided online or by phone.

- Waste & Recycling Collection – All waste streams are being collected, including Garden Waste. The collection schedule has been adjusted to make the best use of available resource, and to respect the guidance on social distancing. Service performance has been sustained despite a very significant increase in volumes of waste being presented. From week commencing 7th June, the new recycling collection system started to be rolled out.
- Bereavement – Whilst still busier than usual, the workload of the bereavement team is now beginning to return to more normal levels. Whilst the numbers able to attend funerals will remain at 10 until further relaxation of social distancing is permitted, the service anticipates being able to increase the time allocated to each funeral service to the normal 40 minutes.
- Taxi Licencing – the service is focusing on supporting existing drivers, with no new license applications currently being processed. Taxi testing has been suspended. Nevertheless, through holding remote licencing hearings and other measures in place, there remains an appropriately licenced adequate taxi and hackney carriage fleet in operation.

In order to bring Council services back to their original capacities in line with Government guidance for re-opening the economy, each service has prepared a “Stepping Up” plan. It is anticipated that some services will experience significant spikes in demand once the economy begins to re-open, with careful planning required to deliver this.

Financial Recovery

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the Council’s financial position through a mix of lost income and additional costs. Government funding of £1.573m has been secured which includes a third tranche of funding announced on 16 July 2020. In addition to this funding the Government has advised that they will be sharing income losses incurred as a result of COVID-19 however further details are yet to be released. This support has significantly relieved pressure on the Council’s revenue budget during the remainder of the year.

The Council’s revenue budget relies on service income from fees and charges of around £0.850m per month across a wide range of services, with a significant proportion coming from Jubilee 2 and car parking. The Council has been actively monitoring the impact of the lockdown and the working practices required to ensure safe practice. Across the Council, it is estimated that net income of £0.276m will be lost during each month that the lockdown prevails. In addition to the loss of income, the Council is experiencing additional costs in some areas, amounting to £0.147m per month.

In the longer term, any impact on either business rates collection (due to business failure) or Council Tax collection (due to non-payment) will materialise in 2021/22. The Government have announced that they will share collection fund losses and have advised that the Council can recover any deficits over 3 years.

The consequences of the Coronavirus on the Council’s financial position will depend significantly on the duration of the lockdown and on the scale and timing of further Government financial support. The Council is actively lobbying our local Members of Parliament and through national networks as part of the wider public sector family, to make the case for further Government support to address COVID-19 related costs and loss of income. Particular emphasis in our lobbying has been the impact on Business rate and Council tax collection.

The Council continues to strongly manage budgets and spending. Action has been taken to furlough a number of staff, primarily from Leisure, where there is no ability or need to redeploy. This will enable the Council to recoup a proportion of their salary costs from the Government. Staff continue to be on full pay, and their contracts of employment are unaffected, with them returning to their usual roles as soon as the easing of lockdown permits.

Careful monitoring of the financial position will be required over coming weeks and months leading to prompt corrective action where necessary to ensure that reserves are not exhausted and the Council remains in a position of being able to deliver a balanced budget position in the current financial year and beyond.

This will inevitably lead to further pressures in the Medium Term Financial Strategy during and beyond 2021/22, particularly around the risk assessed levels of reserves that are required to be maintained and the levels of income that the Council may expect to receive from its services in the medium term.

The Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy - which forecasts future years’ budgets taking into account national and local financial situations together with the Council’s priorities - has identified pre COVID-19 pandemic shortfalls for each year from 2020/21 to 2024/25. The Medium Term Financial Strategy forecast a gap of £1.249m for 2020/21, £1.367m for

2021/22 (gap of £0.490m), £1.115m for 2022/23 (gap of £0.327m), £1.106m for 2023/24 (gap of £0.308m) and £0.858m for 2024/25 (gap of £0.048m). Work is currently being undertaken to update the Medium Term Financial Strategy in light of the impact of COVID-19 and will be presented to Cabinet for approval in October.

On 19 February 2020 the Council set a balanced budget for 2020/21. This was achieved by increasing council tax, efficiency savings, the identification of additional sources of income sufficient to meet the shortfall and the flexible use of capital receipts in order to capitalise expenditure intended to deliver more efficient and sustainable services. The majority of the savings were identified through a review of the Council's services focussing on particular areas where it was felt that savings could be achieved.

As part of the 2020/21 budget a 'Borough Growth' annual contribution of £0.250m has been established, which will again be used to invest in initiatives that are forecast to generate on-going revenue savings through reducing the costs of service delivery or through the generation of additional income.

The government have announced that the Fair Funding Review (FFR) and 75% Business Rates Retention (BRR) will not be implemented in April 2021 as originally planned. Council officers will continue to work with the Government on informing the approach to funding for the next financial year and beyond.

For the purposes of the Medium Term Financial Strategy it has been assumed that the Council will be in a cost neutral position following the reform of local government finance and the introduction of 75% business rates retention, however, this cannot be guaranteed and funding streams may differ significantly from this neutral position.

The Council intends to consider ways it can facilitate and participate in the commercial and industrial development of the Borough and thereby gain access to income streams to contribute to a sustainable revenue budget. The basis for this is set out in the Investment Strategy. As a first step, it is intended to establish a Revolving Investment Fund to invest in suitable projects. Any additional income or capital appreciation generated will either be reinvested to fund further developments or used to support the Council's revenue budget.

Capital

The Capital Programme for 2020/21 to 2022/23 is based on new schemes which are vital to ensure continued service delivery and in assisting the Council to achieve its corporate and service objectives as set out in the Council Plan 2018-22 approved by Cabinet on 19 September 2018. These schemes total £24.624m.

The Capital Programme is produced in line with the Capital Strategy for 2020/21 to 2029/30 which was approved by Full Council on 19 February 2020. In addition to the Council's corporate and service objectives, as set out in the Council Plan 2018-22, the Capital Programme is also influenced by a number of external parties and factors:

- Central government and its agencies
- Legislation requiring capital works
- Partner organisations
- Businesses and Developers
- The needs and views of other interested parties, particularly those of Borough residents.

Delivering the capital programme for 2020/21 will require prudential borrowing to be undertaken. The impact of borrowing is included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy pressures for 2020/21 and future years.

Advice will be sought from the Council's Treasury Management advisors, Arlingclose, as to the most beneficial timing of prudential borrowing. Their current advice is to borrow on a short term basis (up to 4 years) from other local authorities whilst interest rates remain low, particularly in light of the recent increase in the Public Works Loan Board interest rates.

Strategic risks

Major strategic risks affecting the Council which could impact on future service provision are currently as set out in the table below, which shows for each risk its potential impact and measures to mitigate the risk:

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
Failure to realise potential for land sales to provide funding for capital investment	Insufficient resources to fund capital investment needed to maintain service provision or to achieve objectives	Asset Management Plan, Cabinet decisions to sell, planning approvals
Failure to recruit and retain staff with required experience and skills	Reduced amount and quality of service provision. Inability to provide services	Workforce development plan, business continuity planning
Major incident	Unable to provide services during and for some time after the incident	Major incident and emergency response plans in place, incident response guide, business continuity planning,
Long term decline in income including reduction in government funding and failure to provide funding for new initiatives	Pressure on revenue budget	Included in calculation of prudent minimum balances
Pay and price increases	Pressure on revenue budget	Included in calculation of prudent minimum balances
ICT - system/software failure or malicious software incursion	Unable to provide services during and after the failure. Loss of data, corruption of data, ransom demands, unable to provide service after incursion.	Business continuity planning, back up servers
Failure to comply with legislation including data protection breaches	Legal action, compensation claims, fines, reputational damage	Standing orders and financial regulation, training, internal audit, monitoring officer
Overall budget realisation fails	Reduction in reserves, unplanned cuts to services, impact on future budgets	Budget monitoring, adequate reserves levels
Business rates retention	If overall funding reduces, there will be pressure on the revenue budget	Medium term financial strategy, modelling, business rates reserve
Failure of major contractor	Unable to provide services, additional unbudgeted costs	Market intelligence, credit checks, procurement rules and procedures

Reserves

The Council holds a number of reserves the majority of which are earmarked to meet specific categories or items of expenditure. Levels of reserves are reviewed to determine their adequacy to meet the Council's commitments and future plans and are an important consideration when preparing the budget. The Council aims to substantially increase the level of reserves over the life of the Medium Term Financial Strategy to ensure greater financial resilience.

The Council's Section 151 Officer has recommended that a minimum level of un-earmarked reserves and contingencies of £1.548m be held to reflect the Council's levels of revenue risk. Therefore, there should be a minimum General Fund balance of £1.448m and an Income Reserve of £0.100m.

The General Fund balance can be used to contribute to the revenue account. The required level is determined by a risk assessment of factors which might adversely impact upon the revenue budget on a worst case basis. These factors are set out in an appendix to the council tax setting report considered by the Full Council on 19 February 2020. The current level, as at 31 March 2020 is £1.241m, with an Income Reserve balance of £0.100m, a decrease of £0.207m on 2018/19 due to an overspend of £0.207m during 2019/20 relating to COVID-19. This balance will be replenished during 2020/21.

Partnerships

The Council participates in a wide range of partnership arrangements. Some are formal partnerships regulated by an agreement between the partners and some are informal in nature, many of them designed to facilitate community cohesion or to ensure awareness of community needs or to enable more efficient working practices.

Examples of formal partnerships are a shared apprenticeship scheme in conjunction with Newcastle College and the administration of the Business Improvement District (BID) scheme for Newcastle town centre. Businesses within the BID

area pay a supplementary business rate, collected by the Borough Council and used by the BID Board to promote the economic wellbeing and development of the town centre.

The Council works closely with other public sector organisations to obtain value for money in relation to supplies and services and to provide the public with easy access to all of the partners' services from its facilities. An example of this is the Locality Commissioning Partnership which co-ordinates contributions to third sector organisations. There are also reciprocal arrangements between neighbouring authorities for providing assistance, such as the secondment of staff, to provide continuity of service.

The Council's offices at Castle House are shared with Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Police and Aspire Housing.

Economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

Local authorities are obliged to achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in their use of resources. Arrangements are in place to ensure that value for money is obtained when Council resources are expended, that there is proper stewardship and governance in relation to these matters and the arrangements are kept under review to ensure they are adequate and effective.

Financial Regulations, Contract Procedural Rules, Standing Orders and the Council's Constitution set out the basic framework and internal controls by which Council business and administration must be conducted and are binding on all employees and members of the Council. Financial Regulations and the Contract Rules lay down procedures which must be followed when obtaining supplies and services for use by the Council to ensure that transparent and effective processes are in place.

The arrangements and their effectiveness are continually kept under review as part of the ongoing management of the Council's services, medium term financial planning, continuous budgetary control procedures and regular internal audit reviews and reports.

The Executive Management Team receive and review monthly budget monitoring reports and initiate action to deal with any significant variances revealed. Members are kept up to date regarding the budgetary position via quarterly performance monitoring reports to Cabinet, which also include non-financial performance indicators showing how services are delivering on their key targets. The quarterly reports are available on the Council's website. There is also a formal member led scrutiny process, with key priority focussed Scrutiny Committees enabling service delivery to be monitored.

Formal review takes place via the Annual Governance Statement considered and approved by Council members, which is published within the Statement of Accounts (page 16). This is informed by Executive Directors, Heads of Service and Business Managers to provide assurance that governance arrangements are in place and to identify required improvements.

The Capital Strategy, Investment Strategy and Asset Management Strategy set out the framework within which the capital programme is managed and resources made available to finance the programme. Approval to proceed with capital investment is only given provided the necessary resources are available to finance it. An important element providing assurance regarding resource availability is an approved realistic programme of asset disposals. Capital investment and resources are assessed and monitored by the Capital Assets and Commercial Investment Review Group which is chaired by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency. The group aims to ensure that the capital investment programme meets the Council's priorities, is affordable and that projects are carried out on time and within budget.

Pension scheme liability

The liability relating to defined benefit pension schemes decreased from £76.138m at 31 March 2019 to £59.846m at 31 March 2020. These amounts are required to be included in the Borough Council's accounts as a result of the application of International Accounting Standard 19 (IAS19) and the CIPFA Code of Accounting Practice. They relate to transactions of the Staffordshire County Council Pension Fund of which the Council is a member and represent the Council's share of net scheme liabilities.

Formal actuarial valuations are carried out every three years, where each employer's assets and liabilities are calculated on a detailed basis, using individual member data, for cash contribution setting purposes. The 31 March 2019 formal valuations for English and Welsh Local Government Pension Scheme Funds were concluded by 31 March 2020.

The liability position as at 31 March 2020 is therefore based on this new roll forward from the 2019 formal valuation. This differs to the balance sheet position as at 31 March 2019 which was based on a roll forward from the 2016 formal valuation.

This 'step change' can lead to sizeable asset and liability 're-measurement experience' items in the reconciliation of the balance sheet from 31 March 2019 to 31 March 2020 as can be seen in the 'Transactions relating to post-employment benefits' table in Note 29 (page 62), in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (re-measurement of the defined benefit liability/asset, page 24) and in the Balance Sheet (pension liability and pension reserve, page 26).

Audit of the accounts

The Borough Council's appointed auditors, Grant Thornton UK LLP, currently undertake the annual audit of the accounts. Their contact details are:

Andrew Smith, Grant Thornton UK LLP, 4 Hardman Square, Garside Street, Manchester, M3 3EB

Further information

Further information about the accounts is available from:

Jan Willis, Interim Executive Director (Resources and Support Services), Castle House, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 1BL

Comments

If you have any comments about the way that the information is presented in this Statement of Accounts, or about possible alternative ways of making the information available, we would be pleased to receive them, at the above address.

Approval of Statement of Accounts

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Statement of Accounts to be considered by and approved by a Council Committee or the Full Council and for the Statement to be signed at the meeting by the person presiding. This statement has been approved by the Audit and Standards Committee and this is evidenced by the signature of that Committee's Chair.

Signed: (Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee)

Dated:

Statement of Responsibilities

The Authority's responsibilities

The Authority is required:

- To make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this authority, that officer is the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services);
- To manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets;
- To approve the Statement of Accounts.

The Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) - responsibilities

The Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) is the Council's statutory Section 151 Officer and as such is responsible for the preparation of the authority's statement of accounts which, in terms of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) are required to present a true and fair view of the financial position of the authority at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2020.

In preparing the statement of accounts the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) has:

- Selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- Made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- Complied with the Code.
- Kept proper accounting records which were up-to-date;
- Taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) certificate

I certify that the Statement of Accounts presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the Borough Council as at 31 March 2020 and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2020.

Jan Willis

Dated:

Interim Executive Director (Resources and Support Services)

Annual Governance Statement 2019/20

1.0 Scope of responsibility

- 1.1 Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3 Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council has approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. A copy of the Code is on the Council's website at [Code of Corporate Governance](#) or can be obtained from the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services). This statement explains how Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council complies with the Code and also meets the requirements of regulation 4(2) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of a Statement on Internal Control.

2.0 Delivering good governance in Local Government: framework

2.1 *The purpose of the governance framework*

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

- 2.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing and embedded process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.
- 2.3 The governance framework has been in place at Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2020 and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts.

3.0 The governance framework

- 3.1 The Council operates a number of systems, policies and procedures that constitute or contribute to the operation of the internal control environment and support the principles set out in the Code of Corporate Governance as detailed in the tables below:

Core Principle A	Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaving with integrity:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council has in place Codes of Conduct for both Members and Officers which set out requirements that support the need to behave with integrity.• The Council has a set of values which are underpinned by a set of expected behaviours.• All new members and officers are made aware of the Code of Conduct when they join the council.• Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council has a framework of policies that incorporate Anti-Fraud & Corruption, Anti- Money Laundering and a Whistleblowing Policy all of which are designed to in the first instance discourage inappropriate behaviour and then secondly encourage both Members and Officers to voice any concerns they have and	

Core Principle A	Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law.
<p>report any instances found.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members are required to renew their declaration of interests annually and also declare any relevant interests at meetings. There is also a register of gifts and hospitality Employees are required to notify their Executive Director or Head of Service about any potential conflict of interest. A register of gifts and hospitality is maintained by the Executive Management Secretarial Team, an annual reminder is issued to all Employees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respecting the rule of law; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has in place a Monitoring Officer who works with Members and Officers to ensure that the law is adhered to. There is a protocol in place for the Monitoring Officer, which sets out their role and supports them in fulfilling their responsibilities. Legal advice is given in reports for all decisions to be taken by Members and officers are also required to take advice where required. 	

Core Principle B	Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Openness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All meetings of the Authority are held in public unless the Part II requirements of the local authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2000, are met in terms of confidentiality. Copies of all minutes and agendas are available on the Councils website. All reports contain details of options considered and the advice provided by officers regarding legal and financial implications. The minutes include the reasons behind the decisions made. The Council has a Freedom of Information Scheme in place and seeks to publish information openly on its website wherever possible and practicable to do so. Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has in place a Communications Strategy which sets out how we will communicate with our citizens, service users and stakeholders. Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has a consultation framework and toolkit in place and provides details of all on-going consultation exercises/surveys on its website. Whenever we seek the views from the community we provide feedback on the information received and let our citizens know how it has or will be used to help shape Council decisions. 	

Core Principle C	Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has a clear vision of what it wants to achieve, which is set out in its Council Plan. The vision and priorities have been informed by an analysis of needs for the Borough and also via consultation with key stakeholders and the public. Each service has a Service Plan that outlines outcomes to be achieved and how they link to the Council Plan. Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Sustainable Community Strategy is in place which aims to create an environment where local people can articulate their priorities, needs and aspirations. In addition the capital strategy sets out the principles and objectives which the Council has identified for its capital investment and how its capital plans link to other strategies and areas of activity of the Council and its partners, this now extends to a 10 year period. The Councils day to day services support the delivery of the Council Plan, performance in delivering the objectives are monitored by the Executive Management Team (officers), the Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees (Members). 	

Core Principle D	Determining and planning the actions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determining Interventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principles of decision making are detailed in the Councils constitution. 	

Core Principle D	Determining and planning the actions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A calendar of meetings is approved and agreed by annual Council in May each year. • Planning Interventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Councils Forward Plan details all the reports relating to key decisions and the timescales within which they will be presented. • Service Plans are produced annually which set out the planned activities for each service area for that year. • Optimising the achievement of intended outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Medium Term Financial Strategy considers any changes that are required to be made to the base budget to ensure that service priorities are affordable and achievable. • The budget process takes account of the full cost of service delivery over the medium and longer terms. • The budget setting process ensures that a robust and balanced budget is approved. • The budget setting process allows for investment which is intended to bring future efficiencies. 	

Core Principle E	Developing the Council's capacity, including the capability of its leaders and the individuals within it. This includes ensuring effective relationships and a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Members and Officers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the councils capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council regularly reviews its activities to ensure continuous improvement of service delivery. • The Council works closely with its partners to ensure the delivery of agreed outcomes to the community. • Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roles of Members, Committees, Officers and Statutory Officers are set out in the Councils Constitution, which is available on the Councils website. • The Council has a scheme of delegation in place which forms part of the Constitution, this sets out the types of decision made by the council and who can make these. • The Constitution also contains Financial Regulations and Contract Procedures which provide a framework for Officers to follow when running their services and making decisions. • An induction programme is in place to provide training and support for all new members and officers. • All officers have an annual appraisal to review performance and identify any training and development needs. • A member development programme is in place in respect of members to identify all their training needs. • The Council is committed to supporting the health and well-being of the workforce through appropriate Human Resource policies, working practices and access to an occupational health service. 	

Core Principle F	Managing risks, performance and data through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a risk management policy and strategy in place. • A strategic risk register is maintained by the Executive Management Team, progress is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Audit and Standards Committee. • Operational risks are identified and managed by Heads of Service; these are reviewed and monitored quarterly. • Managing Performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads of Service and Business Managers are responsible operationally for the performance in delivering day to day services. This in turn is monitored by Executive Directors and the Executive Management Team. • The performance of delivering the Councils priorities is monitored by Cabinet. • There are Scrutiny Committees in place to monitor the performance of the Council and hold the Cabinet to account for the decisions that it makes. • Robust internal control: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The internal control framework comprises a range of policies and procedures to ensure sound management of the Councils operation and delivery of services. • Internal Audit undertakes reviews of systems that comprise the internal control and governance framework, it provides assurance and where necessary makes recommendations for improvement. • The Audit and Standards Committee receives reports with regards to the internal control framework. In 	

Core Principle F	Managing risks, performance and data through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
<p>addition quarterly reports are presented in respect of the progress and completion of the audit plan and the implementation of outstanding recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a suite of Information Security Policies to ensure and maintain the integrity of the data that it holds. • In addition the Council has an Information Governance Officer in place to ensure that personal data is held securely and managed appropriately. • Strong public financial management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive Director (Resources & Support Services) as the Councils Section 151 Officer is appropriately qualified and complies with the CIPFA statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer. • The Executive Director (Resources & Support Services) prepares and advises the Council on its Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Budget. • Regular budget monitoring reports are provided to Members and Officers. • Financial Regulations and Contract procedures provide a framework for the day to day management of the Councils financial transactions. 	

Core Principle G	Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and assurance (including audit) to deliver effective accountability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing good practice in transparency and reporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following information is reported annually to Members and is available on the Councils website; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance in delivering the Council's priorities; • Statement of Accounts; • Annual Governance Statement; • Annual Internal Audit Report • Annual External Audit Letter • In addition to the above, the Council has a transparency page on the website which provides public access to information in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code. • Assurance and effective accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit provides assurance throughout the year on the key systems of internal control. • The External Auditor provides assurance on the Councils financial statement. • The Councils governance arrangements are reviewed on an annual basis. • There is a Corporate Complaints, Compliments and Comments Policy in place. • Independent reviews of council services are undertaken from time to time, any feedback in respect of such reviews are noted and acted upon accordingly. • The Statutory Officers Group and Corporate Assurance Group review all corporate complaints, compliments and comments. 	

3.2 A key element of the Councils governance arrangements concerns safeguarding. Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure a duty of care for children and vulnerable adults across all its services. As a Council we are committed to ensuring that all children and vulnerable adults are protected and kept safe from harm whilst engaged in services organised and provided by us. We ensure this by;

- Having a Safeguarding Policy in place,
- Mandatory training in place for all Members and Officers,
- Carrying out the appropriate level of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for employees, and
- Working closely with the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board & Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership.

4.0 Review of effectiveness

4.1 Newcastle-under-Lyme 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 review of effectiveness is

informed by the work of the Executive Directors within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance and internal control environment and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

- 4.2 The Code of Corporate Governance adopted by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council demonstrates the Council is committed to ensuring that the principles of good governance flow from a shared ethos or culture, as well as from sound management systems, structures, and processes that are transparent to all its stakeholders. By making explicit the high standards of self-governance the Council aims to provide a lead to potential partners, to the public, private or voluntary sectors and to all citizens.
- 4.3 The Audit and Standards Committee monitors effectively the system of internal control, this has been demonstrated through the completion of a self-assessment against CIPFA's checklist on 'Measuring the effectiveness of the Audit Committee'. The Committee receives regular reports on both the Audit and Risk issues and has demonstrated effective challenge to senior officers in instances of non-compliance; it can therefore be relied upon when considering the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20.
- 4.4 The Scrutiny function continues to ensure effective monitoring and challenge. There are Scrutiny Committees that reflect each of the Council's Corporate Priorities. The terms of reference for each of these committees ensure that performance is effectively monitored and challenged
- 4.5 Internal Audit is responsible for monitoring the quality and effectiveness of the systems of internal control. A risk model is used to formulate a twelve month plan which is approved by the Audit and Standards Committee, and from which the annual workload is identified. The reporting process for Internal Audit requires a report of each audit to be submitted to the relevant Executive Director. The report includes recommendations for improvements that are included within an action plan and require agreement, or challenge, by Directors. The process includes follow ups on a monthly basis, the results of which are reported quarterly to the Audit and Standards Committee in terms of fundamental recommendations and the level of assurance that can be given for that directorate based on the implementation of their recommendations. Internal Audit has continued to receive positive feedback from External Audit with regards to the coverage of their work and high professional standards.
- 4.6 Internal Audit can provide a level of assurance that the Council's systems of internal control are operating adequately, from their work in 2019/20. Whilst the Internal Audit Service has identified some material deficiencies in controls, the service is satisfied that based upon assurances from Management, action is now being taken to address the issues raised.
- 4.7 An assessment of the role of the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) has been completed in accordance with the 'CIPFA Statement on the role of the Chief Financial Officer in public service organisations'. The statement produced by CIPFA seeks to strengthen governance and financial management throughout the public sector, in addition it sets out the core responsibilities, personal skills and professional standards that are crucial to the role. It requires that the CFO is professionally qualified, reports directly to the Chief Executive and is a member of the Leadership team. Having undertaken the assessment of the role of the CFO within the Council it can be confirmed that the Authority complies with this statement.
- 4.8 The role of the Head of Internal Audit has been reviewed in accordance with 'CIPFA Statement on the role of the Head of Internal Audit'. The role of the Head of Internal Audit occupies a critical position within any organisation helping it to achieve its objectives by giving assurance on its internal control arrangements and playing a key role on promoting good corporate governance. The main aim of the CIPFA statement is to promote and raise the profile of the Head of Internal Audit within public service organisations. The Council's current arrangements for the provision of Internal Audit, in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council, ensure that the objectives of this role are achieved.
- 4.9 The Monitoring Officer has a duty to monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure its aims and principles are given full effect. The Council keeps the Constitution under review throughout the year, with a report setting out changes to be consolidated to Council on an annual basis.
- 4.10 Managers Assurance Statements are produced annually by both Executive Directors and Heads of Service. These statements provide a level of assurance with regards to the adequacy of internal controls within their own Directorate and Service Areas.

- 4.11 There are various specialist working groups, i.e. Statutory Officers' Group, Capital, Assets and Commercial Investment Review Group, Corporate Governance, Information Security, Procurement, and Corporate Health and Safety, that agree, oversee and review the various disciplines giving assurance that the Council complies with statute, identifies and manages its risks.
- 4.12 The External Auditors, Grant Thornton gave an unqualified opinion on the 2018/19 Accounts, in their Governance Report. In addition their review of the Council's arrangements for securing financial resilience concluded that the Council had robust financial systems and processes in place to manage its financial risks and opportunities and to secure a stable financial position that enabled it to continue to operate for the foreseeable future.
- 4.13 The Council has a zero tolerance to Fraud and Corruption, the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Framework, Fraud Response Plan and Whistleblowing Policy are in place to help deliver our commitment to protecting public funds and ensuring that all Council activities are carried out in accordance with the principles of openness, honesty and integrity. The commitment to deterring fraud and corruption is actively promoted throughout the organisation. Anyone who has any concerns about any aspect of the Council's work is actively encouraged to come forward and voice those concerns.

5.0 Significant governance issues

- 5.1 The Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) post is currently being undertaken by the Interim Executive Director (Resources and Support Services), Jan Willis following an unsuccessful attempt to recruit on a permanent basis. It should be noted that during 2019/20 a number of permanent appointments to senior roles were made including Head of Human Resources, Head of Planning and Executive Director of Commercial Development and Economic Growth.
- 5.2 The following matters have been identified as issues that need to be addressed in order to further improve the Council's overall governance arrangements;
- To ensure that funding required for the Councils Capital Programme is maximised through the sale of assets identified for disposal as part of the Asset Management Strategy.
 - To ensure that the Council's Constitution is fit for purpose and up to date, in particular decision making processes, and that regular reviews of its appropriateness will continue to be undertaken.
 - To continue to raise the profile and status of Information Security and Governance throughout the Council. Work to ensure that information security and data protection requirements and legislation are complied with, is to be continued.
 - To ensure that the Council continues to deliver services that meet the needs of our customers and respond to any issues our customers may have with the current level of service provision. Working with our partners we will ensure that we can deliver effectively and efficiently against citizen/customer requirements.
 - To ensure that our services demonstrate value for money we will continue to review all Service Areas against best practice and implement actions outlined in Service Plans, in addition we will seek to improve efficiencies across all Council services and ensure that the savings identified from this process can be realised.
 - To work in partnership as part of the North West Staffordshire Corporate Fraud Team to ensure that the Council remains vigilant in combating and tackling all aspects of fraud and corruption.
 - To ensure that the Council is committed to the safeguarding of all children and vulnerable adults and that they are protected and kept safe from harm whilst engaged in services organised and provided by us.
 - To develop the commercial skill sets of Officers and the Council's investment capacity in order to support the Council's long term financial sustainability.
 - To improve practical guidance to governance in order to provide clearer understanding of processes to be followed throughout the organisation.

- To better manage and automate decision report production, meeting agendas, minutes and delegated decision powers and records through the digitisation agenda.

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review and the forth coming Corporate Peer Review which will commence later in the year.

6.0 Reflecting the challenges and impact from the Coronavirus

6.1 The Annual Governance Statement assesses governance in place during 2019/20, so the majority of the year will be unaffected by coronavirus. The conclusion in Section 4 above that governance is fit for purpose during 2019/20 has been based on normal operations. However, coronavirus will have impacted on governance during March 2020, and this section looks at the challenges and the impact the coronavirus has had on the Council.

6.2 The impact on governance can be seen under the following broad categories:

6.2.1 *Impact on business as usual in the delivery of services*

- Social distancing measures have had a significant impact on the Council's governance arrangements.
- MHCLG laid regulations before Parliament in April 2020 to provide flexibility in relation to local authority and police and crime panel meetings held between 4 April 2020 and 6 May 2021. These regulations provide for remote access to meetings of local authorities by members of a local authority and by the press and public. The regulations also enable local authorities to hold and change the frequency and occurrence of meetings without requirement for further notice and they also remove the provisions requiring local authorities to hold annual meetings.
- Given the fundamental importance of local democracy, openness and transparency, accountability and the overarching responsibility to serve the public interest Newcastle Borough Council has put arrangements in place to hold meetings virtually, allowing elected members to fully engage in taking key decisions and allow for public participation.

6.2.2 *National response to coronavirus and governance issues arising*

- The Council has and continues to work on its recovery plan. This currently looks at five areas of recovery work and includes the following areas:-
 1. Reopening Safe, Successful Retail Centres
 2. Supporting Health & Wellbeing
 3. Economic Recovery
 4. Stepping-up Council Services
 5. Financial Recovery
- With the lockdown beginning to be eased, efforts are now be focused on recovery, and ensuring that both the Council and the Borough get "Back on Track" – getting the economy back to its pre-lockdown position as swiftly and safely as possible.
- This plan is delivered through more detailed action plans, with the Cabinet overseeing implementation through portfolio holders working closely with the Executive Management Team colleagues leading on each work stream. Key work undertaken to date is detailed below
- It is still difficult to predict what actions will be needed over the next months and possibly years. There are impacts that will need to be addressed, for instance the Council's role in dealing with local outbreaks of COVID-19 together with the Council's role in the Government's test, track and trace.
- Environmental Health are working across Staffordshire with Public Health to meet the Government's expectations on the part of the plan that will need to be addressed locally. Sufficient resources to meet these demands and support the economy to restart and carry out our usual regulatory duties is a concern, however funding is being made available to upper tier authorities across the country to put these plans in place.

6.2.3 *The financial impact of delivering the local government response*

- The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has already had a significant impact on local council finances, the effects of which will continue through the current period of lockdown and beyond. The financial impact will be due to both unforeseen but necessary, expenditure and reduced income from fees and charges, Council Tax and Business Rates.

- The overall impact is very difficult to predict due to the frequent changes regarding the relaxation of the lockdown measures from Central Government together with anticipating the public's behaviours and responses to these changes.
- The impact will also vary by area, dependent on factors such as geography, demographics, services delivered and the nature of the local economy. However to a large extent, it will depend on how quickly the national and local economies return to normal levels of activity.
- To offset the additional financial pressures being faced by Local Government, Central Government has provided additional funding of £3.2bn to help Council's across the country through the coronavirus pandemic. In addition to this the Government have also announced that they will share the income losses incurred as a result of COVID-19 together with Collection Fund losses and as of 16 July announced a third tranche of funding in an amount of £500m to the sector.

6.2.4 Assessment of the longer term disruption and consequences arising from the coronavirus pandemic

- It is essential that the Council focuses on the likely impact that the crisis, and its aftermath, will have on income levels both now and into the future.
- The COVID-19 crisis is likely to be long-lasting, affecting more than one financial year. It could be difficult for councils to reduce their spending back to pre-crisis levels and income streams will not necessarily bounce back quickly, especially if the local economy is in recession.
- This means that the assumptions underlying later years in the Medium Term Financial Strategy will need to be reviewed, making the 'funding gap' for 2021/22 and beyond larger and are likely to include:
 - *Business Rates income projections due to collection rates, growth, appeals, empty properties relief and other reliefs.*
 - *Council Tax income projections due to collection rates, growth and Local Council Tax Support.*
 - *Income projections for fees and charges including car parking, property rentals and leisure.*
 - *Transformation and savings projects especially where they are focussed on income generation.*

6.2.5 Some Positive Outcomes for the Council

The pandemic has not been totally without some positive outcomes for the Council, for example:

- We have demonstrated the ability to respond and change at pace where needed, something that can be further develop in the future to adapt and deliver change across the Council and its communities.
- The Council's staff have shown the ability to rapidly change mind-set and culture, thereby demonstrating we can deliver services successfully through a virtual front-door and work both flexibly and remotely.
- The pandemic has highlighted the position in regards to the resilience and integrity of our ICT infrastructure.

Once the crisis is over, the Council will conduct a review of the lessons to be learned from its response.

Signed _____

Councillor Simon Tagg, Leader of the Council

Signed _____

Martin Hamilton, Chief Executive

Dated _____

Financial Statements

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

This statement shows the accounting cost of providing services in accordance with accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Authorities raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in both the Movement in Reserves Statement (page 25) and the Expenditure and Funding Analysis (page 45).

2018/19				2019/20		
Gross expenditure £000	Gross income £000	Net expenditure £000		Gross expenditure £000	Gross income £000	Net expenditure £000
3,080	510	2,570	Chief Executive	2,667	671	1,996
33,878	30,246	3,632	Resources & Support Services	31,019	26,528	4,491
7,270	3,595	3,675	Regeneration & Development	8,031	5,244	2,787
17,837	8,061	9,776	Operational Services	17,034	8,031	9,003
1,512	108	1,404	Corporate	606	415	191
63,577	42,520	21,057	Cost of services	59,357	40,889	18,468
972	375	597	Other operating expenditure (Note 10-p50)	918	763	155
6,775	4,386	2,389	Financing & investment income/expenditure (Note 11-p50)	6,672	5,354	1,318
8,826	23,612	(14,786)	Taxation & non-specific grant income/expenditure (Note 12-p50)	9,325	24,780	(15,455)
		9,257	(Surplus)/deficit on service provision			4,486
		(5,046)	(Surplus)/deficit on revaluation of assets			(1,147)
		3,640	Remeasurement of the defined benefit liability/asset (Note 29-p62)			(21,192)
		(1,406)	Other income & expenditure			(22,339)
		7,851	Total income & expenditure			(17,853)

- Resources and Support Services includes housing benefits grant income and expenditure of circa £25m.

Movement in Reserves Statement

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Council, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and unusable reserves. The movements in the year are broken down between gains and losses incurred in accordance with accounting practices and statutory adjustments required to return to the amounts chargeable to council tax for the year. The net increase/decrease line shows the statutory General Fund balance movements in the year following those adjustments.

	General Fund balance	Capital receipts reserve	Capital grants Unapplied	Total usable reserves	Unusable reserves	Total Council reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
2019/20						
Balance at 31 March 2019 b/fwd	(3,130)	(2,242)	(1,032)	(6,404)	15,783	9,379
Movement in Reserves 2019/20						
Total comprehensive income & expenditure	4,486	-	-	4,486	(22,339)	(17,853)
Adjustments between accounting & funding basis (Note 8-p48)	(4,930)	1,425	(820)	(4,325)	4,325	-
Increase/decrease in year	(444)	1,425	(820)	161	(18,014)	(17,853)
Balance at 31 March 2020 c/fwd	(3,574)	(817)	(1,852)	(6,243)	(2,231)	(8,474)
2018/19						
Balance at 31 March 2018 b/fwd	(4,019)	(2,162)	(1,158)	(7,339)	8,867	1,528
Movement in Reserves 2018/19						
Total comprehensive income & expenditure	9,257	-	-	9,257	(1,406)	7,851
Adjustments between accounting & funding basis (Note 8-p48)	(8,368)	(80)	126	(8,322)	8,322	-
Increase/decrease in year	889	(80)	126	935	6,916	7,851
Balance at 31 March 2019 c/fwd	(3,130)	(2,242)	(1,032)	(6,404)	15,783	9,379

- The General Fund balance includes £2.333m of earmarked reserves, leaving a general balance of £1.241m.

Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Council. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Council. The first category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the Council may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the Capital Receipts Reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt). The second category of reserves is those that the Council is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses, where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line 'Adjustments between accounting and funding basis' (page 25).

31/03/2019 £000		31/03/2020 £000
47,534	Property, plant & equipment (Note 19-p53)	44,710
676	Surplus assets (Note 19-p53)	676
16,415	Investment property (Note 20-p56)	16,737
1,429	Heritage assets (Note 21-p57)	1,429
93	Intangible assets	94
442	Long term debtors (Note 22-p57)	413
66,589	Long term assets	64,059
-	Short term investments (Note 31-p67)	-
215	Inventories	241
7,968	Short term debtors (Note 22-p57)	12,437
2,223	Cash/cash equivalents (Note 31-p67)	4,704
10,406	Current assets	17,382
(7,355)	Short term creditors (Note 23-p57)	(11,306)
(77)	Short term borrowing (Note 31-p67)	(77)
(1,216)	Provisions (Note 24-p58)	(890)
(8,648)	Current liabilities	(12,273)
(1,020)	Provisions (Note 24-p58)	(1,061)
(76,138)	Net pensions liability (Note 29-p62)	(58,899)
(566)	Capital grants receipts in advance	(734)
(77,724)	Long term liabilities	(60,694)
(9,377)	Net assets	8,474
6,404	Total usable reserves (MIRS-p25)	6,243
(15,783)	Total unusable reserves (Note 25-p54)	2,231
(9,379)	Total reserves	8,474

Cash Flow Statement

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

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
9,257	Net (surplus)/deficit on the provision of services (per CIES-p24)	4,486
(2,844)	(Increase)/decrease In creditors	(1,145)
1,460	Increase/(decrease) in debtors	1,939
19	Increase/(decrease) in inventories	26
(184)	(Increase)/decrease in provisions	285
(2,809)	Charges for depreciation/impairment of non-current assets	(4,553)
(2,591)	Revaluation losses on property, plant & equipment	(1,568)
(471)	Movements in fair value of investment properties	282
(74)	Amortisation of intangible assets	(24)
7	Capital element of finance leases where Council is lessor	(20)
(4,475)	Movement in pension liability	(3,952)
(1,563)	Non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	(331)
(13,525)	Adjustments for non-cash movements	(9,061)
15	Capital grants & contributions unapplied credited to Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	1,131
1,339	Transfer of cash sales proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	763
-	Transfer from deferred capital receipts reserve on receipt of cash	-
1,354	Adjustments for items that are investing/financing activities	1,894
(2,914)	Net cash flows from operating activities	(2,681)
1,568	Purchase of property, plant & equipment, investment property & intangible assets	2,477
38,919	Purchase of short & long term investments	68,500
(1,810)	Proceeds from sale of property, plant & equipment, investment property & intangible assets	(515)
(39,000)	Proceeds from short & long term investments	(68,500)
(139)	Other receipts from investing activities	(1,295)
(462)	Net cash flows from investing activities	667
-	Cash receipts of borrowing	-
(653)	Other receipts from financing activities	(2,864)
2,478	Repayments of borrowing	-
258	Other payments for financing activities	2,397
2,083	Net cash flows from financing activities	(467)
-	Local Government Pension Scheme deficit contribution	-
(1,293)	Net increase or decrease in cash & equivalents	(2,481)
(930)	Cash & equivalents brought forward	(2,223)
(2,223)	Cash & equivalents carried forward	(4,704)

The cash flows for operating activities include the following items:

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
(75)	Interest received	(97)
6	Interest paid	-

Notes to the Financial Statements

A. Prior Period Adjustments

i. Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

During the financial year 2019/20 the responsibility for the Environmental Health service changed from the Regeneration and Development directorate to the Operational directorate, as such the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement has been adjusted for 2018/19 for comparative purposes. Expenditure of £3.581m and income of £2.384 (net expenditure of £1.197m) has been removed from the Regeneration and Development directorate line and added to the Operational directorate line. There is no further impact on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement nor any other Statements/notes.

ii. Property, Plant and Equipment

During 2019-20 the Council procured and implemented a new asset management system called "Asset Manager" supplied by CIPFA.

A detail review of the Council's asset data was carried out prior to the implementation of the system to ensure that the data imported was accurate and complete. This data cleansing exercise identified a number of historical differences predominately relating to the valuation of assets and the accounting treatment of them in respect of the Revaluation Reserve.

The historical differences total £4.423m of which £3.182m predates 2017/18, £0.237m relates to 2017/18 and £1.004m relates to 2018/19.

A summary of the historical differences are shown below:

	Historical Difference		
	Prior to 2017/18	2017/18	2018/19
Land & Buildings			
Revaluation Reserve Balance with zero carrying value	-742,973.89	-50,488.67	-178,560.19
Revaluation reserve transferred to Investment Properties	-30,886.96	0.00	0.00
Negative Revaluation Reserve	5.10	0.00	0.00
Negative Historic Cost Net Book Value	-88,443.25	0.00	-221,152.50
Plant / Vehicles / Equipment			
Negative Historic Cost Net Book Value	-119,484.00	0.00	0.00
Negative Carrying Value & Negative Historic Cost Net Book Value	-8,475.00	0.00	0.00
Negative Historic Cost Net Book Value	-21,345.00	0.00	0.00
Revaluation balance more than carrying value	-99,936.28	-186,825.00	-605,633.10
Community			
Negative Revaluation Reserve	0.00	0.00	9,999.00
Negative Historic Cost Net Book Value	-9,589.60	0.00	-8,956.91
Surplus Assets			
Negative Revaluation Reserve	368,750.00	0.00	0.00
Investment Properties			
Revaluation balance more than carrying value	-2,460,000.00	0.00	0.00
Revaluation reserve transferred to Investment Properties	30,886.96	0.00	0.00
	-3,181,491.92	-237,313.67	-1,004,303.70

It should be noted that the above historical differences do not affect the Council's financial position, the correction of these differences are solely between the Revaluation Reserve and the Capital Adjustment Account and therefore has no impact on the Council's usable reserves or on the surplus/deficit declared in each year.

The following notes contain adjustments to reflect the above:

- Note 19, Property, plant and equipment; Movements on Balances
- Note 25, Unusable reserves; Revaluation Reserve and Capital Adjustment Account

19. Property, plant and equipment

Movements on balances

2019/20	Land & buildings	Infrastructure assets	Vehicles, plant, furniture & equipment	Community assets	Surplus assets	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation						
At 1 April 2019	32,238	1,339	17,731	7,874	676	59,858
Transfers regarding historical variances		-	41	(38)	-	3
Additions	812	32	1,035	305	65	2,249
Accumulated depreciation /impairment written out	(2,048)	-	-	(30)	-	(2,078)
Revaluation increases/(decreases) - revaluation reserve	1,303	-	-	415	-	1,718
Revaluation increases/(decreases) - surplus/deficit on provision of services	(1,525)	-	-	(93)	-	(1,618)
Derecognition - disposals	-	-	(2,573)		-	(2,573)
At 31 March 2020	30,780	1,371	16,234	8,433	741	57,559
Accumulated depreciation & impairment						
At 1 April 2019	(1,757)	(500)	(8,149)	(1,242)	-	(11,648)
Transfers regarding historical variances	297	-	(582)	335	-	50
Depreciation charge	(747)	(36)	(2,389)	(209)	-	(3,381)
Accumulated depreciation/impairment written out	2,049	-	-	31	-	2,080
Impairment losses/(reversals) - revaluation reserve	(472)	(1)	-	(9)		(482)
Impairment losses/(reversals) - surplus/deficit on provision of services	(338)	(30)	(354)	(259)	(65)	(1,046)
Derecognition - disposals			2,241			2,241
At 31 March 2020	(968)	(567)	(9,233)	(1,353)	(65)	(12,186)
Net book value						
As at 31 March 2019	30,481	839	9,582	6,632	676	48,210
As at 31 March 2020	29,812	804	7,001	7,080	676	45,373

25. Unusable reserves

Revaluation reserve

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
13,772	Balance at 1 April	18,818
-	Adjustment re. capital adjustment account	(4,423)
-	historical variances	
5,662	Upward revaluation of assets not charged to the surplus/deficit on the provision of services	4,001
(616)	Downward revaluation of assets & impairment losses not charged to the surplus/deficit on the provision of services	(2,780)
-	Difference between fair value depreciation and historical cost depreciation	(949)
-	Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	(149)
18,818	Balance at 31 March	14,518

Capital adjustment account

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
49,014	Balance at 1 April	42,913
	Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement:	
(2,809)	Charges for depreciation/impairment of non-current assets	(4,640)
(74)	Amortisation of intangible Assets	(24)
(1,574)	REFCUS expenditure	(380)
1,574	REFCUS income	380
(1,563)	Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal	(331)
(471)	Movements in the market value of investment properties debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	1,107
(2,591)	Revaluation losses on property, plant and equipment	(1,568)
-	Application of grants to capital financing from the capital grants received in advance account	33
7	Capital element of finance leases where Council is the lessor	(20)
-	Minimum revenue provision contribution	40
(7,501)		(5,403)
	Capital financing applied in the year:	
1,266	Use of the capital receipts reserve to finance new capital expenditure	2,199
141	Application of grants to capital financing from the capital grants unapplied account	311
(7)	Capital element of finance leases where Council is the lessor	20
	Adjusting Amounts Written Out of Revaluation Reserve	
-	Adjustment re. revaluation reserve historical variances	4,423
-	Difference between fair value depreciation/historical cost depreciation	949
-	Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	149
(6,101)		2,648
42,913	Balance at 31 March	45,561

1. Accounting Policies

i. General principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2019/20 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2020. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, which is required to be prepared in accordance with accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

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.

Materiality levels throughout the accounts are based upon the relevance to the users of the accounts and notes and the amounts advised to the Council by its external auditors (£1.250m), triviality levels are advised to be £0.062m.

ii. Accruals of income and expenditure

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

- Revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods, is recognised when (or as) the goods or services are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the performance obligations in the contract;
- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed – where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and used, they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet;
- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made;
- Interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure on the basis of the effective interest rate rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract;
- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where debts may not be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

iii. Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with the financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. In the Cash Flow Statement, cash and cash equivalents are shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand.

iv. Prior period adjustments, changes in Accounting Policies and estimates and errors

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

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

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

v. Charges to revenue for non-current assets

Services, support services and trading accounts are debited with the following amounts to record the cost of holding fixed 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 service.

The Council is not required to raise council tax to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisation. These are therefore reversed out by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

vi. Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates

Billing authorities act as agents, collecting council tax and non-domestic rates (NDR) on behalf of the major preceptors (including government for NDR) and, as principal for themselves. Billing authorities are required by statute to maintain a separate fund (i.e. the Collection Fund) for the collection and distribution of amounts due in respect of council tax and NDR. Under the legislative framework for the Collection Fund, billing authorities, major preceptors and central government share proportionately the risks and rewards that the amount of council tax and NDR collected could be less or more than predicted.

Accounting for Council Tax and NDR

The council tax and NDR income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) is the Council's share of accrued income for the year. However, regulations determine the amount of council tax and NDR that must be included in the Council's General Fund. Therefore, the difference between the income included in the CIES and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the General Fund is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account and included as a reconciling item in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The Balance Sheet includes the Council's share of the end of year balances in respect of council tax and NDR relating to arrears, impairment allowances for doubtful debts, overpayments and prepayments and appeals.

Where debtor balances for the above are identified as impaired because of a likelihood arising from a past event that payments due under the statutory arrangements will not be made (fixed or determinable payments), the asset is written down and a charge made to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES. The impairment loss is measured as the difference between the carrying amount and the revised future cash flows.

vii. Employee benefits

Benefits payable during employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within 12 months of the year-end. They include benefits such as wages and salaries, annual leave and sick leave and non-monetary benefits for current employees that are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Council. An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlements or other form of leave, e.g. time off in lieu earned by employees but not taken before the year-end which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the wage and salary rates applicable in the following year, being the period in which the employee takes the benefit. The accrual is charged to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement so that holiday benefits are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

Termination benefits

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

Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or pensioner in the year, not the amount calculated according to relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, appropriations are required to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for pension enhancement termination benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end.

Post-employment benefits

Employees of the Council (unless they chose to opt out) are members of the Local Government Pensions Scheme, administered by Staffordshire County Council. The scheme provides defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees working for the Council.

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

- The liabilities of the Staffordshire Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method – i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates and forecasts of projected earnings for current employees;
- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate of 2.3% (2.3% for the unfunded scheme);
- The assets of Staffordshire Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:
 - Quoted securities – current bid price;
 - Unquoted securities – professional estimate;
 - Unitised securities – current bid price;
 - Property – market value.

The change in the net pension's liability is analysed into the following components:

- Service Cost comprising:
 - Current service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year - allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked;
 - Past service cost - the increase in liabilities arising from current year decisions whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years – debited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Non Distributed Costs;
 - Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset, i.e. net interest expense for the Council - the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability/asset that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. This is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability/asset at the beginning of the period, taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability/asset during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments;
- Remeasurements comprising
 - The return on plan assets, excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset, charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure;
 - Actuarial gains and losses - changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions - charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure;
- Contributions paid to the Staffordshire Pension Fund - cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

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

Discretionary benefits

The Council also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff 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.

viii. Events after the Balance Sheet date

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

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

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

ix. Financial instruments

Financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and are carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. The effective 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 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.

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. The financial assets that the Council holds are measured at amortised cost.

Financial assets measured at amortised cost

Loans and receivables are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value. They are subsequently measured at their amortised cost. Annual credits to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For most of the loans that the Council has made, this means that the amount presented in

the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable (plus accrued interest) and interest credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

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 the financial assets held by the authority, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable (plus accrued interest) and interest credited to the CIES is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

Short term investments

The Council recognises expected credit losses on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost, either on a 12 month or lifetime basis. 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 a 12 month expected loss.

Instruments entered into before 1 April 2006

The Council has entered into a financial guarantee that is not required to be accounted for as a financial instrument. This guarantee is reflected in the Statement of Accounts to the extent that a contingent liability note is needed under the policies set out in the section on provisions, contingent liabilities and contingent assets.

x. Foreign currency translation

Where the Council has entered into a transaction denominated in a foreign currency, the transaction is converted into sterling at the exchange rate applicable on the date the transaction was effective. Where amounts in foreign currency are outstanding at the year-end, they are reconverted at the spot exchange rate at 31 March. Resulting gains or losses are recognised in the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

xi. Government grants and contributions

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

- The Council will comply with the conditions attached to the payments;
- The grants or contributions will be received.

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

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (attributable revenue grants and contributions) or taxation and non-specific grant income (non-ring fenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the CIES.

Where capital grants are credited to the CIES, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the capital grants unapplied reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the capital adjustment account. Amounts in the capital grants

unapplied reserve are transferred to the capital adjustment account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

xii. Heritage assets

The Council's heritage assets are either held in its Museum or consist of outdoor structures of various kinds. All of these assets are tangible. Heritage assets are recognised and measured (including the treatment of revaluation gains and losses) in accordance with the Authority's accounting policies on property, plant and equipment. However, some of the measurement rules are relaxed in relation to heritage assets as detailed below:

Museum collection

These items are reported in the Balance Sheet at insurance valuation, which is based on market values as assessed by an external valuer in October 2006. These valuations are updated where necessary by the museum curator in respect of significant items and changes. New items are added at cost, if purchased and at valuation, if donated, where they are significant. It is considered that obtaining a complete revaluation each year for all items would involve a disproportionate cost in comparison to the benefits to the users of the Council's financial statements. No depreciation is charged since the items in the collection are deemed to have indeterminate lives.

Outdoor structures

There is no reliable cost or valuation information available to enable these items to be valued. Consequently, they are not recognised on the Balance Sheet.

General

The carrying amounts of heritage assets are reviewed where there is evidence of impairment for heritage assets, e.g. where an item has suffered physical deterioration or breakage or where doubts arise as to its authenticity. Any impairment is recognised and measured in accordance with the Authority's general policies on impairment. Heritage assets may occasionally be disposed of which have a doubtful provenance or are unsuitable for public display. The proceeds of such items are accounted for in accordance with the Authority's general provisions relating to the disposal of property, plant and equipment. Disposal proceeds are disclosed separately in the notes to the financial statements and are accounted for in accordance with statutory accounting requirements relating to capital expenditure and capital receipts (see note 'xviii').

xiii. Intangible Assets

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

Intangible assets are measured initially at cost. Amounts are only revalued where the fair value of the assets held by the Council can be determined by reference to an active market. In practice, no intangible asset held by the Council meets this criterion, and they are therefore carried at amortised cost. The depreciable amount of an intangible asset is amortised over its useful life to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES). An asset is tested for impairment whenever there is an indication that the asset might be impaired – any losses recognised are posted to the relevant service line(s) in the CIES. Any gain or loss arising on the disposal or abandonment of an intangible asset is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the CIES.

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

xiv. Inventories

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

xv. Investment property

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

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, being the price that would be received to sell such an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. As a non-financial asset, investment properties are measured at highest and best use. Properties are not depreciated, however their values are considered each year according to market conditions at the year-end (i.e. if any properties or classes of properties, following consideration are thought likely to be subject to a valuation change, they are revalued). In any case every property is revalued once every five years according to a rolling programme of revaluations. Gains and losses on revaluation are posted to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

Rentals received in relation to investment properties are credited to the Financing and Investment Income line and result in a gain for the General Fund balance. However, revaluation and disposal gains and losses are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the General Fund balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the capital adjustment account and (for any sale proceeds greater than £10,000) the capital receipts reserve.

xvi. Leases

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases. Where a lease covers both land and buildings, the land and buildings elements are considered separately for classification.

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

The Council as lessee

Finance leases

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

Lease payments are apportioned between a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property, plant or equipment – applied to write down the lease liability; and a finance charge (debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

Property, plant and equipment recognised under finance leases is accounted for using the policies applied generally to such assets, subject to depreciation being charged over the lease term if this is shorter than the asset's estimated useful life (where ownership of the asset does not transfer to the Council at the end of the lease period).

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

Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefitting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment. Charges are made on a straight-line basis

over the life of the lease even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a rent-free period at the commencement of the lease).

The Council as lessor

Finance leases

Where the Council grants a finance lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the relevant asset is written out of the Balance Sheet as a disposal. At the commencement of the lease, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether property, plant and equipment or assets held for sale) is written off to the other operating expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. A gain, representing the Council's net investment in the lease, is credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal), matched by a lease (long-term debtor) asset in the Balance Sheet.

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property – applied to write down the lease debtor (together with any premiums received) and finance income (credited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

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

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of fixed assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are therefore appropriated to the capital adjustment account from the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Operating leases

Where the Council grants an operating lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the asset is retained in the Balance Sheet. Rental income is credited to the other operating expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Credits are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a premium paid at the commencement of the lease). Initial direct costs incurred in negotiating and arranging the lease are added to the carrying amount of the relevant asset and charged as an expense over the lease term on the same basis as rental income.

xvii. Overheads and support services

The costs of overheads and support services are charged to service segments in accordance with the authority's arrangements for accountability and financial performance.

xviii. Property, plant and equipment

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

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of property, plant and equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Council and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. No de-minimis level, below which expenditure is not capitalised, applies. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

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

The cost of assets acquired other than by purchase is deemed to be its fair value, unless the acquisition does not have commercial substance (i.e. it will not lead to a variation in the cash flows of the Council). In the latter case, where an asset is acquired via an exchange, the cost of the acquisition is the carrying amount of the asset given up by the Council.

Donated assets are measured initially at fair value. The difference between fair value and any consideration paid is credited to the taxation and non-specific grant income line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, unless the donation has been made conditionally. Until conditions are satisfied, the gain is held in a donated assets account. Where gains are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund balance to the capital adjustment account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

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

- Infrastructure and assets under construction – depreciated historical cost. Where the historical cost is unknown, a nominal value of £1 is attributed to the asset concerned;
- Community assets - depreciated historical cost, or the valuation option as per section 4.10 of the Code of Practice on local government accounting (this permits valuations by any method that is appropriate and relevant);
- All other assets – current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV).

Where there is no market-based evidence of current value because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost (DRC) is used as an estimate of current value. Where non-property assets have short useful lives or low values (or both), depreciated historical cost basis is used as a proxy for current value.

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at current value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their current value at the year-end, but as a minimum every five years. Assets within each asset class are revalued together to ensure consistency of valuation within class. Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the revaluation reserve to recognise unrealised gains.

Where decreases in value are identified, they are accounted for by:

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

The revaluation reserve contains revaluation gains recognised since 1 April 2007 only, the date of its formal implementation. Gains arising before that date have been consolidated into the capital adjustment account.

Impairment

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

Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for by:

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

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

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all property, plant and equipment assets by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives. An exception is made for assets without a determinable finite useful life (i.e. freehold land and certain Community Assets) and assets that are not yet available for use (i.e. assets under construction).

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

- Dwellings and other buildings - straight-line allocation over the useful life of the property as estimated by the valuer;
- Vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment – a percentage of the value of each class of assets in the Balance Sheet, as advised by a suitably qualified officer;
- Infrastructure - straight-line allocation over estimated life of asset.

Where an item of property, plant and equipment asset has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately. Revaluation gains are also depreciated, with an amount equal to the difference between current value depreciation charged on assets and the depreciation that would have been chargeable based on their historical cost being transferred each year from the revaluation reserve to the capital adjustment account.

Disposals and non-current assets held for sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an asset held for sale. The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and fair value less costs to sell. Where there is a subsequent decrease to fair value less costs to sell, the loss is posted to the other operating expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any previous losses recognised in the surplus or deficit on provision of services. Depreciation is not charged on assets held for sale.

If assets no longer meet the criteria to be classified as assets held for sale, they are reclassified back to non-current assets and valued at the lower of their carrying amount before they were classified as held for sale; adjusted for depreciation, amortisation or revaluations that would have been recognised had they not been classified as held for sale and their recoverable amount at the date of the decision not to sell. Assets that are to be abandoned or scrapped are not reclassified as assets held for sale.

When an asset is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether property, plant and equipment or assets held for sale) is written off to the other operating expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the revaluation reserve are transferred to the capital adjustment account.

Amounts received for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. These are required to be credited to the capital receipts reserve and can then only be used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the Council's underlying need to borrow (the capital financing requirement). Receipts are appropriated to the reserve from the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of fixed assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are appropriated to the capital adjustment account from the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

xix. Provisions, contingent liabilities and contingent assets

Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Council a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. For instance, the Council may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or the payment of compensation.

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

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year – where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service. Where some or all of the payment required to settle a provision is expected to be recovered from another party (e.g. from an insurance claim), this is only recognised as income for the relevant service if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received if the Council settles the obligation.

Contingent liabilities

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

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

xx. Reserves

The Council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by appropriating amounts out of the General Fund Balance. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in that year to score against the surplus or deficit on the provision of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then transferred back into the General Fund balance so that there is no net charge against council tax for the expenditure.

Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, local taxation and retirement and employee benefits and do not represent usable resources for the Council – these reserves are explained in the relevant policies.

xxi. Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but that does not result in the creation of a non-current asset has been charged as expenditure to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year. Where the Council has determined to meet the cost of this expenditure (less any grant or contribution received towards it) from existing capital resources or by borrowing, a transfer in the Movement in Reserves Statement from the General Fund balance to the capital adjustment account then reverses out the amounts charged so that there is no impact on the level of council tax.

xxii. VAT

VAT payable is included as an expense only to the extent that it is not recoverable from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. VAT receivable is excluded from income.

xxiii. Fair value measurement

Some non-financial assets such as surplus assets and investment properties are measured 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 takes place either in the principal market for the asset or liability or in the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market. Measurement uses the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing an asset or liability, assuming they are acting in their best economic interest and takes account of their ability to generate economic benefits by using the asset in its highest and best use or by selling it to another market participant that would use the asset in its highest and best use.

Valuation techniques appropriate in the circumstances are used 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 financial statements are categorised within the fair value hierarchy as follows:

Level 1 - quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that can be accessed at the measurement date;

Level 2 - inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset, either directly or indirectly;

Level 3 - unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

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

At the balance sheet date the following new standards and amendments to existing standards that are deemed to have material significance to the Council, have been published but not yet adopted by the Code of Practice of Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom:

- **IFRS 16 Leases** will require local authorities that are lessees to recognise most leases on their balance sheets as right-of-use assets with corresponding lease liabilities (there is recognition for low-value and short-term leases). Implementation for local government has been deferred to 1 April 2021. The impact on the Council's Statement of Accounts is not fully known at the current time.

3. Critical judgements in applying Accounting Policies

In applying the accounting policies set out in Note 1 the Council has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts are:

- **Property, Plant and Equipment Valuations** - As at the valuation date of 31 March 2020, less weight can be attached to previous market evidence for comparison purposes in order to inform opinions of value. The current response to COVID-19 means that there is an unprecedented set of circumstances on which to base a judgement. The valuations are therefore reported on the basis of 'material valuation uncertainty', less certainty – and a higher degree of caution should be attached to the valuation than would normally be the case.
- **Pension Liability** - Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions as at 31 March 2020 depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries and pensions are projected to increase and mortality rates. The assumptions used are set out in the Defined Benefit Pension Note 29. The Council uses a firm of actuaries, Hymans Robertson LLP, to provide expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.

Further uncertainty has been created by the Court of Appeal Judgements in the cases of McCloud and Sergeant regarding age discrimination arising from pension scheme transition arrangements. This has an impact on the net pension liability for the LGPS. The actuary has made assumptions regarding the impact and this has been included in the valuation of the Council's net liability.

4. Assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Council about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

The significant items in the Council's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2020 for which there is a risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

- The recoverable amounts in relation to debtors. The following significant inputs, assumptions and estimation techniques have been used in calculating the Council's approach to impairment loss allowances:
 - Debtors relating to public sector organisations are not impaired;
 - A provision matrix is utilised to estimate expected credit losses based on the 'age' of debtors. The matrix identifies the relationship between the age of the Council's debtors and the risk of non-payment based on historical losses;
 - An allowance has been made within the credit loss allowance for debtors to reflect the potential impact of COVID-19 on the collection, this is based upon the reduced income received from fees and charges during April and May 2020. Without this the credit loss allowance would have decreased as a result of the write off of a number of aged debts in 2018/19;
 - Any reasonable and supportable information relating to individual debtors in terms of past events, current conditions and forecasts of future economic conditions that is available without undue cost or effort.
- Principal actuarial assumptions used at the balance sheet date in respect of the defined benefit pension scheme. The effects on the net pension liability of changes in the discount rate or mortality rates are provided in the sensitivity analysis table in the Defined Benefits Pension Note 29. However, the assumptions interact in complex ways. During 2019/20 the Council's actuaries advised that the net pension liability had reduced by £17.239m as a result of the return on plan assets.

The pension fund auditor as part of their report stated that they are anticipating including Emphasis of Matter paragraph in their opinion in respect of £415m directly held property, where the associated valuation report includes a material uncertainty disclosure as a result of the impact of COVID-19 on the market at 31 March 2020.

- The outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), declared by the World Health Organisation as a "Global Pandemic" on 11 March 2020, has impacted global financial markets and market activity is being impacted in many sectors. As at the valuation date, the Valuer has considered that they can attach less weight to previous market evidence for comparison purposes, to inform opinions of value. Valuations are therefore reported as being subject to 'material valuation'. Consequently, less certainty – and a higher degree of caution – should be attached to our valuation than would normally be the case.
- Fair values for financial assets that are not based on recently observed market prices. A total of £24.412m Property, Plant & Equipment assets were re-valued by the Council's qualified valuer. As at 31 March 2020 the Council had £29.983m of operational land and buildings on its Balance Sheet. The Council's Property, Plant and Equipment have been valued on one of the following three bases under IFRS: Fair Value (Existing Use Value (EUV)) – method used to value operational property assets other than specialised property assets. Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC) – method used to value operational property assets of a specialised nature. Fair Value (Market Value) – method used to value property assets held as investments, surplus or for sale. Due to valuation techniques used a 1% Movement in values since the last valuation date would change the reported value of operational land and buildings assets by £0.299m (£0.322m in 2018/19). Buildings are depreciated over useful lives that are dependent on assumptions about the level of repairs and maintenance of those buildings. Reductions in the budget for repairs and maintenance spending brings into doubt the useful lives assigned to buildings. If the useful life of buildings is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying amount of the building falls.

- The business rates retention scheme came into effect on 1 April 2013. The accounts include a provision for the estimated costs of appeals that have been lodged with the valuation office. This is a complex calculation based on past success levels. As at 31 March 2020 the Council's share of the estimated appeals against business rates is £1.758m.

5. Events after the reporting period

The Statement of Accounts was authorised for issue by the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) on 17 July 2020.

Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statements or notes. There were no material events taking place before this date about conditions existing at 31 March 2020 which required the amendment of figures in the financial statements or notes to the financial statements.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Council's financial position through a mix of lost income and additional costs. Government funding of £1.573m has been secured which includes a third tranche of funding announced on 16 July 2020. In addition to this funding the Government has advised that they will be sharing income losses incurred as a result of COVID-19. This support has significantly relieved pressure on the Council's revenue budget during the remainder of the year.

6. Expenditure and Funding Analysis

This analysis shows how expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, council tax and business rates) by the Council compared to resources consumed or earned in accordance with accounting practices. It also shows how expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the Council's Directorates. Income and expenditure accounted for under accounting practice is presented fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (page 24).

Net expenditure chargeable to the General Fund	2018/19			2019/20		
	Adjustments between funding & accounting Basis	Net Expenditure - Comprehensive Inc & Exp Statement		Net expenditure chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments between funding & accounting basis	Net expenditure - Comprehensive Inc & Exp Statement
£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000
2,533	37	2,570	Chief Executive	1,907	89	1,996
3,310	322	3,632	Resources & Support Services	3,831	660	4,491
674	3,001	3,675	Regeneration & Development	1,536	1,251	2,787
7,314	2,462	9,776	Operational Services	4,891	4,112	9,003
781	623	1,404	Corporate	2,176	(1,985)	191
14,612	6,445	21,057	Net cost of services	14,341	4,127	18,468
(13,723)	1,923	(11,800)	Other income and expenditure	(14,784)	802	(13,982)
889	8,368	9,257	Surplus or deficit	(443)	4,929	4,486
4,019			Opening General Fund/other useable reserves balance (MIRS-p25)	3,130		
(889)			Less/plus surplus or deficit on General Fund balance in year	443		
3,130			Closing General Fund/other useable reserves balance (MIRS-p25)	3,573		

- The General Fund balance includes £2.333m of earmarked reserves, leaving a general balance of £1.241m.

6a. Note to the Expenditure and Funding Analysis

This note provides a reconciliation of the main adjustments to net expenditure chargeable to the General Fund to arrive at the amounts in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement amounts	Adjustments for capital purposes (Note 1)	Net change for the pensions adjustments (Note 2)	Other differences (Note 3)	Total adjustments
2019/20	£000	£000	£000	£000
Chief Executive	-	70	19	89
Resources & Support Services	439	227	(6)	660
Regeneration & Development	1,068	173	10	1,251
Operational Services	3,506	545	61	4,112
Corporate	290	(524)	(1,751)	(1,985)
Net cost of services	5,303	491	(1,667)	4,127
Other income and expenditure	(1,057)	1,859	-	802
Difference between General Fund surplus or deficit & Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement surplus or deficit on the provision of services	4,246	2,350	(1,667)	4,929

Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement amounts	Adjustments for capital purposes (Note 1)	Net change for the pensions adjustments (Note 2)	Other differences (Note 3)	Total adjustments
2018/19	£000	£000	£000	£000
Chief Executive	3	41	(7)	37
Resources & Support Services	239	125	(42)	322
Regeneration & Development	2,896	119	(14)	3,001
Operational Services	2,224	236	2	2,462
Corporate	-	623	-	623
Net cost of services	5,362	1,144	(61)	6,445
Other income and expenditure	1,161	1,802	(1,040)	1,923
Difference between General Fund surplus or deficit & Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement surplus or deficit on the provision of services	6,523	2,946	(1,101)	8,368

Notes

1. Adjustments for capital purposes

This column adds in depreciation and impairment and revaluation gains and losses in the services line, and for:

- **Other operating expenditure** – adjusts for capital disposals with a transfer of income on disposal of assets and the amounts written off for those assets.
- **Financing and investment income and expenditure** – the statutory charges for capital financing i.e. minimum revenue provision and other revenue contributions are deducted from other income and expenditure as these are not chargeable under accounting practices.
- **Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure** – capital grants are adjusted for income not chargeable under accounting practices. Revenue grants are adjusted from those receivable in the year to those receivable

without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied. The taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure line is credited with capital grants receivable without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied.

2. Net change for the pensions adjustments

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

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

3. Other differences

This column shows other differences between amounts debited/credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and amounts payable/receivable recognised under statute.

The charge under taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure represents the difference between what is chargeable under statutory regulations for Council Tax and Business Rates that was projected to be received at the start of the year and the income recognised under accounting practices in the Code. This is a timing difference as any difference will be brought forward in future surpluses or deficits on the Collection Fund.

7. Segmental income and expenditure

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom requires that where certain items of significant income and expenditure are included in the 'net expenditure chargeable to the general fund' as shown in the Expenditure and Funding Analysis, these must be disclosed in a separate note as shown below:

2018/19 £000	Segment	2019/20 £000
	<i>Depreciation & amortisation</i>	
3	Chief Executive	-
165	Resources & Support Services	292
190	Regeneration & Development	354
1,189	Operational Services	2,759
1,547	Total	3,405
	<i>Impairment</i>	
-	Chief Executive	-
74	Resources & Support Services	146
512	Regeneration & Development	372
638	Operational Services	654
1,224	Total	1,172
	<i>External Income</i>	
302	Chief Executive	487
1,180	Resources & Support Services	711
5,055	Regeneration & Development	4,197
5,451	Operational Services	6,810
108	Corporate	91
12,096	Total	12,296

8. Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis

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 accounting practice to the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Council to meet future capital and revenue expenditure.

2019/20	General Fund balance	Capital receipts reserve	Capital grants unapplied	Unusable reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Adjustments primarily involving - capital adjustment account				
Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement				
Charges for depreciation & impairment of non-current assets	(4,553)			4,553
Revaluation losses on property, plant & equipment	(1,568)			1,568
Movements in fair value of investment properties	282			(282)
Amortisation of intangible assets	(24)			24
Reversal of REFCUS expenditure	(380)			380
Reversal of REFCUS income	380			(380)
Non-current assets written-off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal	(331)			331
Capital element of finance leases where Council is the lessor	(20)			20
Application of capital grants received in advance	33			(33)
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment	40			(40)
Adjustments primarily involving - capital grants unapplied account				
Transfer of grant from revenue to the capital grants unapplied account	1,131		(1,131)	
Application of grants to capital finance transferred to the capital adjustment account			311	(311)
Adjustments primarily involving - capital receipts reserve				
Transfer of sales proceeds from revenue to the capital receipts reserve	763	(763)		
Use of the capital receipts reserve to finance capital		2,199		(2,199)
Transfer from deferred capital receipts reserve on receipt of cash		(11)		11
Adjustments primarily involving - pensions reserve				
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	(6,312)			6,312
Employers pension contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	3,962			(3,962)
Adjustments primarily involving - collection fund adjustment account				
Amount That Council Tax & Non-Domestic Rating income credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement differs From Council Tax & Non-Domestic Rating income calculated for the year	1,751			(1,751)
Adjustments primarily involving - accumulated absences account				
Amount by which Officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis differs from remuneration chargeable calculated for the year	(84)			84
Total adjustments	(4,930)	1,425	(820)	4,325

2018/19	General Fund balance £000	Capital receipts reserve £000	Capital grants unapplied £000	Unusable reserves £000
Adjustments primarily involving - capital adjustment account				
Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement				
Charges for depreciation & impairment of non-current assets	(2,809)	-	-	2,809
Revaluation losses on property, plant & equipment	(2,591)	-	-	2,591
Movements in fair value of investment properties	(471)	-	-	471
Amortisation of intangible assets	(74)	-	-	74
Reversal of REFCUS expenditure	(1,574)	-	-	1,574
Reversal of REFCUS income	1,574	-	-	(1,574)
Non-current assets written-off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal	(1,563)	-	-	1,563
Capital element of finance leases where Council is the lessor	7	-	-	(7)
Adjustments primarily involving - capital grants unapplied account				
Capital grants & contributions unapplied credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	15	-	(15)	-
Application of grants to capital financing transferred to the capital adjustment account	-	-	141	(141)
Adjustments primarily involving - capital receipts reserve				
Transfer of sales proceeds from revenue to the capital receipts reserve	1,339	(1,339)	-	-
Use of the capital receipts reserve to finance capital	-	1,266	-	(1,266)
Transfer from deferred capital receipts reserve on receipt of cash	-	(7)	-	7
Adjustments primarily involving - pensions reserve				
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	(6,875)	-	-	6,875
Employers pension contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	3,929	-	-	(3,929)
Adjustments primarily involving - collection fund adjustment account				
Amount That Council Tax & Non-Domestic Rating income credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement differs From Council Tax & Non-Domestic Rating income calculated for the year	665	-	-	(665)
Adjustments primarily involving - accumulated absences account				
Amount by which Officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis differs from remuneration chargeable calculated for the year	60	-	-	(60)
Total adjustments	(8,368)	(80)	126	8,322

9. Movements in earmarked reserves

2018/19				2019/20		
Transfers out £000	Transfers in £000	Net movement £000		Transfers out £000	Transfers in £000	Net movement £000
-	248	248	General Fund	(207)	-	(207)
(111)	91	(20)	Equipment replacement fund	(70)	-	(70)
(191)	191	-	Renewals and repairs fund	(179)	179	-
(92)	74	(18)	ICT development fund	(78)	51	(27)
-	-	-	Organisational capacity fund	(125)	125	-
(110)	-	(110)	Income reserve (prev. contingency)	-	-	-
(205)	152	(53)	Budget support fund	(440)	1,450	1,010
(17)	10	(7)	Conservation and heritage fund	(11)	-	(11)
-	-	-	Museum purchases fund	-	75	75
(75)	-	(75)	Maintenance contributions	-	-	-
(4)	-	(4)	Mayors charities reserve	(1)	-	(1)
-	-	-	Clayton Community Centre fund	-	4	4
-	56	56	Borough growth fund	(274)	248	(26)
(7)	-	(7)	Standards reserve	-	-	-
(46)	-	(46)	Keele masterplan reserve	(12)	-	(12)
(853)	-	(853)	Business Rates reserve	(817)	526	(291)
(1,711)	822	(889)	Total	(2,214)	2,658	444

10. Other operating expenditure

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
559	Parish precepts	587
413	(Gains)/losses on disposal of non-current assets	201
(375)	Capital income not arising from asset sales	(633)
597	Total	155

11. Financing and investment income and expenditure

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
5	Interest payable & similar charges	-
1,802	Interest on the net defined benefit liability	1,859
(83)	Interest receivable & similar income	(89)
(1,025)	Investment properties - income	(974)
471	Investment properties - revaluations	(282)
1,219	Investment properties - expenses	804
2,389	Total	1,318

12. Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
(7,519)	Council Tax income	(7,802)
9,470	Non Domestic Rates expenditure	9,325
(14,519)	Non Domestic Rates income	(15,855)
(2,203)	Non-ringfenced Government grants	(1,090)
(15)	Capital grants & contributions	(33)
(14,786)	Total	(15,455)

13. Expenditure and income analysed by nature

The Council's expenditure and income is analysed as follows:

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
	Expenditure	
18,489	Employees	19,716
2,499	Premises	2,372
857	Transport	827
5,494	Supplies and services	4,332
1,918	Grants and contributions	680
833	Agency and contracted services	814
28,566	Housing Benefits payments	25,275
5,950	Capital financing	7,295
9,385	Sources of finance expenditure	9,912
5,080	Pensions interest cost	5,049
79,071	Total expenditure	76,272
	Income	
375	Capital income not arising from asset sales	633
(600)	Gains/(losses) on disposal of non current assets	130
20,063	Sources of finance income	22,001
32,789	Government grants	29,747
140	Transfer from Collection Fund	139
1,780	Other grants and contributions	2,088
1,802	Reimbursements	1,545
8,836	Customer receipts	8,594
898	Rents	908
83	Interest and investment income	89
3,278	Pensions return on assets	3,190
370	Other income	2,722
69,814	Total income	71,786
9,257	(Surplus) or deficit on provision of services	4,486

14. External audit costs

The Council has incurred the following costs in relation to the audit of the Statement of Accounts and certification of grant claims by the Council's external auditors (Grant Thornton):

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
42	External audit services carried out	50
9	Certification of grant claims and returns	12
-	Additional charges re. 2018/19	15
51		77

15. Members' allowances

In 2019/20 a total of £251,863 was paid to members (including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor) in respect of allowances (£251,097 in 2018/19). In addition £1,500 of expenses were paid to members during 2019/20 (£2,734 in 2018/19).

16. Termination benefits

The Council terminated the contracts of a number of employees in 2019/20, incurring liabilities of £205,458 (£140,317 in 2018/19). The termination benefits consisted of £200,390 for loss of office and £5,068 in relation to long service awards.

17. Officers' remuneration

Remuneration between £50,000 and £150,000 per annum was paid to the Council's senior employees as follows:

2019/20 - Post holder	Salary (£)	Benefits in kind (£)	Total exc. employer pension (£)	Employer pension (£)	Total inc. employer pension (£)
Chief Executive*	114,132	-	114,132	19,517	133,649
Executive Directors					
Operational Services	90,926	-	90,926	15,548	106,474
Resources & Support Services^	37,886	-	37,886	6,479	44,365
Heads of Service					
Operations	62,802	-	62,802	10,680	73,482
Recycling and Fleet Services	56,632	-	56,632	9,684	66,316
Planning^^	12,331	-	12,331	2,109	14,440
Housing	47,694	-	47,694	8,156	55,850
Leisure and Cultural Services	59,618	-	59,618	10,194	69,812
Communications	53,615	-	53,615	9,168	62,783
Environmental Health Services	60,960	-	60,960	10,429	71,389
People and Organisational Development^^	11,674	-	11,674	1,996	13,670
Customer and ICT^^	28,827	-	28,827	2,812	31,639
Finance^^	28,827	1,245	30,072	3,490	33,562
Legal and Governance Services^^	16,469	-	16,469	2,816	19,285

2018/19 - Post holder	Salary (£)	Benefits in kind (£)	Total exc. employer pension (£)	Employer pension (£)	Total inc. employer pension (£)
Chief Executive^^	53,698	-	53,698	9,034	62,732
Executive Directors					
Operational Services	89,143	1,247	90,390	15,243	105,633
Resources & Support Services	89,143	-	89,143	15,243	104,386
Regeneration & Development^	66,857	2,049	68,906	12,920	81,826
Heads of Service					
Operations	56,207	1,338	57,545	9,611	67,156
Recycling and Fleet Services	54,059	422	54,481	9,244	63,725
Planning	58,449	-	58,449	9,995	68,444
Leisure and Cultural Services	58,449	-	58,449	9,995	68,444
Communications	52,861	-	52,861	9,039	61,900
Environmental Health	58,352	-	58,352	9,996	68,348
Audit & Elections^	21,902	687	22,589	3,745	26,334
Human Resources^	43,803	-	43,803	6,741	50,544
Customer & ICT^^^	8,952	-	8,952	1,531	10,483
Finance^^^	18,259	-	18,259	-	18,259

* This includes salary of £105,851 plus Returning Officers fees for the Parliamentary and EU Elections in 2019/20.

** These staff worked part time, their full time equivalent salary would exceed £50,000 per annum.

^ These post holders left during the year, their full time equivalent salary would exceed £50,000 per annum.

^^ These post holders started during the year, their full time equivalent salary would exceed £50,000 per annum.

18. Grant income

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

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
	Credited to taxation/non specific grant	
15	Capital Grants	33
174	Other Government grants	155
1,331	Section 31/Business Rates relief grant	1,656
1,262	New Homes Bonus scheme	935
589	Revenue Support Grant	-
3,371	Total	2,779
	Credited to services	
28,258	Housing Benefits subsidy/grants	24,944
484	Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit admin	447
1,574	Disabled Facilities Grant	1,512
48	Individual Electoral Registration Section 31	35
500	Air Quality	945
-	Future High Street Fund	485
77	Homelessness	125
206	Other grants and contributions	459
50	Contributions towards Community Safety	104
31,197	Total	29,056

19. Property, plant and equipment

Movements on balances

2019/20	Land & buildings	Infrastructure assets	Vehicles, plant, furniture & equipment	Community assets	Surplus assets	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation						
At 1 April 2019	32,238	1,339	17,731	7,874	676	59,858
Transfers regarding historical variances		-	41	(38)	-	3
Additions	812	32	1,035	305	65	2,249
Accumulated depreciation /impairment written out	(2,048)	-	-	(30)	-	(2,078)
Revaluation increases/(decreases) - revaluation reserve	1,024	-	-	415	-	1,439
Revaluation increases/(decreases) - surplus/deficit on provision of services	(1,525)	-	-	(93)	-	(1,618)
Impairment losses/(reversals) - revaluation reserve	(267)	(1)	-	(9)	-	(277)
Impairment losses/(reversals) - surplus/deficit on provision of services	(251)	(30)	(354)	(259)	(65)	(959)
Derecognition - disposals	-	-	(2,573)	-	-	(2,573)
At 31 March 2020	29,983	1,340	15,880	8,165	676	56,044
Accumulated depreciation & impairment						
At 1 April 2019	(1,757)	(500)	(8,149)	(1,242)	-	(11,648)
Transfers regarding historical variances	297	-	(582)	335	-	50
Depreciation charge	(747)	(36)	(2,389)	(209)	-	(3,381)
Accumulated depreciation/impairment written out	2,049	-	-	31	-	2,080
Derecognition - disposals			2,241			2,241
At 31 March 2020	(158)	(536)	(8,879)	(1,085)	-	(10,658)
Net book value						
As at 31 March 2019	30,481	839	9,582	6,632	676	48,210
As at 31 March 2020	29,825	804	7,001	7,080	676	45,386

2018/19	Land & buildings	Infrastructure assets	Vehicles, plant, furniture & equipment	Community assets	Assets under construction	Surplus assets	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation							
At 1 April 2018	28,286	1,338	17,820	7,779	4,194	830	60,247
Additions	172	-	423	171	-	-	766
Revaluation increases/(decreases) - revaluation reserve	3,219	1	-	105	-	-	3,325
Revaluation increases/(decreases) - surplus/deficit on provision of services	(3,755)	-	(77)	(171)	-	-	(4,003)
Derecognition - disposals	(221)	-	(435)	(10)	-	-	(666)
Transfers between asset categories	4,537	-	-	-	(4,194)	(154)	189
At 31 March 2019	32,238	1,339	17,731	7,874	-	676	59,858
Accumulated depreciation & impairment							
At 1 April 2018	(2,923)	(474)	(7,809)	(1,180)	-	-	(12,386)
Depreciation charge	(665)	(26)	(594)	(216)	-	-	(1,501)
Accumulated depreciation/impairment written out	1,831	-	-	154	-	-	1,985
Derecognition - disposals	-	-	254	-	-	-	254
At 31 March 2019	(1,757)	(500)	(8,149)	(1,242)	-	-	(11,648)
Net book value							
As at 31 March 2018	25,363	864	10,011	6,599	4,194	830	47,861
As at 31 March 2019	30,481	839	9,582	6,632	-	676	48,210

Depreciation

Depreciation is applied on a straight line basis. No depreciation is applied to land. Where an asset includes land, the value of this element is excluded before applying depreciation. A 10% residual value is assumed in most cases, which is deducted from the depreciable amount before applying depreciation.

The following useful lives have been used:

- Land and buildings - 60 years, unless the valuation basis is depreciated replacement cost, where individual lives apply to each asset;
- Vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment – between 5 and 15 years dependent upon an assessment of the asset;
- Infrastructure - no specific life. Depreciation is based on a historical composite calculation;
- Community assets - 20 years.

Capital commitments

There are no capital commitments at 31 March 2020. There were no capital commitments at 31 March 2019.

Asset classes

For the purposes of valuation assets are grouped into classes. Assets within a class are all valued at the same time. The table below shows the different classes with the total valuation of assets within each as at 31 March 2020 and for the prior period.

31/03/2019 £000		31/03/2020 £000
676	Surplus assets	676
	Land and buildings	
3,793	Community Centres	3,666
6,525	Car Parks	6,241
1,650	Depot	1,200
5,505	Offices	5,021
221	Guildhall	210
221	Bus Station	211
970	Cemeteries	941
533	Crematorium	509
9,930	Leisure Centres	9,371
1,796	Parks and Sports grounds	1,759
520	Museum	326
60	Public toilets	46
95	Business Centre	89
419	Other land and buildings	393
1,339	Infrastructure assets	1,340
17,731	Vehicles, plant, furniture, equipment	15,880
7,874	Community assets	8,165
59,858	Total	56,044

Revaluations

The Council carries out a rolling programme that ensures that all property, plant and equipment required to be measured at fair value is re-valued at least every five years. All valuations are carried out internally. Valuations of land and buildings are carried out in accordance with the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors using the BCIS indices. Valuations of vehicles, plant, and equipment are based on historic cost. The significant assumptions applied in estimating the fair values are, whether a property asset is a specialised asset, which governs its valuation treatment, whether an asset is being used for operational purposes and whether there is any impairment applicable to the asset.

As at the valuation date of 31 March 2020, less weight can be attached to previous market evidence for comparison purposes in order to inform opinions of value. The current response to COVID-19 means that there is an unprecedented set of circumstances on which to base a judgement. The valuations are therefore reported on the basis of 'material valuation uncertainty', less certainty – and a higher degree of caution should be attached to the valuation than would normally be the case.

Valuations over the rolling period were as follows:

	Land & buildings £000	Vehicles, plant, furniture & equipment £000	Community assets £000	Infrastructure assets £000	Surplus assets £000	Total £000
Carried at historical cost	300	15,880	5,911	1,340	-	23,431
Valued at fair value at:						
31 March 2016	250	-	68	-	-	318
31 March 2017	357	-	-	-	330	687
1 April 2017	717	-	930	-	-	1,647
1 April 2018	279	-	1	-	-	280
31 March 2019	5,269	-	-	-	-	5,269
31 March 2020	22,811	-	1,255	-	346	24,412
Total cost or valuation	29,983	15,880	8,165	1,340	676	56,044

Fair value measurement of surplus assets

Surplus assets are measured at fair value. Level 3 of the fair value hierarchy applies in estimating the fair values and the valuation technique employed is the investment basis, using the rental value and yield as unobservable inputs. Significant

changes in any of these inputs will result in a lower or higher fair value. There have been no changes in any of the valuation techniques employed during the year.

20. Investment properties

There are no restrictions on the Council's ability to realise the value of its investment property or on the Council's right to the receipt 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 level 3 investment properties over the year:

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
17,835	Balance at 1 April	16,415
477	Additions - subsequent expenditure	43
(1,152)	Disposals	-
(556)	Net gains/(losses) - fair value adjustments	282
(189)	Transfers (to)/from property, plant & equipment	(3)
16,415	Balance at 31 March	16,737

Valuation techniques used to determine Level 3 fair values for investment properties

The fair value for development sites is based on the market approach using current market conditions, sales prices and other relevant information for similar assets in the area. Local market conditions are such that similar land is not extensively purchased and sold and the level of observable inputs are not significant leading to categorisation at level 3 in the fair value hierarchy.

Other investment properties are valued using the investment approach, whereby actual or estimated rental income is capitalised to provide a capital value. The rental income is calculated by reference to actual or estimated values having regard to market evidence. The yield multiplier is based on comparable evidence. These properties 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.

The following table shows quantitative information relating to fair value measurement of investment properties using significant unobservable inputs.

Investment property type	31/03/2020 £000	Valuation technique used to measure fair value	Unobservable Inputs	Sensitivity
Shops	2,261	Investment method	Rental values yield	(a)
Offices	1,319	Investment method	Rental values yield	(a)
Industrial units	2,762	Investment method	Rental values yield	(a)
Other	2,284	Investment method	Rental values yield	(a)
Development sites	8,111	Comparable method	Capital value	(a)
	16,737			

(a) Significant changes in rental value, yield or capital value will result in a varied fair value

In estimating the fair value of investment properties, the highest and best use of the properties is their current use.

The fair value of investment property is measured annually at each reporting date. All valuations are carried out internally, in accordance with the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

21. Heritage assets

Reconciliation of the carrying value of heritage assets held by the Council

The Council's collection of museum artefacts is reported in the Balance Sheet (page 26) at an insurance valuation of £1.429m, which is based on market values as assessed by an external valuer in October 2006.

These valuations are updated by the museum curator in respect of significant items and changes. New items are added at cost, if purchased and at valuation, if donated, where they are significant. Other Heritage assets, i.e. outdoor structures, are not recognised on the Balance Sheet because there is no reliable cost or valuation information to enable them to be valued. There have been no movements in the valuation of heritage assets during 2019/20.

Museum exhibits

The museum holds a collection of around 20,000 objects, falling into the following categories:

Subject	Description	%
Social history	Domestic and working life, childhood, civic regalia, industry, crafts in the Borough	28%
Decorative art	Ceramics, glass, costume and textiles, furniture, furnishings	8%
Militaria	Costume, medals, weapons, ephemera	3%
Fine art	Oils, watercolours, prints, drawings, sketches of local scenes, local artists	3%
Archives	Documents, ephemera, prints, negatives, lantern slides, cine film, video, audio tapes connected to the local area	55%
Archaeology	Local excavated finds, chance finds	2%
Numismatics	A collection of local coinage/tokens, bank notes, commemorative medals	1%

In addition, the civic regalia and mayoral robes are kept in a secure location to be used on ceremonial occasions.

Outdoor structures

This category of heritage assets comprises of the Queen Victoria Statue and Sergeant Fred Kite Memorial, Queens Gardens; Fountains, Nelson Place; Castle Motte, Queen Elizabeth Park; Silverdale Cemetery Gazebo; Ice House, Chesterton Memorial Park; Mining Memorials at Bateswood and Silverdale; Lyme Valley Canal Basin.

22. Debtors

31/03/2019 £000	Short term	31/03/2020 £000
1,636	Trade receivables	1,239
6,332	Other receivable amounts	11,198
7,968	Total	12,437

31/03/2019 £000	Long term	31/03/2020 £000
146	Finance lease balances outstanding	127
296	Kickstart loans (re. home improvements)	286
442	Total	413

23. Creditors

31/03/2019 £000		31/03/2020 £000
274	Trade payables	717
7,081	Other payables	10,589
7,355	Total	11,306

24. Provisions

	Short term	Long term			Total long term £000
	NNDR appeals £000	Insurance claims £000	MMI £000	NNDR appeals £000	
Balance at 1 April 2018	1,004	148	25	874	1,047
Additional provisions made	741	14	9	-	23
Amounts used	(529)	(19)	-	(31)	(50)
Balance at 1 April 2019	1,216	143	34	843	1,020
Additional provisions made	-	8	16	25	49
Amounts used	(326)	(8)	-	-	(8)
Balance at 31 March 2020	890	143	50	868	1,061

The NNDR appeals provision provides for the Councils element of refunds payable following successful appeals in relation to the rateable value of business rates payer's properties.

The insurance claims provision has been created to meet the costs of claims which are likely to be settled but where the actual settlement date is uncertain.

The MMI provision has been created to provide for possible claw-back (levy) of sums paid out by the administrator of Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI), in the event of MMI becoming insolvent.

25. Unusable reserves

Balances in relation to the Council's unusable reserves are shown below:

31/03/2019 £000		31/03/2020 £000
	Capital:	
18,818	Revaluation reserve	14,444
42,913	Capital adjustment account	44,823
443	Deferred capital receipts reserve	412
	Revenue:	
(77,741)	Pensions reserve	(58,899)
107	Collection fund adjustment account	1,858
(323)	Accumulated absences account	(407)
(15,783)	Total unusable reserves	2,231

Revaluation reserve

The revaluation reserve records unrealised gains in the value of property, plant and equipment. The reserve increases when assets are revalued upwards, and decreases as assets are depreciated or assets are revalued downwards or disposed of. The reserve contains only revaluation gains accumulated since 1 April 2007, the date that the reserve was created. Accumulated gains arising before that date are consolidated into the balance on the capital adjustment account.

The revaluation reserve contains an amendment to correct a number of historical differences that have been identified between the revaluation reserve and the capital adjustment account. The total adjustment is for £4.423m, of which £3.182m predates 2017/18, £0.237m relates to 2017/18 and £1.004m relates to 2018/19.

As the amounts relating to 2017/18 and 2018/19 are below the Council's level of materiality a restatement of the Balance Sheet for prior years has not been undertaken.

Under IAS8.49 a restatement of the Balance Sheet for years prior to 2017/18 is deemed to be impracticable and a disclosure note is considered to be reasonable.

The adjustments made do not impact upon the Council's usable reserves or on the surplus or deficit declared in each year.

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
13,772	Balance at 1 April	18,818
-	Adjustment re. capital adjustment account historical variances	(4,423)
5,662	Upward revaluation of assets not charged to the surplus/deficit on the provision of services	4,001
(616)	Downward revaluation of assets & impairment losses not charged to the surplus/deficit on the provision of services	(2,854)
-	Difference between fair value depreciation and historical cost depreciation	(949)
-	Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	(149)
18,818	Balance at 31 March	14,444

Capital adjustment account

The capital adjustment account is used to reconcile the different rates at which assets are depreciated under proper accounting practice and are financed through the capital controls system. Statute requires that the charge to the General Fund is determined by the capital controls system. The Account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on property, plant and equipment before 1 April 2007, the date that the revaluation reserve was created to hold such gains.

The following table shows the disclosure to the revaluation reserve regarding the amendment between the revaluation reserve and the capital adjustment account.

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
49,014	Balance at 1 April	42,913
	Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement:	
(2,809)	Charges for depreciation/impairment of non-current assets	(4,553)
(74)	Amortisation of intangible Assets	(24)
(1,574)	REFCUS expenditure	(380)
1,574	REFCUS income	380
(1,563)	Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal	(331)
(471)	Movements in the market value of investment properties debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	282
(2,591)	Revaluation losses on property, plant and equipment	(1,568)
-	Application of grants to capital financing from the capital grants received in advance account	33
7	Capital element of finance leases where Council is the lessor	(20)
-	Minimum revenue provision contribution	40
(7,501)		(6,141)
	Capital financing applied in the year:	
1,266	Use of the capital receipts reserve to finance new capital expenditure	2,199
141	Application of grants to capital financing from the capital grants unapplied account	311
(7)	Capital element of finance leases where Council is the lessor	20
	Adjusting Amounts Written Out of Revaluation Reserve	
-	Adjustment re. revaluation reserve historical variances	4,423
-	Difference between fair value depreciation/historical cost depreciation	949
-	Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	149
(6,101)		1,910
42,913	Balance at 31 March	44,823

Deferred capital receipts reserve

The deferred capital receipts reserve holds the gains recognised on the disposal of non-current assets but for which cash settlement has yet to take place. Statute requires that the Council does not treat these gains as usable for financing new capital expenditure until they are backed by cash receipts. When the deferred cash settlement takes place, amounts are transferred to the capital receipts reserve.

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
443	Balance at 1 April	443
(7)	Transfer to the capital receipts reserve upon receipt of cash	(11)
7	Capital element of finance leases where Council is the lessor	(20)
443	Balance at 31 March	412

Pension reserve

The pension reserve is used to reconcile payments made for the year to statutory pension schemes in accordance with the schemes requirements, and the net change in the authority's recognised liability under the Code's adoption of IAS19 – *Employee Benefits*. A transfer is made to or from the pensions reserve to ensure that the charge to the General Fund reflects the amount required to be raised in taxation. For example, the debit balance on the reserve shows that the authority has made commitments to fund pensions that the Government has permitted it to fund from contributions to be made in future years.

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
(71,155)	Balance at 1 April	(77,741)
(3,640)	Remeasurements of the net defined benefit liability/(asset)	21,192
(6,875)	Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services	(6,312)
3,929	Employers pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	3,962
(77,741)	Balance at 31 March	(58,899)

Collection fund adjustment account

The collection fund adjustment account is used to reconcile differences arising from the recognition of council tax and non-domestic rates income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to those amounts required to be charged by statute to the General Fund. For example, the debit balance on the Account shows that less tax has been collected on behalf of the authority and the precepting bodies (and central government in England for non-domestic rates income) than an authority is permitted to transfer out of the Collection Fund by 31 March.

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
(558)	Balance at 1 April	107
(55)	Amount by which council tax income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from council tax income calculated for the year	(293)
720	Amount by which non domestic rates income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from non domestic rates income calculated for the year	2,044
107	Balance at 31 March	1,858

Accumulated absences account

The accumulated absences account absorbs the differences that would 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 31 March.

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
(383)	Balance at 1 April	(323)
383	Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of the preceding year	323
(323)	Amounts accrued at the end of the current year	(407)
(323)	Balance at 31 March	(407)

26. 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), together with the resources that have been used to finance it. Where capital expenditure is to be financed in future years by charges to revenue as assets are used by the Council, the expenditure results in an increase in the capital financing requirement (CFR), a measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically by the Council that has yet to be financed. The CFR is analysed in the table below.

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
4,405	Opening capital financing requirement	4,404
	Capital investment	
766	Property, plant & equipment	2,249
477	Investment properties	43
163	Intangible assets	251
1,574	REFCUS	380
	Sources of finance	
(1,266)	Capital receipts	(2,199)
(1,715)	Government grants & other contributions	(724)
-	Sums set aside from revenue	(40)
4,404	Closing capital financing requirement	4,364
	Explanation of movements in year	
-	Capital expenditure financed from internal borrowing	-
(1)	Increase/(decrease) in capital financing requirement	(40)

27. Impairment losses

During 2019/20 the Council has recognised the following impairment losses in relation to capital expenditure incurred on enhancing non-current assets that does not increase the value of the asset concerned. An amount equal to this is charged as an impairment loss to the service which uses the asset in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The total amount of impairment losses for 2019/20 was £1.757m (2018/19 £1.308m). The whole of the impairment loss is reversed out via the Movement in Reserves Statement (page 25) in accordance with statutory provisions so that it is not a charge against council tax.

28. Related parties

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

Central Government

The UK government has effective control over the general operations of the Council - it is responsible for providing the statutory framework, within which the Council operates, provides funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Council has (e.g. council tax bills, housing benefits).

Members

Members of the Council have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies. The total of members' allowances paid is shown in Note 15 (page 51). One member is a Director on the Board of the New Victoria Theatre, payments to the New Victoria Theatre during 2019/20 amounted to £48,904. The majority of this is in relation to the annual grant that is provided to the Theatre. The member's term of office commenced 3 May 2018, and the annual grant has been issued for several years before this date. Several members of the Council also have a relationship with the Aspire Housing, Keele University, Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, through either their board membership, work as a County Councillor or regular employment. Those who have board membership or regular employment have no direct influence on the operations involving the Council.

Officers

No payments have been made to any entities that have a relationship with Council officers during 2019/20.

29. Defined benefit pension schemes

Participation in pension schemes

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

The Council participates in:

- The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), administered locally by Staffordshire County Council - this has a career average revalue earnings (CARE) benefit design, meaning that the Council and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pensions liabilities with investment assets;
- Arrangements for the award of discretionary post-retirement benefits upon early retirement - this is an unfunded defined benefit arrangement, under which liabilities are recognised when awards are made. However, there are no investment assets built up to meet these pensions liabilities, and cash has to be generated to meet actual pensions payments as they fall due;
- The Staffordshire Pension Scheme is operated under the regulatory framework for the LGPS and the governance of the scheme is the responsibility of the Pensions Committee of Staffordshire County Council. Policy is determined in accordance with the Pension Fund Regulations;
- The principal risks to the Council of the scheme are the longevity assumptions, statutory changes to the scheme, 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 the amounts as described in the accounting policies note.

Formal actuarial valuations are carried out every three years, where each employer's assets and liabilities are calculated on a detailed basis, using individual member data, for cash contribution setting purposes. The 31 March 2019 formal valuations for English and Welsh Local Government Pension Scheme Funds were concluded by 31 March 2020.

The Balance Sheet position as at 31 March 2020 is therefore based on this new roll forward from the 2019 formal valuation. This differs to the balance sheet position as at 31 March 2019 which was based on a roll forward from the 2016 formal valuation.

This 'step change' can lead to sizeable asset and liability 're-measurement experience' items in the reconciliation of the balance sheet from 31 March 2019 to 31 March 2020 as can be seen in the 'Transactions relating to post-employment benefits' table below, in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (re-measurement of the defined benefit liability/asset) and in the Balance Sheet (pension liability and pension reserve).

During 2017/18 an advance payment of pension contributions for 2018/19 (£1.529m) and 2019/20 (£1.601m), totalling £3.130m, was made. This was paid in 2017/18 in return for a discount from the pension fund, this significantly reduced the amounts to be charged to the general fund revenue account as pension contributions in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

During 2019/20 the advance payment relating to this year (£1.601m) has been transferred to the general fund revenue account via a transfer from the pension reserve.

Transactions relating to post-employment benefits

The cost of retirement benefits is recognised in the reported cost of services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are paid as pensions. However, the charge that is required to be made against council tax is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of post-employment benefits is reversed out of the General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement (page 25). The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the General Fund Balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year:

2018/19			2019/20	
LGPS £000	Unfunded benefits £000		LGPS £000	Unfunded benefits £000
		Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement		
		Cost of services:		
4,084		Current service cost	4,697	
989		Past service costs/(gains)	(244)	
-	(440)	Unfunded benefit contributions	-	(435)
		Financing and investment income & expenditure		
1,802	-	Net interest expense	1,859	-
6,875	(440)	Total pension benefit charged to the surplus/deficit on provision of services	6,312	(435)
		Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability comprising:		
(6,901)	-	Return on plan assets	13,274	-
-	-	Changes in demographic assumptions	(7,678)	-
10,394	-	Changes in financial assumptions	(14,736)	-
147	-	Other experience	(12,052)	-
3,640	-	Total pension benefit charged to Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	(21,192)	-
		Movement in Reserves Statement		
(6,875)	440	Reversal of net charges made to the surplus/deficit on provision of services for pension benefits	(6,312)	435
		Actual amount charged against the General Fund balance for pensions		
-	-	Employers' contributions payable to scheme	-	-
3,929	-	Retirement benefits payable to pensioners	3,962	-
-	(440)		-	(435)
(2,946)	-		(2,350)	-

Pensions assets and liabilities recognised in the Balance Sheet

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
(203,854)	Present value of defined benefit obligation-funded	(173,789)
(6,781)	Present value of defined benefit obligation-unfunded	(5,790)
134,497	Fair value of plan assets	120,680
(76,138)	Net liability arising from defined benefit obligation	(58,899)

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

2018/19		2019/20
£000		£000
189,202	Present value of funded liabilities	203,854
6,828	Present value of unfunded liabilities	6,781
196,030	Opening position as at 1 April	210,635
4,084	Current service cost	4,697
989	Past service cost	(244)
5,080	Interest cost	5,049
656	Contributions by scheme participants	684
	Remeasurements:	
10,394	Changes in financial assumptions	(14,736)
-	Changes in demographic assumptions	(7,678)
147	Other Experience	(12,052)
(6,305)	Benefits paid	(6,341)
(440)	Unfunded benefits paid	(435)
210,635	Closing balance as at 31 March	179,579
203,854	Present value of funded liabilities	173,789
6,781	Present value of unfunded liabilities	5,790

Local Government Pensions Scheme assets comprised

2018/19			2019/20	
Fair value of scheme assets			Fair value of scheme assets	
Quoted £000	Unquoted £000		Quoted £000	Unquoted £000
		Equities:		
6,004	-	- Consumer	4,472	-
5,145	-	- Manufacturing	4,830	-
2,155	-	- Energy & utilities	1,612	-
4,975	-	- Financial	4,264	-
3,860	-	- Health & care	3,772	-
3,834	-	- Information technology	2,939	-
127	-	- Other	104	-
26,100	-		21,993	-
		Bonds		
9,985	-	- Corporate (investment)	9,704	-
-	-	- Corporate (non-investment grade)	-	-
9,985	-		9,704	-
		Property		
-	11,433	UK	-	11,886
-	11,433		-	11,886
		Investment funds		
60,540	-	- Equities	51,434	-
10,177	-	- Bonds	10,136	-
-	2,350	- Hedge funds	-	2,146
-	5,415	- Other	-	6,236
70,717	7,765		61,570	8,382
-	4,815	Private equity	-	5,106
3,682	-	Cash/cash equivalents	2,039	-
110,484	24,013	Total assets	95,306	25,374

Reconciliation of the Movements in the fair value of the scheme assets

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
128,005	Opening value of scheme assets	134,495
	Remeasurement gain/(loss):	
3,278	Interest Income on plan assets	3,190
6,901	Return on assets excluding net interest	(13,274)
	Actuarial gains/(losses)	
1,960	Employer contributions	1,926
656	Contributions by scheme participants	684
(6,305)	Benefits paid	(6,341)
134,495	Closing balance at 31 March	120,680

Basis for estimating assets and liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years, salary levels, etc. Both the Local Government Pension Scheme and Discretionary Benefits liabilities have been assessed by Hymans Robertson, an independent firm of actuaries, estimates for the County Council Fund being based on the latest valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2020. The principal assumptions used by the actuary have been:

2018/19			2019/20	
LGPS	Unfunded		LGPS	Unfunded
		Longevity at 65 for current pensioners:		
22.1		Men	21.2	
24.4		Women	23.6	
		Longevity at 65 for future pensioners:		
24.1		Men	22.1	
26.4		Women	25.0	
2.9%		Rate of increase in salaries	2.3%	
2.5%	2.5%	Rate of increase in pensions (CPI)	1.9%	1.9%
2.4%	2.4%	Rate for discounting scheme liabilities	2.3%	2.3%
50%		Take up converting annual pension to lump sum	50%	

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. The sensitivity analysis below is based on possible changes of the assumptions occurring 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.

	<u>Increase in defined benefit obligation £000</u>
0.5% decrease in real discount rate	14,655
0.5% increase in the salary increase rate	1,635
0.5% increase in the pension increase rate (CPI)	12,881

Impact on the Council's cash flows

The objectives of the scheme are to keep employers' contributions at as constant a rate as possible. Staffordshire County Council has agreed a strategy with the scheme's actuary to achieve a funding strategy to recoup the past deficit over the next 20 years. Funding levels are monitored on an annual basis.

The total contribution expected to be made to the Local Government Pension Scheme by the Council in the year to 31 March 2021 is £3.656m. Expected contributions for the discretionary benefits scheme in the year to 31 March 2021 are £0.435m.

30. Contingent assets and liabilities

The Council does not have any contingent assets. Contingent liabilities as at 31 March 2020 are:

(a) Municipal Mutual Insurance

In 1992/93 the Council's insurers, Municipal Mutual Insurance, ceased accepting business. The Scheme of Arrangement that was established to ensure an orderly wind up of the company determined that a levy could be made on the Council. The exact amount cannot be quantified, although the maximum is £760,314. £226,809 has been set aside as a provision for these costs, of which £177,579 has been paid to the administrator. This leaves a maximum contingent liability of £533,505.

(b) VAT

The computation of the Council's 2019/20 position in respect of exempt category Value Added Tax has yet to be agreed with Revenue and Customs. If the 5% allowance has been exceeded, up to £150,000 in VAT may become payable.

(c) Housing stock transfer warranty

Liabilities in relation to a 40 year warranty given by the Council in respect of the transfer of its housing stock to a registered social landlord in February 2000 could arise. The amount of the potential liability cannot be quantified but could amount to several million pounds.

(d) Castle House liquidated damages

The Council is in communication with the developers of Castle House (Kier) regarding liquidated damages. If the liquidated damages are not settled there could be a potential liability of approximately £0.500m.

31. Financial instruments

Categories and fair values of financial Instruments

The following categories of financial instruments are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost (page 26); the table below also shows the fair values of these financial instruments:

2018/19		Measured at amortised cost	2019/20	
Carrying amount £000	Fair value £000		Carrying amount £000	Fair value £000
-	-	Investments (loans and receivables)	-	-
8,410	8,410	Debtors	4,674	4,674
77	77	Borrowings	77	77
7,355	7,355	Creditors	2,337	2,337
2,223	2,223	Cash/cash equivalents	4,704	4,704

Debtors/Creditors vary from the balance sheet as statutory debtors and payments in advance (£7.763m) and statutory creditors (£8.970m) are excluded from the classification of financial instruments

Income, expense, gains and losses

2018/19				2019/20		
Expenses & losses £000	Income & gains £000	Total £000		Expenses & losses £000	Income & gains £000	Total £000
-	-	-	Net loss on financial assets measured at amortised cost	-	-	-
5	-	5	Interest expense on financial assets measured at amortised cost	-	-	-
5	-	5	Total expense in provision of services	-	-	-
-	(83)	(83)	Interest income on financial assets measured at amortised cost	-	(89)	(89)
-	(83)	(83)	Total income in provision of services	-	(89)	(89)
5	(83)	(78)	Net (gain)/loss for the year	-	(89)	(89)

32. 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;
- 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 programme focuses on the unpredictability of financial markets and aims to minimise adverse effects on the resources available. Risk management is carried out under policies approved by the council in the annual treasury management strategy. The council provides written principles for overall risk management, as well as written policies covering specific areas, such as interest rate risk, credit risk and the investment of surplus cash.

Credit risk

Credit risks arise from deposits with banks and financial institutions, as well as credit exposures to the Council's customers. This risk is minimised through the Annual Investment Strategy, which requires that deposits are not made with financial institutions unless they meet identified minimum credit criteria.

The credit criteria in respect of financial assets held by the Council are as summarised below:

- Investment counterparties are assessed as to their suitability in relation to credit ratings supplied by the main ratings agencies, with the additional consideration of credit default swap data. A limit is placed on the amount which can in total be placed with individual counterparties and categories of counterparties;
- Customers for goods and services are assessed, taking into account their financial position, past experience and other factors, with individual credit limits being set where considered necessary. Credit references are obtained where contracts are entered into;
- The Council's policy regarding the write off of debtors is that all possible recovery procedures must have been exhausted, significant staffs resources are committed to the recovery of debtors by the Revenues Section. Indicators that are considered when write offs are recommended include insolvency or other legal proceedings being commenced and the death of the debtor.

The following significant inputs, assumptions and estimation techniques have been used in calculating the Council's approach to impairment loss allowances:

- Debtors relating to public sector organisations are not impaired;

- A provision matrix is utilised to estimate expected credit losses based on the 'age' of debtors. The matrix identifies the relationship between the age of the Council's debtors and the risk of non-payment based on historical losses;
- An allowance has been made within the credit loss allowance for debtors to reflect the potential impact of COVID-19 on the collection, this is based upon the reduced income received from fees and charges during April and May 2020. Without this the credit loss allowance would have decreased as a result of the write off of a number of aged debts in 2018/19;
- Any reasonable and supportable information relating to individual debtors in terms of past events, current conditions and forecasts of future economic conditions that is available without undue cost or effort.

The changes in the lifetime expected credit loss allowance for debtors measured at amortised costs are as follows:

2018/19 £000		2019/20 £000
104	Balance at 1 April	275
(553)	Amounts written off	(55)
724	Changes in models/risk parameters	22
275	Balance at 31 March	242

Liquidity risk

The Council has a comprehensive cash flow management system that seeks to ensure that cash is available as needed. If unexpected movements happen, the Council has access to borrowing from the money markets and the Public Works Loans Board. There is no significant risk that it will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments. The maturity analysis of borrowing is as follows:

31/03/2019 £000		31/03/2020 £000
77	Less than one year	77
77		77

All trade creditors are due to be paid in less than one year.

Interest rate risk

The Council is exposed to risk in terms of its exposure to interest rate movements on its investments (no long term money market borrowing at present). Movements in interest rates have a complex impact on the Council. For instance, a rise in interest rates would increase interest income.

Changes in interest receivable on variable rate 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 market price will be reflected in other comprehensive income and expenditure. At 31 March 2020 the Council had no investments.

Price risk

The Council does not have any investment in equity shares, joint ventures or local industry. Consequently, it is not exposed to losses arising from movements in share prices.

Foreign exchange risk

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

33. Leases

Council as lessee

Finance leases

As at 31 March 2020 the Council has no requirement to commit to making minimum payments under finance leases.

Operating leases

The Council has 3 items of equipment acquired by entering into operating leases (postage franking machines). The minimum lease payments as at 31 March 2020 are shown below:

31/03/2019 £000		31/03/2020 £000
1	Not later than one year	1
2	Later than one year, less than five years	3
-	Later than five years	-
3		4

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

31/03/2019 £000		31/03/2020 £000
1	Minimum lease payments	1
1		1

Council as lessor

Finance leases

The Council has leased out 5 properties on a finance lease basis, with terms remaining ranging from 15 to 75 years.

The Council has a gross investment in these leases, made up of the minimum lease payments expected to be received over the remaining term and the residual value anticipated for properties when the leases come to an end. The minimum lease payments comprise settlement of the long-term debtor for the interest in the properties acquired by the lessee and finance income that will be earned by the Council whilst the debtor remains outstanding. The gross investment is made up of:

31/03/2019 £000		31/03/2020 £000
	Finance lease debtor (net present value of minimum lease payments):	
20	Current	20
130	Non-current	145
431	Unearned finance income	374
581	Gross investment in the lease	539

The gross investment in the lease and the minimum lease payments will be received over the following periods:

31/03/2019			31/03/2020	
Minimum lease payments £000	Finance lease liabilities £000		Minimum lease payments £000	Finance lease liabilities £000
51	31	Not later than one year	51	31
162	118	Later than one year, less than five years	155	104
369	283	Later than five years	333	240
582	432		539	375

Operating leases

The Council leases out property and equipment under operating leases for the purposes of providing community services, such as sports facilities and community centres; to gain income from its investment properties; and for economic development purposes to provide accommodation for local businesses.

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

31/03/2019 £000		31/03/2020 £000
398	Not later than one year	427
383	Later than one year, less than five years	422
914	Later than five years	926
1,695		1,775

Collection Fund

The Collection Fund 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.

2018/19 Council Tax £000	2018/19 Business Rates £000	2018/19 Total £000		2019/20 Council Tax £000	2019/20 Business Rates £000	2019/20 Total £000
(61,928)	-	(61,928)	Income	(64,832)	-	(64,832)
-	(33,725)	(33,725)	Council Tax Payers	-	(33,742)	(33,742)
-	(25)	(25)	Business Rates Payers	-	(287)	(287)
-	(5)	(5)	Transfer of previous years deficit	-	(64)	(64)
-	-	-	- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council	-	-	-
-	(1)	(1)	- Staffordshire County Council	-	(7)	(7)
-	(31)	(31)	- Office of Police & Crime Commissioner	-	(358)	(358)
-	-	-	- Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority	-	-	-
-	-	-	- Central Government	-	-	-
(61,928)	(33,787)	(95,715)	Total income	(64,832)	(34,458)	(99,290)
			Expenditure			
			Council Tax precepts			
7,570	-	7,570	- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council	7,867	-	7,867
44,562	-	44,562	- Staffordshire County Council	46,256	-	46,256
7,088	-	7,088	- Office of Police & Crime Commissioner	8,038	-	8,038
2,707	-	2,707	- Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority	2,811	-	2,811
			Business Rates apportionment			
-	12,493	12,493	- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council	-	11,918	11,918
-	2,811	2,811	- Staffordshire County Council	-	10,130	10,130
-	312	312	- Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority	-	298	298
-	15,617	15,617	- Central Government	-	7,449	7,449
			Other expenditure			
-	140	140	Cost of Collection	-	139	139
-	22	22	Transitional Protection	-	22	22
501	140	641	Provision for Bad Debts	271	144	415
-	452	452	Provision for Appeals	-	(752)	(752)
			Transfer of previous years surplus			
5	-	5	- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council	228	-	228
28	-	28	- Staffordshire County Council	1,452	-	1,452
4	-	4	- Office of Police & Crime Commissioner	231	-	231
2	-	2	- Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority	88	-	88
-	-	-	- Central Government	-	-	-
62,467	31,987	94,454	Total expenditure	67,242	29,348	96,590
539	(1,800)	(1,261)	Deficit/(surplus) for the year	2,410	(5,110)	(2,700)
(1,999)	1,983	(16)	Balance brought forward at 1 April	(1,460)	183	(1,277)
539	(1,800)	(1,261)	Deficit/(surplus) for the year	2,410	(5,110)	(2,700)
(1,460)	183	(1,277)	Balance carried forward at 31 March	950	(4,927)	(3,977)
			Allocation of Collection Fund balance			
(179)	73	(106)	- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council	115	(1,971)	(1,856)
(1,055)	17	(1,038)	- Staffordshire County Council	676	(1,542)	(866)
(64)	2	(62)	- Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority	41	(49)	(8)
-	91	91	- Central Government	-	(1,365)	(1,365)
(162)	-	(162)	- Office of Police & Crime Commissioner	118	-	118
(1,460)	183	(1,277)		950	(4,927)	(3,977)

Notes

1. Business Rates

The Council collects business rates in its area based on non-domestic rateable values (£90.815m at 31 March 2020 and £90.289m at 31 March 2019) multiplied by a uniform business rate. The rate is specified by the Government, in 2019/20 the rate was 50.4p, with a reduction for “small businesses” to 49.1p on application (49.3p in 2018/19 - “small business” reduction, 48.0p).

The administration of business rates aims to give Councils a greater incentive to grow businesses but also results in financial risks relating to volatility in appeals and non-collection of rates. Local authorities retain a proportion of the total collectable rates due, in the case of Newcastle-under-Lyme the local share is 40%. The remainder is distributed to preceptors, these are Central Government (see below re. share), Staffordshire County Council (see below re. share) and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority (1% share).

The Council, as part of a Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent pool, participated in a 75% business rates retention pilot. This pilot increased the share of business rates retained by Staffordshire County Council by 25% (retained 34% in total) and reduced Central Government's share by 25% (retained 25% in total), this 25% was offset by the non-distribution of a number of grants to local authorities. The principal benefit of the pilot was that an extra 25% of business rates growth was retained by Local Government within Staffordshire.

The business rates shares payable for 2019/20 were estimated, via the NNDR1 return, before the start of the financial year as £7.449m to Central Government, £10.130m to Staffordshire County Council, £0.298m to Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority and £11.918m to Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.

The total of these sums (£29.795m) has been paid in 2019/20 and charged to the collection fund in year.

The actual business rates payable for 2019/20, as per the NNDR3 return, when taking into account the cost of collection, provisions for appeals and bad debts and transitional protection was calculated to be £34.189m.

The variance between the estimated business rates shared between Central Government, Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council as per the NNDR1 return (£29.795m) and the actual business rates payable per the NNDR3 return (£34.189m) is £4.394m - a surplus to the collection fund for 2019/20 due to a return for the required appeals provision when compared to that anticipated on the NNDR1 return and a continued position of business rates growth (when taking account of Section 31 discounts and reliefs introduced by Central Government).

In addition to the business rates shares payable for 2019/20, the estimated 2018/19 deficit declared in January 2019 regarding business rates of £0.716m was paid to the collection fund from the Council, Central Government, Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

The actual 2018/19 deficit was calculated to be £0.183m, therefore there was an overpayment of £0.533m in the collection of this deficit in 2019/20 which will need to be repaid, along with the estimated 2019/20 surplus declared in January 2020, to the Council, Central Government, Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority during 2020/21.

Taking into account the overpayment regarding the 2018/19 deficit and the 2019/20 surplus, the business rates collection fund has a surplus of £4.927m as at 31 March 2020.

Please note that balances and transactions relating to 2018/19 are distributed as per the shares under the 50% business rates retention scheme, whilst those balances relating to 2019/20 are distributed as per the revised shares under the 75% business rates retention pilot.

When the scheme was introduced, Central Government set a baseline level for each authority identifying the expected level of retained business rates and a top up or tariff amount to ensure that all authorities receive their baseline amount. Tariffs due from authorities payable to Central Government are used to finance the top ups to those authorities who do not achieve their targeted baseline funding. In this respect Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council paid a tariff in 2019/20 to the value of £9.150m.

2. Council Tax

Council Tax Income is derived from charges raised, in eight valuation bands, according to the value of residential properties. Individual charges are calculated by estimating the amount of income required to be taken from the Collection Fund by Staffordshire County Council, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council for the forthcoming year and dividing this by the council tax base. The average Band D tax in 2019/20 of £1,734.66 compared with £1,667.06 in 2018/19. Multiplication of this amount by the proportions set out in the Council Tax Base table below gives the amount due for a property in each band.

The Council Tax base for 2019/20 was 37,117 (36,812 in 2018/19), this was derived as follows:

Band & value range	Number of dwellings	After discounts/exemptions	Ratio to band D	Band D equivalent
Band A-	-	48	5/9	27
Band A (Up to £40,000)	24,137	16,355	6/9	10,903
Band B (£40,001 - £52,000)	10,521	8,720	7/9	6,782
Band C (£52,001 - £ 68,000)	11,307	9,886	8/9	8,787
Band D (£68,001 - £88,000)	5,028	4,598	9/9	4,598
Band E (£88,001 - £120,000)	2,729	2,500	11/9	3,055
Band F (£120,001 - £160,000)	1,735	1,615	13/9	2,333
Band G (£160,001 - £320,000)	926	869	15/9	1,448
Band H (Over £320,000)	49	29	18/9	57
				37,990
Less non collection rate (2.3%)				(873)
Borough Council Tax base				37,117

In addition to the Council Tax payable for 2019/20, the estimated 2018/19 surplus declared in January 2019 regarding Council Tax of £1.999m was repaid to the preceptors (Staffordshire County Council, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council).

The actual 2018/19 surplus was calculated to be £1.460m; therefore there was a balance of £0.539m on the payment of this surplus in 2019/20 which will need to be recouped during 2020/21 from the preceptors.

Taking into account the 2018/19 surplus to be recouped, the surplus declared to the preceptors for 2019/20 in January 2020 was £0.529m. The actual deficit balance of the Council Tax collection fund as at 31 March 2020 is £0.950m. This increased deficit, when compared to the declared amount, is primarily due to the increased contribution to the provision for bad debts.

Audit Certificate

Independent Auditors report to the Members of Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion to be provided by Grant Thornton upon completion of their audit of the Statement of Accounts

Glossary

To assist readers of the Statement of Accounts to understand its contents the following definitions are provided of terms used in the text.

Accounting Policies

Accounting policies are the principles, bases, conventions, rules and practices applied by the Council that specify how the effects of transactions and other events are to be reflected in its financial statements through recognising, selecting measurement bases for and presenting assets, liabilities, gains, losses, and changes to reserves.

Accruals

The concept that items of income and expenditure are recognised as they are earned or incurred, not as money is received or paid.

Actuarial gains and losses

For a defined benefit pension scheme, the changes in actuarial deficits or surpluses that arise because:

- Events have not coincided with the actuarial assumptions made for the last valuation (experience gains and losses);
- The actuarial assumptions have changed.

Amortisation

An annual charge to a revenue account to reduce the value of an asset to zero over a period of years.

Assets register

A register of the Council's fixed assets which records their essential details, including their description and location, valuation, basis of valuation, life and service chargeable for their use.

Balance Sheet

This shows a summary of the overall financial position of the Council at the end of the financial year.

Business Improvement District (BID)

A BID is a defined area within which businesses are required to pay an additional business rates levy (a business rates supplement) in order to fund projects within the BID's boundaries. A completely separate body from the Council is responsible for operating the BID scheme. The BID is often funded primarily through the levy but can also draw on other public and private funding streams. The Council as billing authority collects the supplement and pays it over to the BID body, whose income it is, charging the body for the costs of collection.

Capital expenditure

Expenditure on the acquisition of fixed assets or expenditure, which adds to and does not merely maintain existing assets.

Capital grants receipts in advance account

An account which holds the balances of capital grants received where conditions apply and have not been satisfied meaning that the grants are not yet available for use to finance expenditure.

Capital grants unapplied account

A usable reserve holding the balances of capital grants received or due to the Council at the year-end where conditions do not apply to those grants or conditions have been satisfied meaning that the grant is available for use to finance expenditure.

Capital receipts

Income received from the sale of capital assets which may be used to finance new capital expenditure.

CIPFA

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) is one of the leading accountancy bodies in the United Kingdom and specialises in public services.

Collection Fund

A fund accounting for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates received by the Council and the payments which are made from the fund including precepts to other authorities, the Council's own demand and shares of business rates receipts.

Community assets

Assets which the Council intends to hold in perpetuity, that have no determinable useful life and that may have restrictions on their disposal. Examples of community assets are parks and historic buildings.

Consistency

The concept that the accounting treatment of like items within an accounting period and from one period to the next is the same.

Contingent asset

A contingent asset is a possible asset arising from past events whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the local authority's control.

Contingent liability

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 authority's control;
- A present obligation arising from past events where it is not probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Creditors

Amounts owed by the Council for goods and services, where payments have not been made at the end of the financial year.

Current service cost

The increase in the present value of a defined benefit pension scheme's liabilities expected to arise from employee service in the current period.

Curtailment

For a defined benefit scheme, 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. Curtailments include termination of employees' services earlier than expected, for example as a result of discontinuing a segment of the business and termination of, or amendment to the terms of, a defined benefit scheme so that some or all future service by current employees will no longer qualify for benefits or will qualify only for reduced benefits.

Debtors

Amounts owed to the Council for goods and services, where the income has not been received at the end of the financial year.

Deferred liabilities

These are liabilities which by arrangement are payable beyond the next year at some point in the future or are paid off by an annual sum over a period of time, specifically for this Council amounts outstanding in respect of finance leases.

Defined benefit pension scheme

A pension or other retirement benefit scheme other than a defined contribution scheme. Usually, the scheme rules define the benefits independently of the contributions payable, and the benefits are not directly related to the investments of the scheme. The scheme may be funded or unfunded (including notionally funded).

Depreciation

The measure of the cost or revalued amount of the benefits of the fixed asset that have been consumed during the period. Consumption includes wearing out, using up or other reduction in the useful life of a fixed asset whether arising from use, the passing of time or obsolescence through either changes in technology or demand for the goods and services produced by the asset.

Discretionary benefits

Retirement benefits which the employer has no legal, contractual or constructive obligation to award and are awarded under the authority's discretionary powers, such as The Local Government (Discretionary Payments) Regulations 1996.

Expected rate of return on pension assets

For a funded defined benefit pension scheme, the average rate of return, including both income and changes in fair value but net of scheme expenses, expected over the remaining life of the related obligation on the actual assets held by the scheme.

Experience gains and losses

See actuarial gains and losses

Fair value

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 takes place either in the principal market for the asset or liability or in the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market.

Fair value hierarchy

A three level classification of techniques used in order to measure the fair value of financial assets and liabilities. The highest level (level 1) uses quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that can be accessed at the measurement date, level 2 uses inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset, either directly or indirectly and level 3 uses unobservable inputs for the asset or liability. Techniques employed should aim to maximise the use of observable inputs and minimise the use of unobservable inputs.

Financial instrument

A Financial instrument is any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another. Typical financial instruments are: liabilities - trade payables, borrowings, financial guarantees; assets - bank deposits, trade receivables, investments; derivatives - forward investment deals.

Financial Reporting Standards (FRSs)

Statements prepared by the Accounting Standards Committee. Many of the Financial Reporting Standards (FRSs) and the earlier Statements of Standard Accounting Practice (SSAPs) apply to local authorities and any departure from these must be disclosed in the published accounts.

Financial year

The period of time to which the Statement of Accounts relates. The financial year of the Council runs from 1 April to 31 March.

Fixed assets

Tangible assets that yield benefits to the local authority and the services it provides for a period of more than one year.

The classes of fixed assets required to be included in the accounting statements are:

Operational assets

- Other land and buildings (excluding Council Dwellings);
- Vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment;
- Infrastructure assets;
- Community assets.

Non-operational assets

- Investment Properties;
- Assets Held for Sale.

Assets under construction are not shown separately. They are included in the balance relating to the category of operational asset where they will be included when completed.

Formula grant

A formula grant is paid by central government to local authorities. Formula grant is largely funded by local business rates income (which is ultimately collected for central government). Revenue Support Grant and business rates are added together to make up the formula grant, which is then distributed to local authorities using a complex formula.

General Fund revenue account

This account records the expenditure and income incurred by the Council in operating its services during the year. It does not record any capital expenditure or income but does include the costs associated with capital expenditure in the form of capital financing costs (mostly related to interest, capital charges for the use of assets by services and depreciation charges).

Government grants

Assistance by government and inter-government agencies and similar bodies, whether local, national or international, in the form of cash or transfer of assets to an authority in return for past or future compliance with certain conditions relating to the activities of the authority.

Heritage assets

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

Historical cost

Actual cost of acquiring or constructing an asset.

Impairment

A reduction in the value of a fixed asset below its carrying amount on the balance sheet.

Infrastructure assets

Fixed assets that are not able to be taken away, expenditure on which is recoverable only by continued use of the asset created. Examples of infrastructure are highways and sewers.

Interest cost

For a defined benefit pension scheme, the expected increase during the period in the present value of the scheme liabilities because the benefits are one period closer to settlement.

Insurance value

The value placed upon an asset for insurance purposes.

Intangible assets

Non-financial fixed assets that do not have physical substance but are identifiable and are controlled by the Council through custody or legal rights. Specifically purchased software licenses are included in this category of asset.

Inventories

The amount of unused or unconsumed stocks held in expectation of future use. When use will not arise until a later period, it is appropriate to carry forward the amount to be matched to the use or consumption when it arises. Inventories comprise the following categories:

- Goods or other assets purchased for resale;
- Consumable stores;
- Raw materials and components purchased for incorporation into products for sale;
- Products and services in intermediate stages of completion;
- Long-term contract balances;
- Finished goods.

Investments

A long-term investment is an investment that is intended to be held for use on a continuing basis in the activities of the authority. Investments should be classified only where an intention to hold the investment for the long term can clearly be demonstrated or where there are restrictions as to the investor's ability to dispose of the investment. Investments which do not meet the above criteria should be qualified as current assets.

Investment properties

Interest in land and/or buildings:

- In respect of which construction work and development have been completed;
- Which is held for its investment potential, any rental income being negotiated at arm's length; and
- Which do not support the service or strategic objectives of the Council.

Leasing

Method of financing the provision of capital assets which does not provide for the title to the asset to pass to the authority. In return for the use of the asset the Council pays rental charges over a specified period of time. There are two basic types of leasing arrangement:

- Finance leases which transfer the risks and rewards of ownership of an asset to the lessee (the Council) and such assets are included within the fixed assets in the Balance Sheet;
- Operating leases where the ownership of the asset remains with the lessor and annual rental is charged direct to the revenue account.

Liquid resources

Current asset investments that are readily disposable by the authority without disrupting its business and are either readily convertible to known amounts of cash at or close to the carrying amount or are traded in an active market.

Long term debtors

Comprises amounts which are owed to the Council which are not investments and which are not expected to be realised within the next financial year. The main items included in this heading are outstanding loans from the Council to other bodies and outstanding amounts in respect of finance leases of Council properties to other bodies.

Material Items

An item is material if its omission, non-disclosure or misstatement could be expected to lead to a distortion of the view given by the financial statements.

National Non-Domestic Rate (NDR)

Amounts payable to local authorities from non-domestic properties. The rate poundage is set nationally. The amount collected is distributed via the business rates retention scheme to Central Government, Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire Authority. The remainder is retained by the Borough Council but is subject to a tariff payment and pool levy.

Non-distributed costs

Overheads from which no user now benefits and which are not apportioned to services.

Past service cost

For a defined benefit pension scheme, the increase in the present value of the scheme liabilities related to employee service in prior periods arising in the current period as a result of the introduction of, or improvement to, retirement benefits.

Precept

Demands made upon the Collection Fund by other authorities (Staffordshire County Council, Police and Fire Authorities and Parish Councils) for the services that they provide.

Prior period adjustments

Those material adjustments applicable to prior years arising from changes in accounting policies or from the correction of fundamental errors. They do not include normal recurring conditions or adjustments of accounting estimates made in prior years.

Provisions

Amounts set aside to meet liabilities or losses which are likely to be incurred but where the amount remains uncertain.

Quoted securities

Assets such as shares that are traded on financial exchanges.

Realisable value

Open market value of the asset in its existing use (or open market value in the case of non- operational assets), less the expenses to be incurred in realising the asset.

Related parties

Two or more parties are related when at any time during the financial period:

- One party has direct or indirect control over the other party, or
- The parties are subject to common control from the same source, or
- One party has influence over the financial and operational policies of the other party to the extent that the other party might be inhibited from pursuing at all times its own separate interests, or
- The parties, in entering a transaction, are subject to influence from the same source to such an extent that one of the parties to the transaction has subordinated its own separate interests.

For individuals identified as related parties, the following are also presumed to be related parties:

- Members of the close family or the same household, and
- Partnerships, companies, trusts or other entities in which the individual, or a member of their close family or same household, has a controlling interest.

Related party Transaction

A related party transaction is the transfer of assets or liabilities or the performance of services by, to or for a related party irrespective of whether a charge is made.

Reserves

Reserves fall into two different categories:

- Usable Reserves representing sums set aside to meet future expenditure for specific purposes and which the Council is able to utilise to provide services.
- Unusable Reserves which the Council is not able to utilise to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves which hold unrealisable gains and losses, such as the Revaluation Reserve and reserves which are adjustment accounts which deal with situations where income and expenditure are recognised statutorily against the General Fund balance on a different basis from that expected by accounting standards, for example the capital adjustment account.

Retirement benefits

All forms of consideration given by an employer in exchange for services rendered by employees that are payable after the completion of employment. Retirement benefits do not include termination benefits payable as a result of either (i) an employer's decision to terminate an employee's employment before the normal retirement date or (ii) an employee's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for those benefits, because these are not given in exchange for services rendered by employees.

Revenue expenditure

Expenditure on day-to-day running of the Council, including employee costs, running expenses and capital financing costs.

Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute (REFCUS)

Expenditure which does not result in the creation of a fixed asset and which is classified as capital for funding purposes but is chargeable to the Income and Expenditure Account (I&E Account) as revenue expenditure. Any grants or contributions towards such expenditure are also chargeable to the I&E Account. An appropriation is made to the I&E Account from the capital adjustment account of the amount of expenditure financed from capital resources. Such expenditure was formerly referred to as deferred charges.

Revenue Support Grant (RSG)

Grant paid to local authorities by Central Government to help finance its general expenditure.

Scheme liabilities

The liabilities of a defined benefit pension scheme for outgoings due after the valuation date. Scheme liabilities are measured using the projected unit method.

Reflect the benefits that the employer is committed to provide for service up to the valuation date.

Settlement

An irrevocable action that relieves the employer (or the defined benefit scheme) of the primary responsibility for a pension obligation and eliminates significant risks relating to the obligation and the assets used to effect the settlement. Settlements include a lump-sum cash payment to scheme members in exchange for their rights to receive specified pension benefits, the purchase of an irrevocable annuity contract sufficient to cover vested benefits and the transfer of scheme assets and liabilities relating to a group of employees leaving the scheme.

Unitised securities

A fund that is sold in units specified by a fund manager, rather than shares of fund managed assets.

Unquoted securities

Assets such as shares that are not traded on financial exchanges.

Useful life

Period over which the local authority will derive benefits from the use of a fixed asset.

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM
TO THE AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

09 November 2020

QUARTER 2 CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT 2020-21

Submitted by: Executive Management Team

Portfolio: Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To inform Members of the progress made by the Council in enhancing and embedding risk management for the period July to September (Q2), including progress made in managing identified corporate risks.

To ask members to recognise that risk likelihood can be mitigated but the risk impact may not change.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:-

- (a) Note that there are no overdue risk reviews (point 2.1.1).**
- (b) Note that there were 5 risk level increases (point 2.2.1).**
- (c) Note that there were no new identified risks (point 2.2.2).**
- (d) Note the current position on the Brexit – No Trade Deal (point 2.2.3).**
- (e) Identify, as appropriate, individual risk profiles to be scrutinised in more detail at the next meeting of the Committee.**

Reasons

The risk management process adopted by the Council has been reviewed to incorporate changes in the way the Council works and to provide continuity and streamlined reporting of risks to allow the process to become further embedded at each level of the authority. This will also aid the identification of key risks that potentially threaten the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities. The Risk Management Strategy provides a formal and proportionate framework to manage these identified risks and thus reduce the Council's exposure.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council monitors and manages all its risks through the various risk profiles contained within GRACE (Governance Risk and Control Environment) – the Council's software used to record and manage risks.

- 1.2 The Council currently reviews its high (red 9) risks at least monthly and its medium (amber) risks at least quarterly.
- 1.3 The last review of these risks (Q1 2020) was reported to the Council's Audit & Standards Committee in July 2020.
- 1.4 Risk owners are challenged by the Council's Risk Champions in respect of the controls, further actions, ratings and emerging risks related to their risks, and are also challenged on the reasons for inclusion or non-inclusion and amendment of these.
- 1.5 Projects are managed to a high level in relation to risk and are reviewed in accordance with the Risk Management Strategy (i.e. at least monthly).

2. Issues

- 2.1 Further to an Audit Assurance recommendation, your officer has been asked to report on overdue risk reviews that are 6 months out of date.
 - 2.1.1 At the time of running the report, there are no overdue risk reviews.
- 2.2 Following a previous meeting a brief point is now produced to show any risks where the risk level has increased to a Medium 7, 8 or High 9.
 - 2.2.1 Your officer can report that there were 5 risk level increases for reporting. These risks can be found from page 1 to 5 of Appendix A.
 - 2.2.2 There has been no reportable new risks identified for Q2 2020/21.
 - 2.2.3 From a previous meeting a request was made in respect of Brexit - No Trade Deal, and what risks may affect the Council. Your Officers can advise that the Brexit Working Group has been reformed, an initial meeting of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF) has taken place (the Borough Council were in attendance) and officers have now drafted the attached risk assessment, shown at Appendix B, which may be modified subject to further outcomes of the SRF (inclusion of risk ratings, risk owners etc.).
 - 2.2.3.1 A summary of the key points from partner work to date include:
 - Reformation of the Borough Council Brexit Working Group proactively supports internal services, local businesses and residents on and around the potential impacts of a Brexit – No Trade Deal.
 - Initial meeting of the SRF has taken place.
 - Local planning assumptions have been assessed.
 - Key consequences have been identified and are the risks shown in Appendix B. Some of these risks however are outside of Newcastle Borough Council's control, however we can support partners and local businesses to access other areas/streams of support should the need arise.
 - 2.2.4 Should there have been any changes or increases during October to December 2020 these will be fully reported to the next relevant meeting of the Committee.

3. Options Considered

3.1 Following the comprehensive review of risk profiles taking place across the council, the only risks to be reported are those from the Corporate Risk Register, unless there are any significant occurrences or increases in other profiles.

4. Proposal – Corporate, Strategic, Operational, Project and Partnership Risk Registers (Appendices)

4.1 The Council regularly reviews and refreshes its risk registers in accordance with the Risk Management Strategy.

4.2 These reviews are co-ordinated by the Strategic Risk Champion who works closely with Directors, Operational Risk Champions and Risk Owners.

4.3 The measure of the ratings for the impact and likelihood are shown below, for ease of use.

Impact Measures

	High (red)	Medium (amber)	Low (green)
Health & Safety	Death, abuse, life threatening OR permanent disability	Serious injury OR long-term absence from work (over 7 days)	Minor injury OR short-term absence from work (less than 7 days)
Cost	More than £300k	Between £50-£300k	Between £20-£50k
Reputation	National media attention, potential public interest report, third party intervention	Sustained local media attention, Executive Director reporting, Member interest	Short term local media attention, Wider Management Team reporting
Service Delivery	Serious service failure directly affecting partners, stakeholders (more than 1 month)	Service failure but not directly affecting partners or stakeholders (up to 1 month)	Service disruption (between 1 day to 2 weeks)
Project Delivery	Project failure impacting on council's priorities and performance	Project failure impacting on Directorate's performance and priorities	Project delay impacting on service performance and priorities
Legal implications	Statutory body, partner or enforcement agency	Member and Executive Management Team	Wider Management Team

Likelihood Measures

	High (red)	Medium (amber)	Low (green)
--	------------	----------------	-------------

Timescale	Highly likely to occur (90%+ chance)	Likely to happen (50-89% chance)	Possible (1-49% chance)
	An incident has occurred in the past year <u>OR</u> is highly likely to occur in the next year	An incident has occurred in the past 2-5 years <u>OR</u> is likely to occur in the next 2-5 years	An incident has occurred in the past 6+ years <u>OR</u> is likely to occur in the next 6+ years

L I K E L I H O O D	High	7 Amber	8 Amber	9 High Red
	Medium	4 Green	5 Amber	6 Amber
	Low	1 Green	2 Green	3 Amber
		Low	Medium	High
IMPACT				

5. Reasons for Preferred Solution

5.1 To offer a continual review process to minimise and mitigate risks.

6. Outcomes Linked to Corporate and Sustainable Community Priorities

6.1 Good risk management is a key part of the overall delivery of the Council's four corporate priorities of:

- Local Services that Work for Local People.
- Growing our People and Places.
- A Healthy, Active and Safe Borough.
- A Town Centre for all.

7. Legal and Statutory Implications

7.1 The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, state that:

*“The relevant body **is** responsible for ensuring that it has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives; ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective, and includes effective arrangements for the management of risk”.*

8. Equality Impact Assessment

8.1 There are no differential equality impact issues in relation to this report.

9. Financial and Resource Implications

9.1 None where actions are to be taken in order to mitigate the risks as these will be met from within existing budgets. Where this is not possible, further reports will be submitted to Members of relevant Committees.

10. Major Risks

10.1 As highlighted in Appendix A.

10.2 As highlighted in Appendix B.

11. Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

11.1 Officers assess sustainability and climate change implications as part of their local services.

12. Key Decision Information

12.1 This report is for information and there are no key decision requirements pertaining to the information contained within the report.

13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

13.1 Previous Minutes from Committee meeting held on 9th March 2020.

14. List of Appendices

14.1 Appendix A – Risks with increased ratings and heat map.

14.2 Appendix B – Risk Assessment for Brexit - No Trade Deal.

15. Background Papers

15.1 Previous Minutes and reports have been circulated to relevant Members and Officers.

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Commercial Development and Economic Growth

Risk Failure to achieve income targets

Likelihood	H			R/G
	M		T	
	L			
		L	M	H
	Impact			

Impact Measures			
Risk Description	Failure to achieve income targets		
Potential Consequences	Adverse financial impact. Reputational damage. Service delivery failure.		
Implication			
Risk Owners	Louise Beeby; Shawn Fleet; Joanne Halliday; Simon McEneny; Phil Thompson		
Risk Rating	High Red 9	Last Review	10/09/2020
Final Risk Rating	High Red 9	Next Review	10/10/2020
Target Risk Level	Medium Amber 5	Treatment	Treat
Path	Commercial Development and Economic Growth/Newcastle Under Lyme		

Key Controls Identified

- Budget process
- Pro-active monitoring of income targets.
- Asset Management Strategy in place for the next 3 financial years.
- Budget monitoring undertaken on monthly basis
- Fees and Charges set annually
- Marketing and promotion activity
- Monthly budget reports
- Monitoring of usage of facilities and services
- Contingency fund available.

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Due for Completion by	Comments
Strategic review of commercial property portfolio.	Strategic review of commercial property portfolio should be undertaken based upon a refreshed Stock Condition Survey with a view to determining medium to long term rationalisation taking account of both regeneration and value for money considerations.	Planned	Louise Beeby Joanne Halliday	23/12/2020	Delay due to contractual issues - now sorted but date revised.

Risk Website Development

Likelihood	H	R		G
	M			
	L			
		L	M	H
	Impact			

Impact Measures

Risk Description

Digital Delivery success will be heavily reliant on a well presented and up to date website, currently we do not have a web developer. We have one member of staff currently updating web pages.

Potential Consequences

Failure of strategy to deliver its desired outcomes. Savings not achieved. Residents don't engage with online services.

Implication

Additional costs to the Council of buying-in resource.

Risk Owners

Janet Baddeley; Audrey Clowes; David Elkington

Risk Rating

High Red 9

Last Review

28/09/2020

Final Risk Rating

Medium Amber 7

Next Review

27/12/2020

Target Risk Level

Treatment

Treat

Path

Digital Delivery/Customer and Digital Services/Resources and Support Services/Newcastle Under Lyme

Key Controls Identified

Digital Delivery Board in place and chaired by a member of EMT.

Digital Delivery Team in place led by Rosie Bloor.

Digital Strategy in final stages of development.

ICT in process of securing digital staff resources.

Action Plans

Action Plan Description

Action Plan Type

Action Plan Owner

Due for Completion by

Comments

Housing Advice Service and Allocations [Risk Champion: Presutti, Jane] [Risk Champion: Presutti, Jane]

Risk Failure to make provision within the budget for services which cannot be accurately determined such as emergency housing

Likelihood	H			R
	M			
	L	G		
		L	M	H
	Impact			

Impact Measures

Risk Description Failure to make provision within the budget for services which cannot be accurately determined such as emergency housing

Potential Consequences Small changes in occurrence would have a significant impact on the budget.

Implication

Risk Owners Sarah Moore; Gillian Taylor

Risk Rating Low Green 1

Last Review 10/09/2020

Final Risk Rating High Red 9

Next Review 10/10/2020

Target Risk Level

Treatment Treat

Path

Housing Advice Service and Allocations [Risk Champion: Presutti, Jane] [Risk Champion: Presutti, Jane]/Housing and Partnerships [Risk Champion: Presutti, Jane]/Commercial Development and Economic Growth/Newcastle Under Lyme

Key Controls Identified

- Continuous monitoring to reduce unforeseen occurrences and raise awareness.
- Review of effectiveness of the Open Doors temporary accommodation
- Provision of Open Doors temporary accommodation

Action Plans

Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Due for Completion by	Comments
-------------------------	------------------	-------------------	-----------------------	----------

Risk Failure to provide a sound financial plan built upon a medium term financial strategy

Page 132

Likelihood	H			R
	M			T/G
	L			
		L	M	H
	Impact			

Impact Measures

Risk Description Failure to provide a sound financial plan built upon a medium term financial strategy

Potential Consequences Failure to plan budgets. Uninformed budget decisions. Long term impact of Covid undermines the robustness of the MTFS and financial sustainability.

Implication

Risk Owners Sarah Wilkes

Risk Rating Medium Amber 6

Last Review 17/09/2020

Final Risk Rating High Red 9

Next Review 17/10/2020

Target Risk Level Medium Amber 6

Treatment Treat

Path Resources and Support Services/Newcastle Under Lyme

Key Controls Identified

Medium Term Financial Strategy in place

Continually review and monitor the Medium Term Service & Financial Plan

Covid-19

Action Plans

Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Due for Completion by	Comments
Review the MTFS and produce a financial recovery and sustainability strategy in light of the Covid impact	Planned	Jan Willis	30/11/2020	

Risk Demand (number of people) exceeds the capacity of a particular Rest Centre

Likelihood	H		R/G	
	M		T	
	L			
		L	M	H
	Impact			

Impact Measures

Risk Description Demand (number of people) exceeds the capacity of a particular Rest Centre

Potential Consequences Reputational damage to the council. Increased cost to the council.

Implication

Risk Owners Elaine Burgess; Richard Kissman; Sarah Moore; Jeff Vernal

Risk Rating Medium Amber 8 **Last Review** 22/09/2020

Final Risk Rating Medium Amber 8 **Next Review** 21/12/2020

Target Risk Level Medium Amber 5 **Treatment** Tolerate

Path Rest Centres/Asset Services/Commercial Development and Economic Growth/Newcastle Under Lyme

Key Controls Identified

Arrangements exist between local authorities to provide support by way of mutual aid.

A Mass Displacement Plan is in place for the SRF.

A process is in place to prepare for additional Rest Centre activations, if required.

There are a number of Rest Centres on the council's list which could be used to provide extra spaces, if required.

A forecast of needs/demand would be obtained prior to selecting and activating an appropriate Rest Centre.

Action Plans

Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Due for Completion by	Comments
-------------------------	------------------	-------------------	-----------------------	----------

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Brexit - No Trade Deal

Risk Business, Farming, Agriculture and Rural issues

Likelihood	H			
	M			
	L			
		L	M	H
	Impact			

Impact Measures

Risk Description

Potential Consequences EU nationals in workforce
Supply of temp and agency staff
Environmental Health issue if food can't be exported
Stockpiling of supplies and chemicals

Implication

Risk Owners

Risk Rating

Final Risk Rating

Target Risk Level

Path

Last Review

Next Review 26/01/2021

Treatment

Brexit - No Trade Deal/Newcastle Under Lyme

Key Controls Identified

Council staff inoculation and support

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Due for Completion by	Comments
Maintenance of equipment in business, farming and agriculture settings	Maintenance schedules of essential equipment supplied or maintained by EU companies, or EU supplied parts	Ongoing		31/12/2020	Expect local businesses, farming and agriculture as part of their BCP's to bring forward such works to enable replacement parts to be obtained/stockpiled and work to be completed
Staff inoculations	Encourage businesses as part of their BCP to look at staff inoculations against influenza and pneumonia via a Communication plan	Planned		31/12/2020	

Crime, Public Order and Community Tensions

Likelihood	H				Impact Measures			
	M				Risk Description			
	L				Potential Consequences	Delay to supplies and supply chains EU nationals in workforce Stockpiling of supplies and chemicals		
		L	M	H	Implication			
					Risk Owners			
					Risk Rating		Last Review	
					Final Risk Rating		Next Review	26/01/2021
					Target Risk Level		Treatment	
					Path	Brexit - No Trade Deal/Newcastle Under Lyme		

Key Controls Identified

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Due for Completion by	Comments
Disorder outside of shops	Work with partners to consider the potential impact of any perceived shortages such as food, and ensuring adequate plans are in place to deal with disorder outside food shops and supermarkets in the event of shortages of a particular item.	Ongoing		31/12/2020	
Free up capacity and resource	To be available to troubleshoot any difficulties that arise, to support multi-agency planning and preparation, and consider additional support to recover from any adverse consequences.	Ongoing		31/12/2020	
Increase in homelessness	Work with partner organisations to monitor incidents, and scope the need for additional resources	Ongoing		31/12/2020	
Review evac procedure and develop lockdown procedure	Review evac procedure and develop lockdown procedure for Council buildings and local businesses, vulnerable to protest	Ongoing		31/12/2020	
Scope need for additional officer resource in relation to enforcement of regulatory services		Ongoing		31/12/2020	

Risk Food Supply and Safety

Likelihood	H			
	M			
	L			
		L	M	H
	Impact			

Impact Measures

Risk Description

Potential Consequences Delay to supplies and supply chains
 EU nationals in workforce
 Supply of temporary and agency staff
 Environmental Health issue if food can't be exported
 Stockpiling of supplies and chemicals

Implication

Risk Owners

Risk Rating

Last Review

Final Risk Rating

Next Review 26/01/2021

Target Risk Level

Treatment

Path

Brexit - No Trade Deal/Newcastle Under Lyme

Key Controls Identified

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Due for Completion by	Comments
Perceived shortages	Consider the potential impact of any perceived shortages such as food, and ensuring adequate plans are in place	Ongoing		31/12/2020	Possible impact on local food banks having insufficient food to meet demand, and voluntary sector capacity

Health and Social Care

Likelihood	H				Impact Measures			
	M				Risk Description			
	L				Potential Consequences	Delay to supplies and supply chains EU nationals in workforce Supply of temp and agency staff		
		L	M	H	Implication			
					Risk Owners			
					Risk Rating		Last Review	
					Final Risk Rating		Next Review	26/01/2021
					Target Risk Level		Treatment	
					Path	Brexit - No Trade Deal/Newcastle Under Lyme		

Key Controls Identified

Council staff inoculation and support

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Due for Completion by	Comments
Comms campaign via appropriate channels in respect of dealing with supplies and supply chain	Advise local businesses to be prepared and to carefully consider their risks as part of Business Continuity Plans	Ongoing		31/12/2020	
Perceived shortages & increased food poverty	Consider the potential impact of any perceived shortages such as food, and ensuring adequate plans are in place to signpost to other sources	Ongoing		31/12/2020	Possible impacts on local food banks having insufficient food to meet demand, voluntary sector capacity and vulnerable groups/communities
Staff inoculations	Encourage businesses as part of their BCP to look at staff inoculations against influenza and pneumonia via a Communication plan	Ongoing		31/12/2020	

Risk Other

Likelihood	H			
	M			
	L			
		L	M	H
	Impact			

Impact Measures

Risk Description Risks including: Dealing with impact of Brexit No Trade Deal; Supply chains;

Potential Consequences

Implication

Risk Owners

Risk Rating

Last Review

Final Risk Rating

Next Review 26/01/2021

Target Risk Level

Treatment

Path

Brexit - No Trade Deal/Newcastle Under Lyme

Key Controls Identified

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Due for Completion by	Comments
Comms campaign via appropriate channels in respect of dealing with impact	Warn local businesses to be prepared and to carefully consider their risks	Ongoing		31/12/2020	
Maintenance of equipment	Maintenance schedules of essential equipment supplied or maintained by EU companies, or EU supplied parts	Ongoing		31/12/2020	Bring forward such works to enable replacement parts to be obtained/stockpiled and work to be completed
Supplies continuity	Ensure BCP's are up to date in respect of supply and suppliers throughout the Borough	Ongoing		31/12/2020	However, if suppliers are unable to obtain required stock, prioritization of works needs to be identified.

Waste and Environmental Safety

Likelihood	H			
	M			
	L			
		L	M	H
	Impact			

Impact Measures

Risk Description

Potential Consequences EU nationals in workforce
Supply of temp and agency staff
Environmental Health issue if food can't be exported
Stockpiling of supplies and chemicals

Implication

Risk Owners

Risk Rating

Final Risk Rating

Target Risk Level

Path

Last Review

Next Review 26/01/2021

Treatment

Brexit - No Trade Deal/Newcastle Under Lyme

Key Controls Identified

Action Plans

	Action Plan Description	Action Plan Type	Action Plan Owner	Due for Completion by	Comments
Stockpiling of chemicals	Keep necessary COSHH details and recommended manufacturer storage details up to date and disseminate to all affected services and general public/businesses	Ongoing		31/12/2020	

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO

Audit & Standards Committee
09 November 2020

Report Title: Internal Audit Update Quarter 2

Submitted by: Chief Internal Auditor, Clare Potts

Portfolios: Finance and Efficiency

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To report on the position regarding Internal Audit during the period 1st July to 30 September 2020.

Recommendation

That Members consider the report

Reasons

The role of Internal Audit is to ensure that the Council has assurance that controls are in place and operating effectively across all Council Services and Departments.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21 allows for 336 days of audit work.
- 1.2 This is the second progress report of the current financial year presented to the Committee.
- 1.3 As audit resources are finite, it is important to target these resources at areas considered to be high risk (where risk includes potential impact on the delivery of the council's objectives) and high priority, ahead of medium/low ranked audits. In this way the audit resource will be most efficiently utilised and will produce the greatest benefit. The internal audit plan will be regularly monitored and where necessary revised to take into account both unforeseen and new developments. Any variations or developments; significant matters that jeopardise the delivery of the plan or require changes to the plan will be reported to the Audit & Standards Committee at the earliest opportunity. Where requests are received to undertake consulting engagements, consideration will be given to their potential to improve the management of risks, to add value and to improve the council's operations.

2. Issues

Audit reviews

- 2.1 Quarter 2 continued to be challenging for the internal audit service. Whilst a number of reviews commenced during quarter 2, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic continued to have an impact on the speed at which reviews could be undertaken. The council

remains in a similar position to many local authority internal audit teams. Table 1 below details the audit work currently in progress.

Table 1 – Planned Audits in progress at the end of September 2020

Directorate	Audit	Status (Preparation / Fieldwork / Draft / Since issued)
Chief Executives	Health & Safety	Preparation
	Elections	Fieldwork
Regen & Development	Joint Local Plan	Fieldwork
Corporate	Business Continuity	Fieldwork
IT Audit Assurance (External)	IT Governance	Fieldwork

- 2.2 As in the previous quarter, the internal audit team continue to be available to provide advice and guidance to services as required. The annual internal audit plan also remains under regular review to ensure that adequate work is undertaken to support an annual opinion at the year end.

Number of Recommendations Implemented

- 2.3 At the conclusion of every audit, an audit report is issued to management detailing findings of the audit review together with any recommendations required to be implemented to address any weakness identified.
- 2.4 Up to the end of September 2020, 255 recommendations had been made, of which 225 have been implemented, which represents 88%; the target for the implementation of all recommendations is 96% by the end of the financial year. Appendix A provides further details.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 The audit plan is monitored on a regular basis to ensure that it is achievable and reflects the key risks affecting the council. Due to current issues as outlined in paragraph 2.1 above, the internal audit plan for 2020/21 remains under review to ensure best use of available resources.

4. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 4.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Council to 'maintain an adequate and effective system of internal control in accordance with the proper internal audit practices'.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1 There are no equality impact issues identified from this proposal.

6. **Financial and Resource Implications**

6.1 The service is currently on target to be provided within budget. The financial implications resulting from the recommendations made within audit reports will be highlighted within individual reports wherever possible. It is the responsibility of managers receiving audit reports to take account of these financial implications, and to take the appropriate action.

7. **Major Risks**

7.1 If key controls are not in place, managers are exposing their systems, processes and activities to the potential abuse from fraud and corruption.

7.2 If key controls are not in place, assurance cannot be given that the Services being delivered provide Value for Money for the Council.

7.3 If the risks identified are not addressed through the implementation of agreed recommendations, achievement of the Council's objectives will be affected.

8. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

8.1 Not applicable.

9. **Key Decision Information**

9.1 Not applicable

10. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

10.1 Approval of the Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21 (Audit and Standards Committee 1st May 2020).

11. **List of Appendices**

11.1 Appendix A – Outstanding internal audit recommendations

12. **Background Papers**

12.1 Internal Audit Plan 2020/21.

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Summary of Overdue Audit Recommendations and Level of Assurance

Directorate	Total Number of Recommendations	Number of Recommendations Completed	Number of Recommendations Not Completed	Number of Recommendations Overdue for Implementation*			
				High	Medium	Low	Total
Chief Executives	66	59	7	0	1	0	1
Resources & Support Services	82	70	12	0	9	3	12
Regeneration & Development Services	12	11	1	0	0	1	1
Operational Services	59	53	6	0	3	3	6
Corporate Reviews	36	32	4	0	4	0	4
Total	255	225	30	0	17	7	24

* includes recommendations where extensions have been agreed

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S
REPORT TO**

Audit & Standards Committee
09 November 2020

Report Title: Treasury Management Half Yearly Report 2020/21

Submitted by: Head of Finance

Portfolios: Finance and Efficiency

Ward(s) affected: All indirectly

Purpose of the Report

To receive the Treasury Management Half Yearly Report for 2020/21 and to review the Treasury Management activity for this period.

Recommendation

That the Treasury Management Half Yearly Report for 2020/21 be received.

Reasons

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management recommends that Members should be informed on Treasury Management activities at least twice a year.

It was resolved that the Audit and Standards Committee would monitor and oversee the delivery of the Treasury Management Strategy through the receipt of half yearly and year end Treasury Management Reports.

1. Background

- 1.1 The CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management recommends that Members should be informed on Treasury Management activities at least twice a year. It was resolved that the Audit and Standards Committee would monitor and oversee the delivery of the Treasury Management Strategy through the receipt of half yearly and year end Treasury Management Reports.
- 1.2 This report therefore ensures that this Council is embracing Best Practice in accordance with CIPFA's recommendations in the CIPFA Code of Practice.
- 1.3 Treasury Management operations are carried out in accordance with policies laid down in the currently approved Treasury Management Policy Statement, backed up by approved Treasury Management Practices and Schedules thereto, and the Annual Treasury Management Strategy Report approved by Council on 19 February 2020.

2. Issues

- 2.1 The Treasury Management Half Yearly Report for 2020/21 is attached at Appendix 1. The economic background included in the report has been provided by the Council's Treasury Management Advisors, Arlingclose.

2.2 **Heritable Bank**

The original investment with Heritable Bank was £2.5m. Fifteen dividends have been received from administrators Ernst and Young representing a return of 98%, with the most recent payment of £99,932 being made in August 2015.

The bank's administrators confirmed the execution of a settled de-minimis payment from the parent company of Heritable Bank which will be paid to the Council in the event that the remaining 2% of the original investment is no longer contingent. At the time this equated to £9,411.35.

Following the conclusion of the administration, the Council actually received a final payment of £23,919.80 in July 2020, making the total amount of investment returned £2.492m

3. **Proposal**

3.1 That the Treasury Management Half Yearly Report for 2020/21 be received.

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

4.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management recommends that Members should be informed on Treasury Management activities at least twice a year.

4.2 It was resolved that the Audit and Standards Committee would monitor and oversee the delivery of the Treasury Management Strategy through the receipt of half yearly and year end Treasury Management Reports

5. **Options Considered**

5.1 Not applicable.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 This report ensures that this Council is embracing Best Practice in accordance with CIPFA's recommendations in the CIPFA Code of Practice.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 Not applicable.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from the report.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 Treasury management is a major area of risk for the Council in that large amounts of money are dealt with on a daily basis and there are a number of limits and indicators, which must be complied with.

9.2 The overriding consideration in determining where to place the Council's surplus funds is to safeguard the Council's capital. Within this constraint the aim is to maximise the return on capital.

9.3 Operational procedures, coupled with monitoring arrangements, are in place to minimise the risk of departures from the approved strategy.

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

10.1 Not applicable.

11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 Not applicable as report is for information only.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 Council, 19 February 2020, agenda item 5 – Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21.

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Appendix 1, Treasury Management Half Yearly Report 2020/21.

14. **Background Papers**

- CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice (revised December 2017),
- Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement,
- Council's Treasury Management Strategy,
- Local Government Act 2003,
- Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003,
- Guidance on Local Authority Investments issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (revised April 2018),
- Ernst and Young creditors of Heritable Bank report (March 2019).

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Treasury Management Half Yearly Report – 2020/21

1. Background

The Council operates a balanced budget, which broadly means cash raised during the year will meet its cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operations ensure this cash flow is adequately planned, with surplus monies being invested in low risk counterparties, providing adequate security and liquidity initially before considering optimising investment return (yield).

Accordingly Treasury Management is defined as:

“The management of the local authority’s investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

The second main function of a treasury management service is the funding of an authority’s capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer term cash flow planning to ensure the Council can meet its capital spending operations. This management of longer term cash may involve arranging long or short term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses, and on occasions any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

2. Introduction

In February 2010 the Council adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve treasury management semi-annual and annual reports.

The Council’s treasury management strategy for 2020/21 was approved at a meeting on 19 February 2020. The Council has invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Council’s treasury management strategy.

The 2017 Prudential Code includes a requirement for local authorities to provide a Capital Strategy, a summary document approved by full Council covering capital expenditure and financing, treasury management and non-treasury investments. The Council’s Capital Strategy, complying with CIPFA’s requirement, was approved by full Council on 19 February 2020.

This Half Yearly Report to members is intended to provide an update of the treasury management strategy and performance for the period April to September of this financial year. It has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA’s Code of Practice on Treasury Management, and covers the following:

- An economic update for the 2020/21 financial year to 30 September 2020;
- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy; and
- A review of the Council’s investment portfolio for 2020/21.

3. Economic Update – as provided by the Council’s Treasury Management Advisors, Arlingclose

The spread of the coronavirus pandemic dominated during the period as countries around the world tried to manage the delicate balancing act of containing transmission of the virus while easing lockdown measures and getting their populations and economies working again. After a relatively quiet few months of Brexit news it was back in the headlines towards the end of the period as agreement between the UK and EU on a trade deal was looking difficult and the government came under fire, both at home and abroad, as it tried to pass the Internal Market Bill which could override the agreed Brexit deal, potentially breaking international law.

The Bank of England maintained Bank Rate at 0.1% and its Quantitative Easing programme at £745 billion. The potential use of negative interest rates was not ruled in or out by Bank of England policymakers, but then a comment in the September Monetary Policy Committee meeting minutes that the central bank was having a harder look at its potential impact than was previously suggested took financial markets by surprise.

Government initiatives continued to support the economy, with the furlough (Coronavirus Job Retention) scheme keeping almost 10 million workers in jobs, grants and loans to businesses and 100 million discounted meals being claimed during the ‘Eat Out to Help Out’ offer.

GDP growth contracted by a massive 19.8% (revised from first estimate -20.4%) in Q2 2020 (Apr-Jun) according to the Office for National Statistics, pushing the annual growth rate down to -21.5% (first estimate -21.7%). Construction output fell by 35% over the quarter, services output by almost 20% and production by 16%. Recent monthly estimates of GDP have shown growth recovering, with the latest rise of almost 7% in July, but even with the two previous monthly gains this still only makes up half of the lost output.

The headline rate of UK Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) fell to 0.2% year on year in August, further below the Bank of England’s 2% target, with the largest downward contribution coming from restaurants and hotels influenced by the ‘Eat Out to Help Out’ scheme.

In the three months to July, labour market data showed the unemployment rate increased from 3.9% to 4.1% while wages fell 1% for total pay in nominal terms (0.2% regular pay) and was down 1.8% in real terms (-0.7% regular pay). Despite only a modest rise in unemployment over the period, the rate is expected to pick up sharply in the coming months as the furlough scheme ends in October. On the back of this, the Bank of England has forecast unemployment could hit a peak of between 8% and 9%.

Ultra-low interest rates and the flight to quality continued, keeping gilts yields low but volatile over the period with the yield on some short-dated UK government bonds remaining negative.

There continues to remain much uncertainty around the extent of the losses banks and building societies will suffer due to the impact from the coronavirus pandemic and for UK institutions there is the added complication of the end of the Brexit transition period on 31 December and what a trade deal may or may not look like. The institutions on Arlingclose’s counterparty list and recommended duration remain under constant review, but at the end of the period no changes had been made to the names on the list or the recommended maximum duration of 35 days.

Outlook for the remainder of 2020/21

	Dec 20	Mar 21	Jun 21	Sep 21	Dec 21	Mar 22	Jun 22	Sep 22	Dec 22	Mar 23	Jun 23	Sep 23	Dec 23
Official Bank Rate													
Upside Risk	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30
Arlingclose Central Case	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
Downside Risk	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50

The medium-term global economic outlook is weak. While the strict initial lockdown restrictions have eased, coronavirus has not been suppressed and second waves have prompted more restrictive measures on a regional and national basis. This ebb and flow of restrictions on normal activity will continue for the foreseeable future, at least until an effective vaccine is produced and importantly, distributed.

The global central bank and government responses have been significant and are in many cases on-going, maintaining more stable financial, economic and social conditions than otherwise. This has supported a sizeable economic recovery in Q3.

However, the scale of the economic shock to demand, on-going social distancing measures, regional lock downs and reduced fiscal support will mean that the subsequent pace of recovery is limited. Early signs of this are already evident in UK monthly GDP and PMI data, even before the latest restrictions.

This situation will result in central banks maintaining low interest rates for the medium term. In the UK, Brexit is a further complication. Bank Rate is therefore likely to remain at low levels for a very long time, with a distinct possibility of being cut to zero. Money markets have priced in a chance of negative Bank Rate.

Longer-term yields will also remain depressed, anchored by low central bank policy rates, expectations for potentially even lower rates and insipid inflation expectations. There is a chance yields may follow a slightly different path in the medium term, depending on investor perceptions of growth and inflation, or if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Arlingclose expects Bank Rate to remain at the current 0.10% level and additional monetary loosening in the future most likely through further financial asset purchases (Quantitative Easing). While Arlingclose's central case for Bank Rate is no change from the current level of 0.1%, further cuts to Bank Rate to zero or even into negative territory cannot be completely ruled out.

Downside risks remain in the near term, as the government dials down its fiscal support measures, reacts to the risk of a further escalation in infection rates and the Brexit transition period comes to an end.

4. Regulatory Updates – as provided by the Council's Treasury Management Advisors, Arlingclose

IFRS 16

The implementation of the new IFRS 16 Leases accounting standard has been delayed until 2021/22.

5. Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Update

The Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21 was approved by Full Council on 19 February 2020. The Council's annual Investment Strategy, which is incorporated in the Treasury Management Strategy, outlines the Council's investment priorities as follows:

- Security of Capital
- Liquidity

The Council will also aim to achieve the optimum return on investments commensurate with the proper levels of security and liquidity. In the current economic climate it is considered appropriate to keep investments short term, and only invest with highly credit rated financial institutions using the Arlingclose suggested creditworthiness matrices. Currently investments are only being made with UK financial institutions.

Investments during the first six months of the 2020/21 financial year have been in line with the strategy, and there have been no deviations from the strategy.

As outlined in Section 3 above, there is considerable uncertainty in the financial and banking market, both globally and in the UK. In this context, it is considered that the strategy approved on 19 February 2020 is still fit for purpose in the current economic climate.

6. Investment Portfolio 2020/21

In accordance with the CIPFA Code, it is the Council's priority to ensure security of capital and liquidity, and to obtain an appropriate level of return which is consistent with the Council's risk appetite. As set out in Section 3, it is a very difficult investment market in terms of earning the level of interest rates commonly seen in previous decades as rates are very low and in line with the current 0.10% Bank Rate. Given this environment, investment returns are likely to remain low.

The Council held investments of £7m as at 30 September 2020; £5m was placed in the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF) with the DMO, £1m was held in the Public Sector Deposit Fund, and £1m was held in the Council's Lloyds Current Account for liquidity. In comparison only £4.5m was held as at 31 March 2020, entirely within the Council's Lloyds Current Account. Investments held have been with institutes with a credit rating of A+ or above. This is greater than the average portfolio credit rating target of A or above set in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21.

Funds available for investment purposes during 2020/21 to date have varied between nil and £25m, mainly due to the central government funding received to support small and medium businesses during the coronavirus pandemic. Typically this variance is between nil and £10m. These fluctuations are due to cash inflows and outflows during each month. Large cash inflows include council tax and business rate direct debits and the Housing Benefit subsidy from the Department for Work and Pensions. Large cash outflows include payment of the precepts to Staffordshire County Council, the Fire Authority and the Police, payment of salaries and payment of business rates to Central Government and the Staffordshire Business Rate pool.

The investment portfolio yield for the first six months of the year is 0.13%, at 30 September 2019 this yield was 0.52%. The Council's budgeted investment return for 2020/21 is nil. As at the end of the first 2 quarters of 2020/21 £8,400 of interest has been earned.

Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before

seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses.

On 25 September 2020 the overnight, 1 week and 2 week deposit rates on DMADF deposits dropped below zero percent to -0.03%, the rate was 0% for 3-week deposits and 0.01% for longer maturities. The return on Money Market Funds net of fees also fell over the six months and for many funds net returns range between 0% and 0.1%. In many instances, the fund management companies have temporarily lowered or waived fees to maintain a positive net return.

Heritable Bank

The original investment with Heritable Bank was £2.5m. Fifteen dividends have been received from administrators Ernst and Young representing a return of 98%, with the most recent payment of £99,932 being made in August 2015.

The bank's administrators confirmed the execution of a settled de-minimis payment from the parent company of Heritable Bank which will be paid to the Council in the event that the remaining 2% of the original investment is no longer contingent. At the time this equated to £9,411.35.

Following the conclusion of the administration, the Council actually received a final payment of £23,919.80 in July 2020, making the total amount of investment returned £2.492m

Estimates for income, 2020/21

The corporate world is still adjusting to the economic shock, with probably more to come, and it is still too early to tell which companies will withstand the economic damage in the short to medium-term or which will choose to conserve cash in very difficult economic conditions simply to survive.

Investment income in 2020/21 was set against a very different economic backdrop. Bank Rate, which was 0.75% in January/February 2020, now stands at 0.1%. Interest earned from short-dated money market investments will be significantly lower. In relation to income from the Council's externally managed strategic funds, dividends and income distributions will ultimately depend on many factors including but not limited to the duration of COVID-19 and the extent of its economic impact.

7. Borrowing Position 2020/21

The Council's current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing, in order to reduce risk and keep interest costs low. During the first six months of 2020/21 no borrowing has taken place, however it is envisaged that borrowing will be required to cover short-term cash flow deficits together with the capital programme.

With short-term interest rates remaining much lower than long-term rates, the Council consider it to be more cost effective in the near term to use internal resources or borrow on a short-term basis. This is also in line with advice provided by Arlingclose Ltd.

However, a need to borrow in order to fund the Council's capital programme was included within the Revenue and Capital Budgets, Council Tax and Strategies 2020/21 report

presented to Council on 19 February 2020. The impact of borrowing is included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy pressures for 2020/21 and future years.

Borrowing Update

In October 2019 the PWLB raised the cost of certainty rate borrowing to 1.8% above UK gilt yields making it relatively expensive. Market alternatives are available, however the financial strength of individual authorities will be scrutinised by investors and commercial lenders.

The Chancellor's March 2020 Budget statement included significant changes to Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) policy and launched a wide-ranging consultation on the PWLB's future direction. Announcements included a reduction in the margin on new Housing Revenue Account (HRA) loans to 0.80% above equivalent gilt yields. £1.15bn of additional "infrastructure rate" funding at gilt yields plus 0.60% has been made available to support specific local authority infrastructure projects for England, Scotland and Wales for which there is a bidding process.

The consultation titled "Future Lending Terms" allows stakeholders to contribute to developing a system whereby PWLB loans can be made available at improved margins to support qualifying projects. It contains proposals to allow authorities that are not involved in "debt for yield" activity to borrow at lower rates as well as stopping local authorities using PWLB loans to buy commercial assets primarily for yield. The consultation also broaches the possibility of slowing, or stopping, individual authorities from borrowing large sums in specific circumstances.

The consultation closed on 31 July 2020 with the announcement and implementation of the revised lending terms expected in the latter part of this calendar year.

8. Prudential Indicators 2020/21

Treasury management activity during the first half year has been carried out within the parameters set by the prudential indicators contained in the approved 2020/21 Treasury Management Strategy. Consequently, there is no intention to revise any of the indicators for the remainder of the year.

9. Compliance

The Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the year to date have complied fully with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

Annex A

Treasury Management – Glossary of Terms

- **CIPFA** – the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, is the professional body for accountants working in Local Government and other public sector organisations.
- **CPI** – a measure that examines the weighted average of prices of a basket of consumer goods and services. The Consumer Price Index is calculated by taking price changes for each item in the predetermined basket of goods/services and averaging them; the goods are weighted according to their importance. Changes in CPI are used to assess price changes associated with the cost of living.
- **DMADF** – is provided by the DMO as part of its cash management operations and in the context of a wider series of measures designed to support local authorities' cash management.
- **DMO** – The Debt Management Office is an Executive Agency of Her Majesty's Treasury responsible for debt and cash management for the UK Government, lending to local authorities and managing certain public sector funds.
- **GDP** – Gross Domestic Product is the market value of all officially recognised final goods and services produced within a country in a given period of time.
- **Liquidity** – relates to the amount of readily available or short term investment money which can be used for either day to day or unforeseen expenses. For example Call Accounts allow instant daily access to invested funds.
- **MHCLG** – the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is the UK Government department for housing, communities and local government in England. Known previously as Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), it was renamed to add Housing to its title and changed to a ministry in January 2018.
- **PMI** – is an index of the prevailing direction of economic trends in the manufacturing and service sectors.
- **PWLB** – is a statutory body operating within the United Kingdom Debt Management Office. PWLB's function is to lend money from the National Loans Fund to local authorities, and to collect the repayments.
- **Quantitative Easing** – a form of unconventional monetary policy in which a central bank purchases longer-term securities from the open market in order to increase the money supply and encourage lending and investment. Buying these securities adds new money to the economy, and also serves to lower interest rates by bidding up fixed-income securities. It also expands the central bank's balance sheet.

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT TO AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE

09 November 2020

Report Title: Health & Safety 6 month report 2020-21

Submitted by: Nesta Barker – Head of Environmental Health Services

Portfolios: Finance & Efficiency

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To inform Members of issues and trends regarding health and safety at the council.

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

Reasons

To update and inform members of any recent issues and trends in relation to the management of health and safety at the council.

1. Background

1.1 Attached as an Appendix is the health and safety report submitted to the council. It covers the period 1st April 2020 to 30th September 2020.

2. Issues

2.1 There is considerable progress to report, including updating the employee handbook. Work in relation to COVID-19 has been vast and has involved every department within the Council to some extent. Risk assessments, person specific assessments, implementing new procedures and controls and adapting to varying guidance and legislative changes have been labour intensive and has been the primary work through the last 6 months.

2.2 Work continues to support employees on using the health and safety IT system, Target 100.

2.3 Accident data and trends are provided within the report.

2.4 The works of the various health and safety committees and sub-committees are detailed within the report.

2.5 The report also details work which has commenced and is planned for delivery in the next 6 months, this includes; competing a full review of the lone working policy, its associated lone working devices and conflict resolution training provision, implementation of Target 100 v6.1 which were delayed due to COVID-19 and adopting a revised approach to first aid provision based on location risk level.

3. **Proposal**

3.1 That the report be noted.

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

4.1 Regular updates in relation to health and safety service delivery, information and trends ensures effective review of service delivery.

5. **Options Considered**

5.1 Not applicable.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 The council is required to comply with all relevant Health and Safety legislation.

6.2 Failure in ensuring suitable and sufficient arrangements for health and safety may lead to investigation and/or enforcement action by the Health and Safety Executive as the enforcing authority for the council's activities.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 The health and safety policy and procedures apply equally to all employees. Training is available to all employees as required.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 The majority of health and safety service delivery is carried out in-house from existing resources, this also includes training courses. On occasions, external providers are required to conduct specialist training courses i.e. first Aid. The cost of this is met from within the existing Corporate Training budget.

8.2 Good health and safety management also ensures that insurance claims can be effectively managed.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 Failure to adopt best practice health and safety standards could result in wastage of council resources and the provision of an inefficient service.

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

10.1 No sustainability or climate change implications identified.

11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 This is not a key decision.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 Annual and 6 month reports are presented to Audit & Standards committee each year.

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Appendix 1 – Health & Safety 6 month report.

14. **Background Papers**

14.1 None

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Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

HEALTH AND SAFETY SIX MONTH REPORT APRIL 2020 – SEPTEMBER 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report outlines the current state of health and safety matters during the six months from 1st April 2020 to 30th September 2020.
- 1.2 The effect of COVID-19 on the Council has been vast and resulted in a considerable change to how health and safety resources have been directed.

2. POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

- 2.1 A review of the Lone Working policy remains outstanding at present but a complete review on how the current lone worker devices are being used and how this may be optimised together with investigating the viability of body cameras for certain staff is being undertaken to incorporate into this policy.
- 2.2 The employee handbook has been reviewed and released to employees as well as being readily available on Connexus.
- 2.3 The Workplace Policy on Smoking has also been reviewed and is also available to employees.

3. TARGET 100

- 3.1 Target 100 is the safety management system which the Council uses to manage and record health and safety policies, procedures, risk assessments and to organise routine assessments and tasks for the management and control of Health and Safety across the Council. This system also provides practical Health and Safety advice and guidance to assist in ensuring compliance with the law. This system was introduced in late 2010 and its use continues to be developed throughout the Council.
- 3.2 A move to version 6.1 has been delayed due to re-directed priorities relating to COVID-19. When moving over to 6.1 there will be training requirements for employees which will need to be addressed, which will more than likely need to be available remotely with COVID-19 still requiring home working wherever possible.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING

- 4.1 Corporate Health and Safety training has been on hold with the presence of COVID-19 however as staff have moved departments in some areas, there has been ongoing training where essential in the operational areas to ensure a safe transition.
- 4.2 Central COVID risk assessments have been completed and as staff have undertaken associated duties they have completed training records to confirm they have read and understood the contents – these have been logged on either T100, or on a database created by ICT for those able to access the online versions, which has proved popular and may be utilised further for other similar scenarios.

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5. ACCIDENT REPORTS –

5.1 All accidents (staff & members of public)

Month	RIDDOR*	Non-Reportable	Near Miss	RTA	Dangerous Occurrence	Totals
April 2020	0	0	1	1	0	2
May 2020	0	3	1	2	0	6
June 2020	1	2	1	2	0	6
July 2020	2	1	0	1	0	4
August 2020	0	3	2	3	0	8
September 2020	0	1	1	1	0	3

TOTAL	3	10	6	10	0	29
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* RIDDOR - Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (Accidents which result in over a 7 day absence from work of an employee; a member of the public taken from the premises by ambulance and specified injuries (broken bones etc) would all be reportable to the Health & Safety Executive by the Local Authority.)

5.2 RIDDOR Summary

Month	Injured Person	Incident Type	Remedial Action
June	Member of public	Hit fixed object Member of public taken to hospital	Investigation identified all inspections completed Update to safe working procedure No further actions required
July	Employee	Hit fixed object Over 7 day injury	Investigation confirmed the safe working procedure had been followed Reminder to report all accidents at time of accident issued No further actions required
July	Member of public	Slip, trip, fall Member of public taken to hospital	Investigation completed Site inspections confirmed as complete No further actions required

All RIDDOR Accidents have been reported to the HSE and investigations have been completed by management.

6. HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDITS & INSPECTIONS

6.1 Formal site inspections have been placed on hold during the last six months due to COVID-19.

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- 6.2 Many of the sites were non-operational for a period of time, including the Museum, Jubilee 2 and Kidsgrove Customer Services Centre which remains out of use by the NULBC employees. The remaining sites have been vastly less occupied than normal as staff have been working from home wherever possible.
- 6.3 All NULBC buildings have been subjected to the rigorous COVID-19 risk assessment process prior to opening, or indeed as they continued to operate. As each building has been visited by the Chief Executive, they have each received a COVID-secure certificate which are displayed adjacent to the main entrances. The assessments have been updated as government guidance has altered or usage has changed. A separate update has been prepared to advise on the measures taken for COVID-19.

7. KNUTTON DEPOT

7.1 The Knutton Lane Health and Safety Committee held meetings on:

- 9th July 2019
- 8th October 2019

7.2 Matters arising from the meetings included:-

- Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses
- Target 100
- Training
- Site Rules
- HAVS update
- Buildings, Utilities and Infrastructure
- External Yard, Waste Transfer Station, Salt Yard
- Site re-organisation
- COVID related site/ procedure changes

8 LEISURE (SHE) Safety, Health and Environment Meetings –

8.1 The meetings have been established to oversee and monitor the implementation of British Standards for the management of Quality (ISO 9001), Environment (ISO 14001) and ISO 18001 (Health & Safety).

8.2 During the Meetings the following points (regarding health and safety) are discussed

- Accident Statistics
- Accident / Incident Investigations
- Risk Assessments
- COSHH

Minutes/Action logs from the meetings are provided for review at Corporate Health and Safety Committee meetings.

9. CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

9.1 The Corporate Health and Safety Committee held the following meetings during the period

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- 23rd April 2020
- 23rd July 2020

9.2 The committee discussed the following items, throughout past six months:

- HAVS working group
- Fire Prevention Policy
- Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses
- Accident & Insurance claims
- Target 100 update
- Health and Safety Matrix
- Castle House ongoing issues
- Drug and Alcohol Policy – Manager' Guide
- Facilities Management Updates
- Leisure and Cultural SHE
- First Aid provision
- Fire marshal provision
- Review of CCTV provision at the Depot

10. FIRE

- 10.1 A number of evacuations have taken place in the last 6 months including
- 6 month programmed Fire Drills across the majority of sites undertaken on 8th October, this had been delayed due to COVID-19 and slight adaptations to procedures.

11. EVENT SAFETY

- 11.1 The number of events over the past six months where Corporate Health & Safety Services and partners from Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service have provided advice and assistance has been vastly reduced due to COVID-19. However there was assistance provided in the set-up of temporary testing stations on both the Rycroft site and the former Knutton Recreation Ground.
- 11.2 Advice has also been provided in relation to many queries from various organisers requesting assistance on determining if their events are able to proceed or not.

12. LONE WORKING REVIEW

- 12.1 In order to complete the policy review a questionnaire has been developed for all users of the lone working devices to identify any failings and areas for improvement. There has also been consideration given to the introduction of body cameras for those in high risk areas such as enforcement roles.
- 12.2 Once data is returned the system can be analysed and comparative quotes obtained from other providers as part of the contract renewal process.
- 12.3 The policy can then be updated to reflect the alterations.

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13. CASTLE HOUSE

- 13.1 Castle House has been minimally occupied over the last six months. Until re-occupation is undertaken by NULBC staff it is difficult to identify if a trial blind fitted to the ground floor area have been successful or not. A similar delay is attached to any works to the ventilation system which are carried out.
- 13.2 A one-way system has been introduced around the buildings together with numerous other COVID-related controls to allow safe re-occupation by the staff who wish or need to use the facility. These remain under regular review in line with government advice.

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NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S
REPORT TO

Audit & Standards Committee
09 November 2020

Report Title: Back on Track - Coronavirus Pandemic Recovery Plan Update.

Submitted by: Executive Management Team

Portfolios: All

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To inform the Committee of the actions being taken across the Council to recover from the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Recommendation

That the Committee considers whether it wishes to raise any queries or issues with Cabinet.

Reasons

To enable the Committee to have an overview of the impact of the pandemic and the Council's response.

1. **Report**

1.1 The attached report was submitted to Cabinet on 14th October 2020 and is submitted to the Committee to enable it to fulfil its remit of having an overview of the financial position of the Council.

2. **Appendix**

2.1 Report to Cabinet 14th October 2020

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S
REPORT TO CABINET**

Choose an item.

14 October 2020

Report Title: Back on Track - Coronavirus Pandemic Recovery Plan Update

Submitted by: Chief Executive

Portfolios: All

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To inform the Cabinet of the actions being taken across the Council to recover from the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Recommendation

1. **It is recommended that Cabinet note this report and endorse the work being undertaken to recover from the pandemic.**

Reasons

To allow Cabinet to publicly consider the actions being undertaken in order to recover from the pandemic.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 Cabinet has regular reports detailing the Council's response to the Coronavirus pandemic and, latterly, progress in delivering its recovery plan. This report provides the current position regarding the recovery effort, and the ongoing work to combat the spread of the Virus.
- 1.2 The recovery plan continues to be closely monitored by the Leader and Cabinet Members who are leading on specific work streams, with the Executive Management Team continuing to manage the day to day recovery effort alongside the ongoing elements of incident response which continue to be required.
- 1.3 At time of writing, the 7 day infection case rate in Newcastle under Lyme was 141 cases per 100,000 population, and steadily increasing. This is broadly in line with the England average (141/100,000), but above the Staffordshire average of 103/100,000. In the figures include a cluster associated with students who have come back for the new term at Keele University students, although most of the cases are off campus.
- 1.4 The Government has announced a new three tier alert system for England, with Newcastle currently being in the "medium" alert area, with no additional restrictions in place.
- 1.5 This provides a context for the work of the Council in both recovery of the local economy, and in standing up local services. With the infection rate at its current level, the Council is heavily engaged in its outbreak control work, with specific avenues of work being progressed:

- The Leader of the Council sits on the County-wide Local Outbreak Board which has regular oversight infection rates and action being taken to respond. This board is intensifying its work in light of the increased infections.
- A multi-agency board, under the chairmanship of the Deputy Leader, Cllr Sweeney, has been convened to ensure that all possible steps are being taken across the key anchor institutions to reduce infection rates in the Town Centre, particularly in the 18 to 25 year old age group.
- Colleagues from Environmental Services continue to work closely with the Director of Public Health and colleagues from across the public sector to investigate infections in high risk premises in the borough and provide advice to those running high risk premises to minimise infection spread. Government funding of c£115,000 has been secured, via Staffordshire County Council to assist in resourcing this work;
- A team of colleagues has been assembled from across the Council to work as “Covid Marshalls”, encouraging the public to socially distance and to practice good Covid security in the town centre, and to support businesses to maintain strong Covid security in terms of compliance with government guidance. Funding of £60,000 has been secured from the Government to underpin this work

2. **The Recovery Plan**

2.1 This report addresses the Council’s current position across five areas of the recovery work:

- Reopening Safe, Successful Retail Centres
- Supporting Health & Wellbeing
- Economic Recovery
- Stepping-up Council Services
- Financial Recovery

Reopening Safe, Successful Retail Centres

2.2 Through work undertaken since June 2020, and previously reported to Cabinet, the Council has put arrangements in place to enable the safe re-opening of Newcastle and Kidsgrove town centres and the various district centres across the borough.

2.3 More recently, the Council supported the safe re-opening of pubs and cafes, with activity focussed on:

- Provision of advice to pubs and cafes on how to re-open in a Covid secure way;
- Facilitating pavement licenses for pubs and cafes, and nil cost to the businesses;
- Monitoring compliance with government guidance regarding social distancing;

2.4 To encourage footfall in the town centre, the Council has continued its strategy of hosting new, special interest, markets including two record fairs and, in October, a “makers market”, selling local craft items.

2.5 Covid Marshalls have been deployed in the town centre at peak times to encourage social distancing and good Covid security. Arrangements are in place to ensure that signage and pavement stencils are refreshed from time to time to keep the advice re social distancing and hygiene uppermost in the publics’ mind when visiting our centres.

Supporting Health & Wellbeing

- 2.6 Following the easing of lockdown, and significant reduction in demand for the service, the Council discontinued its standalone helpline for individuals to reach out for assistance, and reverted to taking calls through its overall call centre. Access to support is also available on line.
- 2.7 Homeless & Rough Sleepers - in March the Government required District and Borough Councils to provide emergency accommodation for any rough sleepers in their area and provided funds to support this. The Council is currently providing emergency accommodation for 19 individuals in a mix of bed and breakfast and range of temporary accommodation, with support tiered according to need.
- 2.8 Work is continuing to ensure ongoing support for this cohort, in line with Government guidance.
- 2.9 The Council has secured £125,000 from the government to support the ongoing pressure to provide emergency accommodation for homeless people. A report elsewhere on this agenda addresses the use of these funds, which will include entering into contracts for supported accommodation for the remainder of this financial year.
- 2.10 People will be required by law to self-isolate from 28 September, supported by payment of £500 for those on lower incomes who cannot work from home and have lost income as a result. This fund – the Test & Trace Support Payment – will be administered by lower tier Council's, with this Council's Revenues and Benefits Team managing the service for Newcastle. This fund will incentivise people required to self-isolate, but who would lose income by doing so, to comply with the requirements of the Test and trace programme and thus reduce the spread of the virus.

Economic Recovery

- 2.11 The Council's economic recovery programme is currently focussed on progressing the major regeneration and growth schemes:
- As previously reported, a bid has been submitted to the Future High Streets Fund for schemes to facilitate the regeneration of Newcastle Town Centre, with a specific focus on the Ryecroft site;
 - Advance Town Deal Funds of £1.75m have been secured for initiatives in Newcastle & Kidsgrove
 - Town Investment Plan for Kidsgrove & Newcastle are in preparation with the Town Deal Boards, with the Kidsgrove Plan targeted for submission to Government in October and the Newcastle Plan in January.

Stepping-up Council Services

- 2.12 Since the commencement of the lockdown, staff who have been able to effectively work from home have done so and as a consequence, the majority of services have continued with

minimal disruption. As the lockdown has eased, services most impacted by the lockdown have been stepping back up to normal levels. Key issues are:

- **J2** – following the reopening in August on a Covid secure basis, attendances at J2 have grown steadily. Notwithstanding this, memberships have reduced by c.25%, despite an ongoing 50% reduction in the membership fee. Steps are now being taken to increase capacity at the centre, whilst maintaining the high level of Covid security that the service has established and maintained.
- **Taxi Licensing** –Taxi testing has recommenced, but the period of lockdown, and the associated service closure, means that the service is working its way through a considerable backlog of tests which should be cleared in 5-6 months. Arrangements are being put in place to now enable new driver applicants to take the Local Knowledge Test and to undertake n the Safeguarding Training.
- **Food Inspections** – Food safety inspections were largely stopped during lock down, and the re-opening of premises, and hence the need for inspections, has coincided with a demand on this service to divert resource to providing advice, inspection, and enforcement activity related to Covid outbreaks in the Borough. This has resulted in a significant backlog, and attention is being given to addressing the highest risk premises as a priority.

2.13 **Other Pressures** – in addition to addressing the service pressures above, the Council is responding to the financial impact of the pandemic by refreshing its Medium Term Financial Plan, and accelerating work on the Digital Strategy and Commercialisation. This will be an additional work pressure across the Council alongside the service specific issues.

2.14 The challenges identified fall disproportionately on a number of services. Environmental Services, which covers licencing & environmental health and is leading on the air quality project on behalf of the Borough and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, is likely to be the focus for significant additional demands. This is under constant review by the Executive Management Team and Cabinet, which will direct priorities and resourcing.

3. Financial Recovery

3.1 The pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the Council's financial position through a mix of lost income and additional costs. To date Government funding of £1.743m has been secured (including £170k of new burdens funding to offset the costs of administering Coronavirus business support grant and hardship relief schemes), which has reduced the immediate pressure on Council finances. Additional costs have continued to fall with the return of a degree of normality in line with forecasts. However, the current forecast is a net revenue overspend of £333k in this financial year, assuming no further tightening of current lockdown measures. The forecast overspend will need to be met from existing reserves.

3.2 The Council's revenue budget relies on service income from fees and charges of c£850k per month across a wide range of services, with a significant proportion coming from J2 and car parking. The Council has been actively monitoring the impact of the lockdown and the working practices required to ensure safe practice. Across the business, net monthly income losses stabilised at c£276k during the first quarter reducing to c£258k during the second quarter. The Government will fund income losses above the first 5% at the rate of 75p in the pound in the current financial year, this will to a significant degree insulate the Council from income related financial risks.

3.3 The scheme compensates for income that local authorities generate independently which is defined as a sale, fees and charges, and is unable to be recovered – for example, car parking charges or receipts from museum charges. It does not include commercial income,

such as rents. The 5% deductible will be calculated using sales, fees and charges budgets for 2020/21 as this represents what the Council expected to collect from these income sources at the start of the year. Compensation will be provided to mitigate the net budget gap which income losses have created, i.e. after the savings that the Council has made regarding the furlough scheme. It is currently estimated at the close of quarter 2 that of the £2.292m forecast income losses in 2020/21 the Government will fund £1.558m leaving the Council with a deficit of £0.734m which is accounted for in the forecast overspend for the year.

- 3.4 Local tax income is collected by billing authorities and paid into local 'collection funds' (the Council is a billing authority). Where there is a shortfall in tax receipts (compared to expected levels), this leads to a deficit on the collection fund. Billing and major precepting authorities are usually required to meet their share of any deficit during the following financial year. In response to forecast shortfalls in tax receipts relating to COVID-19, the government has announced that repayments to meet collection fund deficits accrued in 2020- 21 will instead be phased over a three-year period (2021-22 to 2023-24) to ease immediate pressures on budgets. The phased amount will be the entire collection fund deficit for 2020-21 as estimated on the 15 January 2021 for council tax and in the 2021-22 NNDR1 for business rates.
- 3.5 The current forecast shortfalls in tax receipts, and the proposed repayments under this scheme are shown below:

Tax	Total Deficit Forecast	Council's Share	Repayable 2021/22	Repayable 2022/23	Repayable 2023/24
Council Tax	£1.292m	£0.144m (11.8%)	£0.048m	£0.048m	£0.048m
Business Rates	£15.015m	£6.006m (40%)	£2.002m	£2.002m	£2.002m
Business Rates Section 31 Measures	(£14.358m)	(£5.631m) 40%	(£1.877m)	(£1.877m)	(£1.877m)
Total	£1.949m	£0.519m	£0.173m	£0.173m	£0.173m

- 3.6 The Government announcement made on 2 July referred to a further apportionment between MHCLG and Local Government of irrecoverable tax losses (i.e. debts required to be written off), however details of how this will operate in practice are still awaited.
- 3.7 Work is continuing on the implementation of a financial recovery plan including:
- Benchmarking of Council service performance and budgets;
 - Review of performance against the Council Plan to date, and confirmation of Council priorities post Covid;
 - Identification of savings opportunities, including accelerated delivery of the digital and commercial strategies and exploration of alternative service delivery models;
 - Refresh of the Medium Term Financial Plan in the light of the above.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 Cabinet are recommended to note this report.

5. Reasons for Proposed Solution

- 5.1 This report serves to brief Cabinet on the work being undertaken to address the Coronavirus pandemic, and the financial impact that the pandemic is having on the Council, and the recovery arrangements being put in place.

6. **Options Considered**

6.1 N/A

7. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

7.1 Addressing the impact of Coronavirus locally has involved adjustment to some service provision. When making such changes there are a number of legal and statutory implications to take into account. These are all appropriately factored into decision taking by the Incident Management Team.

8. **Equality Impact Assessment**

8.1 None directly arising from this report.

9. **Financial and Resource Implications**

9.1 The Council's General Fund balance as at 31st March 2019 was £1.548m. Careful monitoring of the financial position will be required over coming weeks and months leading to prompt corrective action where necessary to ensure that reserves are not exhausted and the Council remains in a position of being able to deliver a balanced budget position in the current financial year and beyond.

10. **Major Risks**

10.1 The Coronavirus pandemic, in the round, represents a significant risk to the Council. This report sets out how that risk is being addressed.

11. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

11.1 N/A

12. **Key Decision Information**

12.1 This is not a key decision.

13. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

13.1 None

14. **List of Appendices**

14.1 Back on Track – Recovery Plan

15. **Background Papers**

15.1 None

Audit and Standards Committee

Work Plan 2020/2021

Committee Date	Reports
27 July 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Committee Work Plan 2. Annual Governance Statement 3. Annual Health and Safety Report 4. Draft Statement of Accounts 2019/20 5. Treasury Management Annual report 6. Counter Fraud Arrangements 7. Corporate Risk Management Strategy
28 September 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Internal Audit Annual Report 2019/20 2. Internal Audit Progress Report Quarter 1 3. Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2019/20 4. Covid-19 impact
9 th November 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audited Statement of Accounts 2019/20 including External Auditors Audit Findings Report 2. Corporate Risk Management Report Quarter 2 including Brexit risk update 3. Internal Audit Progress Report Quarter 2 4. Health and Safety Half-Year Report April-September 2020 5. Treasury Management Half-Yearly Report 2020 6. Covid-19 impact
8 th February 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corporate Risk Management Report Quarter 3 2. Internal Audit Progress Report Quarter 3 3. Internal Audit Plan 2021/22 4. Internal Audit Charter 2021/22 5. External Audit – Annual Audit Letter 6. Covid-19 impact
19 th April 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Risk Management Policy and Strategy 2021/22 2. External Audit – Certification Work 3. Code of Corporate Governance 4. Corporate Fraud Arrangements 5. Covid-19 impact

*Standards training – to be arranged at the appropriate time, once the new Code of Conduct has been received and to be held prior to an in person meeting

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