AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

DATE	29/01/2026
REPORT OF	Interim Section 151 Officer
SUBJECT	Statement of Accounts 2025/2026 – Accounting Policies
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

This report is to inform the Audit and Governance Committee of the accounting policies that are proposed to be used in completing the 2025/2026 Statement of Accounts which will be integral to reporting the Council's finances.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In preparing the Statement of Accounts the Section 151 Officer is responsible for selecting suitable accounting policies and applying them consistently.

The accounting policies to be used in completing the 2025/2026 accounts are provided for consideration by the Audit and Governance Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the Audit and Governance Committee considers and approves the accounting policies to be used in completing the 2025/2026 Statement of Accounts, as set out in Appendix 1.

REASONS FOR DECISION

Accounting policies are the specific principles, bases, conventions, rules, and practices applied in preparing and presenting financial statements.

The Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for approving the financial statements and therefore is required to understand the basis on which they have been prepared.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

Accounting policies are the specific principles, bases, conventions, rules, and practices applied in preparing and presenting financial statements. The policies proposed are based upon guidance issued by the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and take account of local circumstances.

The Section 151 Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Council's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices and, in preparing those Accounts, is responsible for selecting suitable accounting policies and applying them consistently.

The Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for approving the Statement of Accounts and should therefore be aware of and understand the basis on which those Accounts have been prepared. The accounting policies are provided at Appendix 1 for consideration.

As a result of HM Treasury's Thematic Review of Non-Investment Asset Valuations, the 2025/2026 Code introduces the following key changes for local authorities in relation to certain categories of Property, Plant, and Equipment:

- Revaluations of property, plant, and equipment are mandated every five years, supported by annual indexation in the intervening years.
- Provision of transitional arrangements for applying these changes prospectively, without restating prior year figures.
- Removal of an existing adaptation to now allow both options (the proportionate and elimination methods) permitted by IAS 16 Property, Plant and Equipment for the treatment of accumulated depreciation when assets are revalued.

Aside from this, no other changes have been made to the accounting policies since these were last approved by the Audit and Governance Committee in January 2025.

Whilst the full list of accounting policies has been provided for Audit and Governance Committee approval, IAS1 Presentation of Financial Statements requires entities to only disclose their 'material' accounting policy information, so as to enhance the relevance and clarity of financial statements. Therefore, only those policies determined to be material will be reported within the annual Statement of Accounts.

2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

Failure to complete the Statement of Accounts in accordance with approved accounting policies and The Code would have significant reputation risks for the Council.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

It is not anticipated that there will be any reputational issues arising from this report.

The Statement of Accounts (which includes the material accounting policies) will be published on the Council's website

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Council's accounting policies are a key element of the Council's Statement of Accounts.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

None

7. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

8. PUBLIC HEALTH, HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND MARMOT IMPLICATIONS

None

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council's accounting policies are a key element of the Council's Statement of Accounts.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Constitutionally the Section 151 Officer is responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs, reporting to Cabinet and as alluded to within the body of the report, to the Audit and Governance Committee in the discharge of those responsibilities. The administration of the financial affairs is not only predicated upon CIPFA guidance but also s151 Local Government Act 1972 and s114 Local Government Finance Act 1988.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct HR implications arising from the contents of this report.

12. WARD IMPLICATIONS

The financial statements are relevant to all wards.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2025/2026.

14. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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GUY LONSDALE
INTERIM SECTION 151 OFFICER

Note 1 – Accounting Policies

i. General Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the council's transactions for the 2025/2026 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2026. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the council to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2025/2026, 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.

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 their consumption; they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet where individual inventory categories are above £100k.
- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.
- Interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where debts may not be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.
- In respect of both capital and revenue transactions, the council operates on the normal accruals concept of income and expenditure above the council's de minimis threshold of £10k. However, this de minimis threshold does not apply to creditor accruals auto identified within the finance system, or where failure to accrue would result in the loss of a time limited grant.

iii. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that mature in three months or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with a low risk of change in value.

Cash and cash equivalents are shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and form an integral part of the council's cash management.

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

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

Changes in accounting policies are only made when required by proper accounting practices or the change provides more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions, other events and conditions on the council's financial position or financial performance.

Where a change is made, it is normally applied retrospectively (unless not material or stated otherwise) by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period as if the new policy had always been applied. Exceptionally, the 2025/2026 Code provides that changes to the valuation of non-investment assets as set out in the code will be applied prospectively, with no restatement of prior year figures.

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 non-current assets during the year:

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

The council is not required to raise council tax to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisation. However, it is required to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement, equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis in accordance with statutory guidance. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisation are therefore replaced by the contribution in the General Fund Balance (MRP), by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

vi. Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates

The Collection Fund shows the transactions of the billing authority in relation to the collection from taxpayers and the distribution to local authorities, central government and precepting bodies of council tax and non-domestic rates (NDR). There is no requirement for a separate Collection Fund Balance Sheet since the assets and liabilities arising from the collecting non-domestic rates and council tax belong to the bodies (i.e., major preceptors, central government and billing authorities).

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

vii. Employee Benefits

Benefits Payable During Employment

Short-term employee benefits such as wages and salaries, paid annual leave, sick leave and expenses are paid on a monthly basis and reflected as expenditure in the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Termination Benefits

When the council is demonstrably committed to the termination of the employment of an officer or group of officers, or making an offer to encourage voluntary redundancy, these costs are charged on an accruals basis to the respective service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Post-employment Benefits

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

- The Local Government Pension Scheme, administered by East Riding of Yorkshire Council.
- The Teachers’ Pension Scheme, administered by Capita Teachers’ Pensions on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).

- The NHS Pension Scheme, administered by the NHS Business Services Authority

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

However, the arrangements for the Teachers' and NHS schemes mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot ordinarily be identified specifically to the council. These schemes are therefore accounted for as if they were defined contribution schemes and no liability for future payments of benefits is recognised in the Balance Sheet. The Children's Services line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is charged with the employer's contributions payable to the Teachers' Pension Scheme in the year. The Public Health line within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is charged with the employer's contributions payable to the NHS Pension Scheme in the year.

The Local Government Pension Scheme

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

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

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

Service cost comprising:

- Current service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year – allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked.
- Past service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years – debited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- Net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset), i.e. net interest expense for the council – the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability (asset) that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – this is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability (asset) at the beginning of the period – taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability (asset) during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.

Re-measurements 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 East Riding pension fund – cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

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

Discretionary Benefits

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

viii. Events After the Reporting Period

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

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

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

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 for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument.

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

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

Where premiums and discounts have been charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, regulations allow the impact on the General Fund Balance to be spread over future years. The council has a policy of spreading the gain or loss over the term that was remaining on the loan against which the premium was payable or discount receivable when it was repaid. The reconciliation of amounts charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the net charge required against the General Fund Balance is managed by a transfer to or from the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Financial Assets

The council's business model is to hold investments to collect contractual cash flows. Financial assets are therefore classified as amortised cost, except for those whose contractual payments are not solely payment of principal and interest (i.e., where the cash flows do not take the form of a basic debt instrument).

<u>Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost</u>

Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value. They are subsequently measured at their amortised cost. Annual credits to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For most of the financial assets held by the 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.

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

Expected Credit Loss Model

The council recognises expected credit losses on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost, either on a 12-month or lifetime basis. The expected credit loss model also applies to lease receivables and contract assets. Only lifetime losses are recognised for trade receivables (debtors) held by the council.

Impairment losses are calculated to reflect the expectation that the future cash flows might not take place because the borrower could default on their obligations. Credit risk plays a crucial part in assessing losses. Where risk has increased significantly since an instrument was initially recognised, losses are assessed on a lifetime basis. Where risk has not increased significantly or remains low, losses are assessed on the basis of 12-month expected losses.

The council has a small portfolio of loans to individuals, small businesses and other entities, which have been grouped as follows when assessing expected loss allowances:

- Group 1 – these loans, which are secured against the property, were issued to home owners and owners of derelict land and commercial properties to help pay for repairs and other urgent works to bring accommodations up to current decency standards or to facilitate bringing the properties back into use within the community. Loss allowances for these loans can be assessed on an individual basis.
- Group 2 – under a government initiative that aimed to release the economic and productivity potential of the most deprived areas across the country, the council provided loans to individuals and small businesses to aid entrepreneurial activity and support sustainable growth.
- Group 3 – for the residual group of loans, the council relies on past due information and calculates losses based on expected lifetime credit losses.

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit of Loss (FVPL)

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

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

- Instruments with quoted market prices – the market price
- Other instruments with fixed and determinable payments – discounted cash flow analysis.

The inputs to the measurement techniques are categorised in accordance with the following three levels:

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

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

Instruments Entered into Before 1 April 2006

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

x. Government Grants and Contributions

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

- The council will comply with the conditions attached to the payments, and
- The grants or contributions will be received.

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

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

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Unapplied reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Grants Unapplied reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

xi. Heritage Assets

The council holds several assets which are held to increase the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the council's history and local area. Heritage Assets are recognised and measured (including the treatment of revaluation gains and losses) in accordance with the council's accounting policies on property, plant and equipment. However, some of the measurement rules are relaxed in relation to heritage assets as detailed below. The council's collections of heritage assets are accounted for as follows:

Civic Regalia and Museum Collection

These items are reported in the Balance Sheet at insurance valuation which is based on market values. The civic regalia and museum collection are deemed to have indeterminate lives and a high residual value; hence the authority does not consider it appropriate to charge depreciation.

Heritage Assets – General

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

xii. Intangible Assets

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

Internally generated assets are capitalised where it is demonstrable that the project is technically feasible and is intended to be completed (with adequate resources being available) and the council will be able to generate future economic benefits or deliver service potential by being able to sell or use the asset. Expenditure is capitalised where it can be measured reliably as attributable to the asset and is restricted to that incurred during the development phase.

Intangible assets are measured initially at cost and then 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. 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 Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Any gain or loss arising on the disposal or abandonment of an intangible asset is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

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

xiii. Inventories and long-term contracts

Inventories are included in the Balance Sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value. The council has set a de minimis value of £100k, below which inventories are not held on balance sheet.

Long term contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement with the value of works and services received under the contract during the year.

xiv. 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 (in the ordinary course of operations).

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, being the price that would be received to sell such an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. As a non-financial asset, investment properties are measured at highest and best use.

Properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually according to market conditions at the year-end. Gains and losses on revaluation are posted to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

Rentals received 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 £10k) the Capital Receipts Reserve.

xv. Leases

<u>The Council as Lessee</u>

The authority classifies contracts as leases based on their substance. Contracts and parts of contracts, including those described as contracts for services, are analysed to determine whether they convey the right to control the use of an identified asset, through rights both to obtain substantially all the economic benefits or service potential from that asset and to direct its use.

Initial measurement

Leases are recognised as right-of-use assets with a corresponding liability at the date from which the leased asset is available for use (or the IFRS 16 transition date, if later). The leases are typically for fixed periods in excess of one year but may have options to extend.

The authority initially recognises lease liabilities measured at the present value of lease payments, discounting by applying the authority’s incremental borrowing rate wherever the interest rate implicit in the lease cannot be determined. Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability include:

- fixed payments, including in-substance fixed payments.
- variable lease payments that depend on an index or rate, initially measured using the prevailing index or rate as at the adoption date.
- amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee.
- the exercise price under a purchase option that the authority is reasonably certain to exercise.
- lease payments in an optional renewal period if the authority is reasonably certain to exercise an extension option.

- penalties for early termination of a lease, unless the authority is reasonably certain not to terminate early.

The right-of-use asset is measured at the amount of the lease liability, adjusted for any prepayments made, plus any direct costs incurred to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or restore the underlying asset on the site on which it is located, less any lease incentives received.

However, for peppercorn, nominal payments or nil consideration leases, the asset is measured at fair value.

Subsequent measurement

The right-of-use asset is subsequently measured using the fair value model. The authority considers the cost model to be a reasonable proxy except for:

- assets held under non-commercial leases.
- leases where rent reviews do not necessarily reflect market conditions.
- leases with terms of more than five years that do not have any provision for rent reviews.
- leases where rent reviews will be at periods of more than five years.

For these leases, the asset is carried at a revalued amount. In these financial statements, right-of-use assets held under index-linked leases have been adjusted for changes in the relevant index, while assets held under peppercorn or nil consideration leases have been valued using market prices or rentals for equivalent land and properties.

The right-of-use asset is depreciated on a straight-line basis over the shorter period of remaining lease term and useful life of the underlying asset as at the date of adoption.

The lease liability is subsequently measured at amortised cost, using the effective interest method. The liability is remeasured when:

- there is a change in future lease payments arising from a change in index or rate.
- there is a change in the group's estimate of the amount expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee.
- the authority changes its assessment of whether it will exercise a purchase, extension or termination option, or
- there is a revised in-substance fixed lease payment.

When such a remeasurement occurs, a corresponding adjustment is made to the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset, with any further adjustment required from remeasurement being recorded in the income statement.

Low value and short lease exemption

As permitted by the Code, the authority excludes leases:

- for low-value items that cost less than £10k when new, provided they are not highly dependent on or integrated with other items, and
- with a term shorter than 12 months (comprising the non-cancellable period plus any extension options that the authority is reasonably certain to exercise and any termination options that the authority is reasonably certain not to exercise).

Lease expenditure

Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement includes interest, straight-line depreciation, any asset impairments and changes in variable lease payments not included in the measurement of the liability during the period in which the triggering event occurred. Lease payments are debited against the liability. Rentals for leases of low-value items or shorter than 12 months are expensed.

Depreciation and impairments are not charges against council tax, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are therefore appropriated to the capital adjustment account from the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The Council as Lessor

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases.

Finance Leases

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

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:

- A charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property – applied to write down the lease debtor (together with any premiums received), and
- Finance income (credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

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

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

Operating Leases

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

xvi. Overheads and Support Services

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

xvii. 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.

Property Plant & Equipment Asset Categories

The following six reporting categories fall within the classification of property, plant and equipment:

- Other Land & Buildings.
- Vehicles, Plant & Equipment.
- Infrastructure Assets – Inalienable assets, expenditure on which is only recoverable by continued use of the asset created, i.e., there is no prospect of sale or alternative use; examples include highways infrastructure assets, coastal defences, water supply and drainage systems. Highways infrastructure assets include carriageways, footways and cycle tracks, structures (e.g., bridges), street lighting, street furniture (e.g., illuminated traffic signals, bollards), traffic management systems and land which together form a single integrated network.

- Community Assets - Assets that an authority intends to hold in perpetuity, which have no determinable useful life and that may, in addition, have restrictions on their disposal.
- Assets Under Construction.
- Surplus Assets – Assets that are not being used to deliver services, but that do not meet the Code criteria to be classified as either investment properties or non-current assets held for sale.

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of property, plant and equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the council and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but 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 bring the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operation in the manner intended by management.

The council does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred whilst assets are under construction.

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

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

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

- Assets under construction and community assets (without a determinable finite useful life) – historical cost.
- Infrastructure assets and community assets (with a determinable finite useful life) – depreciated historical cost. However, with regards to highways infrastructure assets, this is a modified form of historical cost – opening balances for highways infrastructure assets were originally recorded in balance sheets at amounts of capital undischarged for sums borrowed as at 1 April 1994, which was determined at that time to be historical cost.
- All other assets are measured at current value.

Where there is no market-based evidence of current value, because of the specialist nature of an asset and the asset is rarely sold, an estimate of current value is made on a depreciated replacement cost (DRC) basis.

From 1 April 2025, the Code requirements changed in respect of revaluations of Other Land & Buildings, Vehicles, Plant & Equipment, Surplus Assets, and Right of Use Assets measured at current value. Where assets are not non-property assets subject to indexation, they are to be revalued every five years, with annual indexation applied to assets during the four intervening years.

Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains. Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services where they arise from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service.

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

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

Material assets are recognised into components for depreciation purposes when the component is of significant cost compared to the total cost of the item and has a materially different useful life to the main asset. Enhancement expenditure requires the de-recognition of the component being replaced or refurbished, and the new component reflected in the carrying amount, even where parts of an asset have not previously been recognised as a separate component.

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

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 normally charged in the first full year of operational use, except where stated, and 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 – straight-line allocation over estimated life of the asset or as advised by a suitably qualified officer.
- Infrastructure – straight-line allocation over the estimated useful life.

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 losses previously 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, or component of the highways network, 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 £10k are categorised as capital receipts. The receipts are transferred to the Capital Receipts Reserve from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. The reserves 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).

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

xviii. Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

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

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

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year – where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

Where some or all of the payment required to settle a provision is expected to be recovered from another party (e.g., from an insurance claim), this is only recognised as income for the relevant service if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received if the council settles the obligation.

Contingent Liabilities

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

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

Contingent Assets

A contingent asset arises where an event has taken place that gives the council a possible asset whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the council. Contingent assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts where it is probable that there will be an inflow of economic benefits or service potential.

xix. Reserves

The council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by transferring amounts out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in that year to score against the Surplus 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 in the Movement in Reserves Statement so that there is no net charge against council tax for the expenditure.

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

xx. Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute

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

xxi. Schools

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom confirms that the balance of control for local authority maintained schools (i.e., those categories of school identified in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended) lies with the local authority. The Code also stipulates that those schools' assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows are recognised in the local authority financial statements (and not the Group Accounts). Therefore, schools' transactions, cash flows and balances are recognised in each of the financial statements of the council as if they were the transactions, cash flows and balances of the council.

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

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

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

The council measures the fair value of an asset or liability using the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability, assuming that market participants act in their economic best interest.

When measuring the fair value of a non-financial asset, the council takes into account a market participant's ability to generate economic benefits by using the asset in its highest and best use or by selling it to another market participant that would use the asset in its highest and best use.

The council uses valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data is available, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs. Inputs to the valuation techniques in respect of assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the council's financial statements are categorised within the fair value hierarchy, as follows:

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