

Statement of Accounts

2025/26



WELWYN
HATFIELD

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Please note that figures are rounded to the nearest thousand (where applicable) throughout the document and may not sum due to rounding.

Narrative Report

Financial Year ended 31 March 2026

Dear Reader,

I am pleased to present the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2025/26, and I hope you will find them of interest.

The Council has continued to operate in challenging financial times, but it is pleasing to report that the Council's financial standing remains strong, with sound financial management practices and controls in place. Following the Governments multi-year final settlement announcement in February 2026, the council is in a stronger position with reduced savings targets anticipated for future years.

My narrative report includes the financial statements with an overall explanation of the Council's financial position during 2025/26 and commentary on the medium-term picture. It also includes information about the operation of the Council and the major influences affecting the accounts. It provides information on service and financial performance over the financial year ending 31 March 2026, risks and community engagement. All this information is given with the aim of providing all stakeholders and interested parties' assurance as to the Council's sound financial standing and that public money has been properly accounted for.

The narrative report is presented under the following headings:

About our Area and our Council

Our Vision and Commitments

Financial Overview of 2025/26

A Summary of the Council's Financial Performance in 2025/26

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29

Explanation of the Financial Statements

Corporate and Strategic Risks

Community Engagement and Feedback

Further Information

About our Area and our Council

- The borough is located in central Hertfordshire covering an area of approximately 130 square kilometres. Around 79 per cent of the borough is currently designated as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt.
- It includes the two towns of Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City (WGC) and eight other large villages and settlements to the north and south of these towns. Around 76 per cent of the population live in the two towns.
- The borough's location on radial routes out of London means it is highly accessible by road and rail with the A1(M) and the East Coast Main Line running north and south through the borough, and the M25 located just to the south of the borough.
- The borough's population is estimated to be around 122,814 at mid-2024, an increase of around 10.9% since the 2011 Census.
- There is a significant student population at the University of Hertfordshire in Hatfield in the College Lane and de Havilland campuses, and at two other college campuses at Oaklands College in Welwyn Garden City and the Royal Veterinary College in Potters Bar.
- The borough continues to offer good employment opportunities with more than one job available for every working age resident, with many people commuting into the borough to work and commuting out towards London.
- The health of the local population is generally very good, with life expectancy recorded above the national average for males and females and there are currently no health indicators in which the borough is significantly worse than the national average.
- We are one of ten borough and district councils in Hertfordshire that work together with the county council and many different town and parish councils to provide a wide range of local services.
- We are represented by 48 borough councillors in 16 wards who are directly elected by public vote to each serve up to four years term of office, with a Cabinet made up of 7 members of a joint administration as at 31 March 2026.
- A Mayor and Deputy Mayor are appointed to serve one year terms of office.
- We directly employ over 400 full time equivalent staff across key services that are responsible for housing, planning, environment, finance, public health, leisure, community, law and place.
- We work with many community and commercial partners who provide local services on our behalf, some of whom are contracted on long term partnerships to deliver high quality value for money services to residents and businesses.



H

Homes to be proud of

- Build new social and affordable homes
- High-quality homes for all
- Support and prevent homelessness
- Plan for future homes in the right places



E

Enable an economy that delivers for everyone

- Champion local businesses
- Support vibrant town centres
- Enable access to amenities in our neighbourhood centres
- Boost the economy in rural areas



A

Action on Climate Change

- Renew our commitments to be a net zero Council by 2030
- Step up climate change adaptation and mitigation measures
- Lead by example and encourage others to make positive change
- Increase and promote biodiversity



R

Run an effective council

- Be accessible
- Be accountable and adopt a first time right approach
- Make financial decisions to deliver efficient and quality services
- Build our reputation, locally and with partners



T

Together, create opportunities for our communities

- Be proud of our environment and heritage
- Promote health and wellbeing through local leisure and cultural opportunities
- Celebrate our diverse cultures and communities
- Help us feel safer where we live

WE WILL BE: **COLLABORATIVE OPEN RESPONSIBLE EXCELLENT**



1. Financial Overview of 2025/26

The budget and Council Tax for 2025/26 was set by Full Council in February 2025 along with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29. The budget set out the detailed financial plans for the authority in its revenue and capital budgets for the 2025/26 year.

Throughout 2025/26, the Council's continues to see pressures on front line services such as housing and financial support in relation to supported accommodation through the benefits system. New burdens on the council included the preparation for the implementation of the new waste measures announced by the government.

The Council was able to make use of grants provided by the government to offset some of the additional costs, as well as using earmarked reserves set aside in previous financial years. More details on the impacts are set out in section 2.8.

2025/26 saw another single year settlement which meant the budget was set at a time of uncertainty, following a number of years of real terms reductions in grant income from central government, increasing demands on statutory services and funding for services increasingly being derived from local funding.

The Council set its budget to respond to these financial challenges, but each year these challenges get harder to achieve. The focus of the Council has remained on improving efficiency whilst also embracing new technology and ways of working, which has allowed us to continue investment in front line services. In 2025/26 we successfully implemented savings while continuing to deliver services effectively.

Positively, in February 2026, the government announced a multi-year settlement, which saw the council receiving a higher level of support than previously anticipated. Whilst the council still has challenges ahead, and savings targets to deliver, this longer-term settlement has reduced those targets and allows for longer term planning for efficiency targets as there is more certainty into the medium term.

The Council set a General Fund Budget of £16.107m for the year and the Council Tax requirement for the borough was £10.829m, with a parish precept of £2.384m, giving a total Council Tax requirement of £13.213m. The other key income comes from government grants and the retention of a small proportion of business rates collected. The General Fund outturn was £15.07m, and contributions to reserves have resulted in a net increase in the General Fund balance of £0.795m.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) net budget was £16.09m and there was a planned increase to the HRA reserve of £0.02m. The final HRA outturn position was a £0.225m decrease to the HRA reserve.

At 31 March 2026 the Council has £1.252bn of Non-Current Assets on its balance sheet, of which £1.047bn relates to the HRA Council Dwellings. The net value of Non-Current assets decreased by £0.017m over the year. There were additions of £68.113m due to capital expenditure and £24.581m of Non-Current assets were disposed of.

2. A Summary of the Council's Financial Performance in 2025/26

2.1 General Fund Revenue Outturn

The Statement of Accounts sets out the Council's spending and financing in line with accounting and statutory requirements. The Council has a robust financial position and maintains sound financial management.

The outturn was a contribution to general reserves of £0.795m, which compares to an original budgeted contribution from reserves of £0.808m.

The below table shows a summary of the services budget and net expenditure outturn.

	Original Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000
Customer Service and Transformation	1,634	1,249	(384)
Finance	6,953	6,644	(309)
ICT and Digital	2,037	1,803	(234)
Legal and Governance	2,145	1,946	(199)
Budgets controlled by the Director	1,255	1,343	88
Executive Director (Finance and Transformation)	14,023	12,984	(1,039)
Leisure, Community and Cultural Services	1,910	2,489	579
Planning	854	934	79
Regeneration and Economic Development	(3,363)	(5,019)	(1,656)
Budgets controlled by the Director	459	492	33
Executive Director (Place)	(139)	(1,105)	(966)
Homes and Neighbourhoods	496	495	(1)
Public Realm	7,434	7,659	225
Budgets controlled by the Director	361	407	47
Executive Director (Resident Services and Climate Change)	8,290	8,561	271
Senior Leadership Team	463	481	18
Net Recharge to the Housing Revenue Account	(6,530)	(5,850)	680
Net Operating Expenditure	16,107	15,072	(1,036)
Capital Financing and Debt Impairment	1,932	3,385	1,453
Interest and Investment Income	(350)	(1,344)	(994)
Total Net Expenditure	17,689	17,113	(577)
Funded by:			
Retained Business Rates	(4,467)	(3,094)	1,373
Government Grants	(3,668)	(2,857)	811
Council Tax	(13,213)	(13,213)	0
Collection fund deficit/(surplus)	1,146	(3,051)	(4,197)
Total Funding	(20,202)	(22,216)	(2,014)
Net Outturn	(2,513)	(5,103)	(2,590)
Parish Precepts	2,384	2,384	0
Net Contribution (from) / to Earmarked Reserves	936	1,924	988
Net (Increase) / Decrease in General Fund Balance	808	(795)	(1,602)

The significant variances contained within the outturn are as follows:

- Housing Benefit – (£0.459m) net favourable variance on housing benefit overpayments due to amounts to be recovered being far greater than budgeted but ending with a net positive outturn. This variance is contained in the “Finance” line in the table above.
- Planning Income – (£0.288m) net favourable variance on planning income relating to planning application fees, planning performance agreements and pre-application changes. The favourable variance is largely due to changes in government green belt guidance and adoption of the local plan which have led to increased developer activity. This variance is contained in the “Planning” line in the table above.
- Temporary Accommodation – £0.316m net adverse variance on temporary accommodation expenditure due to increasing homelessness presentations. This variance is contained in the “Leisure, Community and Cultural Services” line in the table above.
- Gatehouse – (£0.551m) net favourable variance on operating income for Gatehouse. The decision to purchase the Gatehouse mixed use development was taken in year and therefore, rental income was not budgeted for. This variance is contained in the “Regeneration and Economic Development” line in the table above.
- Parking Charges – (£0.272m) net favourable variance on parking income. This relates to on-street parking, parking permits and season tickets. This variance is contained in the “Regeneration and Economic Development” line in the table above.
- Interest and Investment Income – (£1.164m) net favourable variance. Interest and investment income received by the Council has been higher than expected due to lower capital spend than budgeted and higher balances being held. This has offset the reduction in interest rates. This variance is contained in the “Interest and Investment Income” line in the table above.
- Borrowing Interest Costs – £0.651m net adverse variance. This is due to the in-year decision to purchase the Gatehouse mixed use development. As the purchase is funded by borrowing, it is resulting in higher borrowing costs in the short term, although the purchase of this development is expected to generate profits in future years. This variance is contained in the “Capital Financing and Debt Impairment” line in the table above.

The Outturn as reported in this section and Housing Revenue Outturn provide the Outturn as reported to Cabinet in the Expenditure and Financing Analysis.

Further information on the movement of earmarked reserves can be found in Note 8 – Earmarked Reserves.

2.2 Housing Revenue Account Outturn

The Council is legally obliged to hold separate accounts for the running of its housing stock. The balance at the end of the year was £3.157m.

A comparison of actual spending during the year and the original budget is summarised below. The Housing Revenue Account outturn was a £225k contribution from balances, compared to a budgeted contribution of £21k to balances.

	Original Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000
Income	(64,678)	(63,132)	1,545
Expenditure	47,315	53,851	4,175
HRA Share of Corporate Democratic Core	1,272	1,283	11
Net Cost of Service	(16,090)	(7,999)	5,732
Statutory Items Expenditure	16,069	8,224	(5,485)
Net (Increase) / Decrease in HRA Balance	(21)	225	247

This table summarises the Housing Revenue Account outturn as reported to Cabinet. The key variances in drawdown from balances are:

- £1.583m net adverse variance on rental income due to a number of factors, including a change in how income is shown between accounting and rent periods. The void rate was also higher than expected for most of the year; this has since been reduced with the appointment of a new voids contractor. An influx of Right to Buy applications completed in 2025/26 due to government caps being introduced on discounts available to tenants, which has also reduced rental income received. This variance is contained in the “Income” line in the table above.
- £5.477m net adverse variance on repairs and maintenance. This variance is predominantly due to overspends on responsive external repairs due to increased costs and inflation on works done. This variance is contained in the “Expenditure” line in the table above.
- (£0.845m) favourable Expenditure variance on the depreciation charge. This charge is based upon actual valuation of properties. The depreciation charge is credited to the major repairs reserve to fund the capital programme. The reduction to the charge will be offset by an increase in the revenue contribution to capital. This means both the revenue and capital funds will not be materially impacted by changes in valuation. This variance is contained in the “Expenditure” line above.
- (£2.420m) net favourable Expenditure variance on interest paid. The amount of interest paid was lower than budgeted due to a lower level of borrowing than anticipated, mainly linked to the rephasing of capital schemes to later years. This variance is contained in the “Statutory Items Expenditure” line in the table above.
- (£2.814m) net favourable Expenditure variance on the Revenue Contribution to Capital. This is calculated to ensure that the HRA maintains a minimum balance of around 5% of total income, as set out in the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy.

2.3 Capital Outturn

The total capital expenditure in the 2025/26 financial year was £68.60m, compared with an original budget of £55.99m, resulting in an adverse variance of £12.61m. This comparison relates to spend against original budgets, which do not include re-phased amounts from 2024/25 or additional budgets agreed in the year.

	Original Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000
Executive Director - Finance and Transformation (GF)	178	165	13
Executive Director - Place (GF)	669	16,999	(16,330)
Executive Director - Resident Services and Climate Change (GF)	1,945	1,237	708
Executive Director - Place (HRA)	1,000	5,265	(4,265)
Executive Director - Resident Services and Climate Change (HRA)	52,198	44,937	7,261
Capital Expenditure Out-Turn	55,990	68,602	(12,612)
Funded By:			
Capital Grants and Contributions	4,052	2,777	1,275
Borrowing	44,996	38,298	6,698
Capital Receipts and Reserves	1,896	26,405	(24,509)
Revenue Contribution to Capital	3,931	47	3,884
Statutory Provision for the repayment of debt	1,115	1,075	40
Total Funding Received	55,990	68,602	(12,612)

The main projects undertaken during the year include:

- £5.27m on the purchase and development of affordable housing properties.
- £44.94m on capital improvements and replacements of major components for the Council's Housing stock.
- £15.62m on a property purchase in the General Fund.

Balance Sheet

The Council has maintained a very strong balance sheet, with £1.252bn of Non-Current Assets as at 31 March 2026 and current assets of £42.225m, current liabilities of £86.952m, and long term liabilities of £246.876m. Furthermore, the Council has usable reserves of 57.194m.

	At 31 March 2026 £'000	At 31 March 2025 £'000
Non-current Assets	1,252,379	1,269,166
Current Assets	42,225	32,549
Current Liabilities	(86,952)	(75,218)
Long Term Liabilities	(246,876)	(242,520)
Net Assets	960,776	983,977
Represented by:		
Usable Reserves	(57,195)	(48,613)
Unusable Reserves	(903,582)	(935,364)
Total Reserves	(960,776)	(983,977)

2.4 Pensions Liability

This year the pension fund net position changed to a surplus of £49.501m from a surplus of £43.647m in 2024/25. This change is mainly due to an increase in asset values while the value of liabilities has dropped.

As pension fund assets are now greater than funded obligations, an asset ceiling has been applied as accounting standards restrict the amount of surplus that can be disclosed. This adjusts the net closing position on the Pension Fund to a net nil position.

The pension asset/liability has a significant effect on the net worth of the Council; however, our annual contribution to the fund and the statutory arrangements for funding any deficit over time means that the financial position of the authority remains healthy, and sudden swings in liability do not materially affect the council in the medium term.

The last Triennial pension valuation was based on March 2025, and contribution rates have been agreed until March 2029.

2.5 Borrowing and Capital Financing

The Authority currently has £244.6m borrowing outstanding relating to the Housing Stock and the development of new social housing. In addition, the Council has £37.8m of borrowing outstanding relating to General Fund capital expenditure. The Council had an operational borrowing limit of £350.1m.

During 2025/26 new long-term borrowing of £70.7m was taken with no early redemptions. This borrowing refinanced maturing loans relating to the housing stock, capital spend and General Fund borrowing to fund the purchase of a property.

The Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2029/30 was agreed by Council in February 2025.

2.6 Provisions, contingent liabilities and assets

During the financial year 2025/26, there has been a decrease of £0.206m for Business Rates appeals provision. This has been based on the appeals lodged with the Valuation Office as at 31 March 2026 and other available data such as Government statistics.

There has also been a decrease of £0.197m for insurance claims provisions, based on the Council's estimated liabilities under its self-insurance arrangements and outstanding legal claims.

2.7 Significant changes in accounting policies

The accounts for 2025/26 are presented in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) which specifies the principles and practices of accounting required to give a 'true and fair' view of the financial position and the transactions of a local authority.

The Code sets out the proper accounting practices required by section 21(2) of the Local Government Act 2003. These proper practices apply to the Statement of Accounts prepared in accordance with the statutory framework established for England by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended).

The 2025/26 Code incorporates required accounting standard amendments – the main change affecting the Council relates to accounting valuations and the introduction of indexation in the intervening years between valuations. This is detailed in Note 1 – Accounting Policies.

2.8 Economic Climate

Since the start of government grant funding restrictions in 2010, the Council has delivered just under £26m of efficiency savings to maintain a balanced budget ensuring it balances the historic reduction in funding received from central government and ongoing growth in demand for some services.

There is more certainty than previous year on future settlements, but wider economic impacts could have implications for the council.

These include:

- Continued economic changes are having material impacts on the Council's finances, as service demand would be impacted by such changes. This includes increased housing and temporary accommodation demand, increased welfare support (for example housing benefit and council tax support), adverse impacts on borrowing costs, increased fuel and utility costs and impacts on commercial property and other income.
- Ongoing wars are having impacts on fuel and market pricing, which could have a direct impact on the council in future years, such as utility costs for buildings, in the cost of delivering services directly and contract costs.
- At the time of setting the budget base rates were anticipated to fall further, but the wars and other market factors have led those forecasts to now suggest potential increases in base rates. This could have impacts for the council borrowing and investments.
- See the Medium-Term Financial Plan for how the Council plans to manage its resources over a five-year period in order to meet the Council's overall corporate objectives.
[Financial Strategy – Principles](#)

2.9 Going Concern

The accounts are prepared on a going concern basis; that is, on the assumption that the functions of the Council will continue in operational existence for twelve months from the date that the accounts are authorised for issue.

The Council has undertaken cash flow modelling through to June 2027 which demonstrates the Council's ability to work within its Capital Financing Requirement and cash management framework.

It is therefore noted that based on the Council's cash flow forecasting and resultant liquidity position, cash and short term investment balances of £22.83m at 31 March 2026 and the ability to borrow short term if required, the Council thereby concludes that it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, and that the Council will be a going concern, 12 months from the date of approval of the accounts. This demonstrates that the Council has

sufficient liquidity over the same period, assuming forecast minimal short-term borrowings for liquidity purposes if required.

Furthermore, the Code requires that local authorities prepare their accounts on a going concern basis, as they can only be discontinued under statutory prescription. The submission to the government to reorganise local councils in Hertfordshire has been submitted to the Government and will be consulted on in 2026. Until such time as statutory instruments are laid in relation to this, the Council will continue to prepare accounts on the basis that it will be ongoing as an organisation.

2.10 Collection Fund Rates for Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates

The collection rates achieved during 2025/26 are summarised below:

Collection Rate 2025/26	Target	Actual
Council Tax	97.70%	97.24%
NDR	99.10%	97.33%

Collection rates for Council Tax are slightly above the collection rate for 2024/25 while collection rates for Business Rates are very slightly below the collection rates for 2024/25. The value is the in-year collection rate target, not the long-term collection rate target.

2.11 Non-Current Asset Revaluation

The Council appointed Wilks Head and Eve to carry out a rolling valuation programme of a proportion of the General Fund assets in 2025/26. Wilks Head and Eve also provided an indexation review setting out the impact of indexation on all assets eligible to be indexed in the intervening years between accounting valuations.

Lambert Smith Hampton was appointed to carry out a full physical valuation of the Housing Revenue Account's housing stock as at 31 March 2026.

The impact of these valuations is reported within the notes to these accounts.

3. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 – 2028/29

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2025/26 to 2028/29 was agreed by Full Council in February 2025. This sets out the Council's strategy for maintaining financial sustainability and a commitment to provide the best possible value for money for the community.

It also provides a framework for the Council to plan and manage its resources over the current Comprehensive Spending Review period in order to meet the Council's overall corporate objectives.

The council is in a good overall financial position with General Fund non earmarked reserves of £8.86m at the end of 2025/26, and a HRA Balance of £3.16m. This is a direct result of robust financial management and a prolonged period of achieving efficiencies to balance the budget. However, in line with other local authorities, the Council is facing further severe financial constraints as central government grants continue to reduce in real-terms. At the same time the

demand on some of the Council's services continue to grow and further responsibilities are put on Local Government as new burdens.

Based on the updated MTFS, approved in February 2026, the Council is required to find a further £0.566m of savings on the general fund by 2027/28, in order to live within its means and maintain a reasonable cushion in reserves. This is challenging but is a substantial reduction to the savings targets required in recent years, due to the improved settlement that we received. The focus remains on safeguarding services it may not be possible to find efficiencies of this magnitude and guarantee no impact upon frontline services.

Despite the challenging environment, the Council seeks to continue to reduce its costs, sharing good practice, simplifying delivery processes and reducing the Council's administration costs. In addition to this, housing related government policy proposals do create challenges and opportunities for the sustainability of the HRA over the medium term. The government has announced rent convergence will be reintroduced, which will positively impact the HRA. However if this is later reversed, or if caps on rent increases were to be implemented again in future years, negative impacts could be seen. The council will need to continue to borrow externally to fund the Affordable Housing Programme going forward.

There remain some uncertainties and risks to the Council's finances in the medium term, the details of which are contained within the MTFS. The Council will continue to experience pressure on services arising from demographic and government policy changes and continued high expectations of service delivery. We will keep our MTFS under review and make changes accordingly to reflect the rapidly changing local government environment.

4. Explanation of the Financial Statements

Movement in Reserves statement (MiRS)

The movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Council is shown in this statement. This is analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e., those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other reserves. The Movement in Reserves Statement is a summary of the changes that have taken place in the bottom half of the Balance Sheet over the financial year. It does this by analysing:

- the increase or decrease in the net worth of the authority as a result of incurring expenses and generating income,
- the increase or decrease in the net worth of the authority as a result of movements in the current or fair value of its assets,
- movements between reserves to increase or reduce the resources available to the authority according to statutory provisions.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES)

This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. The Council raises taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in the Expenditure and Funding Analysis and Movement in Reserves statements.

Balance Sheet

The value at the end of the reporting period (i.e. 31 March) of the assets and liabilities recognised by the authority are shown on the balance sheet. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Council.

Reserves are reported in two categories:

- Usable reserves - those reserves that the authority 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),
- Unusable reserves - those that the authority is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the revaluation reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line “Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations”.

Cash Flow Statement

This statement shows the movement in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing or financing activities.

The net cash flow arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the authority are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the authority. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the authority's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e. borrowing) to the Council.

Notes to the core financial statements

The notes provide support to the core financial statements, inform the reader and give sufficient information to present a good understanding of the Council's activities.

Statement of Accounting Policies

These set out the principles, rules, conventions and practices applied that specify how the effects of transactions and other events are reflected in the accounts.

Supplementary financial statements:

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) - Income and Expenditure statement

The HRA Income and Expenditure Statement shows the economic cost in the year of providing housing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from rents and government grants. Authorities charge rents to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost.

The increase or decrease in the year on the basis on which rents are raised is shown in the Movement on the Housing Revenue Account Statement.

The Collection Fund

The Collection Fund is an agent's statement that reflects the statutory obligation for billing authorities to maintain a separate Collection Fund. The statement shows the transactions of the billing authority in relation to the collection from taxpayers and distribution to local authorities and the Government of council tax and non-domestic rates.

Notes to the supplementary financial statements

The notes provide support to the supplementary financial statements; inform the reader and give sufficient information to present a good understanding of the Council's activities. The notes are part of the detail that helps to ensure the statements show a true and fair view of the Council's financial position.

5. Corporate and Strategic Risks

The council continues to operate in a challenging environment. We are a complex organisation, delivering on a range of priorities for our communities against a backdrop of tighter finances and

the need to continuously improve efficiency and customer focus. We work to deliver our priorities in partnership with many organisations across the public, private and third sectors

Within this context the management of risk, including opportunity risk, is essential to ensure the achievement of our objectives. The effective management of risk is a statutory requirement and is also a central component of the council's governance.

A planned approach to the identification, analysis and mitigation of risk helps to plan for the right balance between innovation and change, and the avoidance of unexpected risk events.

A risk management framework is in place for the Council's risks which are managed under two main areas of strategic and operational risks. The current top strategic risks from the council's risk register include:

- Financial Sustainability
- Cyber Security
- Planning for, and delivering, high quality affordable homes for everyone
- Management of Council Owned Housing Property Assets
- Management of Non-Housing assets
- RSH Regulatory Standards
- Impacts of Climate Change
- Health and Safety

More detail on the strategic risks and the assessment of risks as at 31 March 2026 can be found here: [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday 9th June 2026, 6.30 pm – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council](#)

6. Community Engagement and Feedback

The council welcomes the views of local residents, businesses, user groups, and other stakeholders about the Council's performance. There are also a number of qualitative performance indicators that assist in explaining how the council's services are perceived by its users.

Further information about the Council's performance can be found on our website at the following link: [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday 9th June 2026, 6.30 pm – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council](#)

For further information on how you can be consulted on Council decisions, or to provide feedback on our services, please visit <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/Haveyoursay>

7. Further Information

If you would like to receive further information about these accounts, please do not hesitate to contact me at accountancy@welhat.gov.uk or 01707 357000.

Richard Baker (CPFA)
Executive Director (Finance and Transformation)
26 June 2026

Expenditure and Funding Analysis

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis is a note to the accounts that shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, rents, council tax and business rates) by local authorities in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by authorities in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the council's directorates / services / departments and is not a primary statement of the accounts. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

2025/26

	Notes	Out-Turn as reported to Cabinet £'000	Adjustments ¹ £'000	Net	Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis			Net
				Expenditure Chargeable to the GF and HRA Balances £'000	Adjustments for Capital Purposes £'000	Net Charge for Pensions Adjustments £'000	Other Differences £'000	Expenditure in the CIES £'000
Executive Director (Finance and Transformation)		12,943	(7,190)	5,787	(167)	(852)	6	4,773
Executive Director (Place)		(1,105)	3,204	2,093	3,557	(634)	9	5,025
Executive Director (Resident Services and Climate Change)		8,561	(1,116)	7,466	1,421	(334)	(1)	8,551
Senior Leadership Team		481	(404)	77	0	(50)	2	29
Housing Revenue Account		219	(7,172)	(6,966)	1,154	(772)	4	(6,580)
Net cost of Services		21,099	(12,678)	8,457	5,965	(2,642)	20	11,798
Other operating expenditure	9			2,385	10,001	0	0	12,386
(Income) and expenditure in relation to investment	10			9,018	0	1,276	(1,694)	8,600
Taxation and Non-specific Grant Income and Expenditure	11			(22,215)	(3,204)	0	2,635	(22,784)
(Surplus) or Deficit				(2,359)	12,762	(1,366)	961	10,000
Opening General Fund and HRA Balances²				(23,736)				
Less/Plus (Surplus) or Deficit on General Fund and HRA Balance in Year				(2,359)				
Closing General Fund and HRA Balances at 31 March²				(26,095)				

2024/25

	Notes	Out-Turn as reported to Cabinet £'000	Adjustments ¹ £'000	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the GF and HRA Balances £'000	Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis			Net Expenditure in the CIES £'000
					Adjustments for Capital Purposes £'000	Net Charge for Pensions Adjustments £'000	Other Differences £'000	
Executive Director (Finance and Transformation)		14,076	(7,038)	7,038	(283)	(1,760)	27	5,022
Executive Director (Place)		(591)	2,140	1,549	3,518	(1,620)	1	3,448
Executive Director (Resident Services and Climate Change)		6,844	(497)	6,347	1,371	(869)	1	6,850
Senior Leadership Team		423	(384)	39	0	(128)	1	(88)
Housing Revenue Account		(436)	(5,685)	(6,121)	(11,556)	(1,760)	9	(19,428)
Net cost of Services		20,316	(11,464)	8,852	(6,950)	(6,137)	39	(4,196)
Other operating expenditure	9			2,217	13,474	0	0	15,691
(Income) and expenditure in relation to investment	10			6,518	(380)	410	(1,189)	5,359
Taxation and Non-specific Grant Income and Expenditure	11			(17,529)	(4,313)	0	(4,475)	(26,317)
(Surplus) or Deficit				58	1,831	(5,727)	(5,625)	(9,463)
Opening General Fund and HRA Balances²				(23,794)				
Less/Plus (Surplus) or Deficit on General Fund and HRA Balance in Year				58				
Closing General Fund and HRA Balances at 31 March²				(23,736)				

¹ Some transactions are not reported to Cabinet in our monitoring as this focusses on activities delivered by services. For 24/25 there have been further outturn adjustments since the outturn was reported to Cabinet.

² For a split of this balance between the General Fund and the HRA and Earmarked Reserves – see the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Councils raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost.

	Notes	2025/2026			2024/2025		
		Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000	Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000
Executive Director (Finance and Transformation)		33,512	(28,750)	4,773	34,246	(29,224)	5,022
Executive Director (Place)		19,733	(14,708)	5,025	16,996	(13,548)	3,448
Executive Director (Resident Services and Climate Change)		15,382	(6,830)	8,551	13,698	(6,848)	6,850
Senior Leadership Team		29	-	29	(88)	-	(88)
Housing Revenue Account		56,206	(62,787)	(6,580)	44,811	(64,239)	(19,428)
Cost of Services		124,862	(113,075)	11,798	109,663	(113,859)	(4,196)
Other operating expenditure	9			12,386			15,691
(Income) and expenditure in relation to investment	10			8,600			5,359
Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income and Expenditure	11			(22,784)			(26,317)
(Surplus) or Deficit on Provision of Services	12			10,000			(9,463)
(Surplus) or Deficit on revaluation of property, plant and equipment assets				38,834			(36,053)
Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability / (asset)	30.2			(22,991)			8,174
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				15,843			(27,879)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				25,843			(37,342)

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 other reserves. The '*surplus or (deficit) on the provision of services*' line shows the true economic cost of providing the council's services, more details of which are shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. These are different from the statutory amounts required to be charged to the General Fund balance and the Housing Revenue Account for council tax setting and dwellings rent setting purposes. The '*net increase /decrease before transfers to reserves*' line shows the statutory General Fund balance and Housing Revenue Account Balance before any discretionary transfers to / from reserves undertaken by the council.

2025/26

	<i>Notes</i>	General Fund Balance £'000	Housing Revenue Account £'000	Usable Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	Earmarked Reserves £'000	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Unusable Reserves £'000	Total Council Reserves £'000
Balance at 31 March 2025		(8,065)	(3,382)	(18,369)	(6,508)	(12,289)	(48,613)	(935,364)	(983,977)
Balance at 1 April 2025		(8,065)	(3,382)	(18,369)	(6,508)	(12,289)	(48,613)	(935,364)	(983,977)
Movement in Reserves during 2025/26							-		-
Total comprehensive income and expenditure		2,022	7,978	-	-	-	10,000	13,200	23,201
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	7	(4,737)	(7,622)	(5,958)	(264)	-	(18,581)	18,583	2
Transfers to / from reserves	8	1,920	(135)	-	-	(1,790)	(5)	-	(5)
Increase / (Decrease) in 2025/26		(795)	221	(5,958)	(264)	(1,790)	(8,586)	31,784	23,197
Balance at 31 March 2026		(8,860)	(3,161)	(24,327)	(6,772)	(14,079)	(57,199)	(903,580)	(960,780)

Movement in Reserves Statement

2024/25

	Notes	General Fund Balance £'000	Housing Revenue Account £'000	Useable Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	Earmarked Reserves £'000	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Unusable Reserves £'000	Total Council Reserves £'000
Balance at 31 March 2024		(6,771)	(2,952)	(19,347)	(5,370)	(14,071)	(48,511)	(895,569)	(944,080)
Balance at 1 April 2024		(6,771)	(2,952)	(19,347)	(5,370)	(14,071)	(48,511)	(895,569)	(944,080)
Movement in Reserves during 2024/25									
Total comprehensive income and expenditure		(8,426)	(1,037)	-	-	-	(9,463)	(30,438)	(39,901)
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	7	8,380	1,152	967	(1,138)	-	9,362	(9,362)	-
Transfers to / from reserves	8	(1,247)	(545)	-	-	1,782	(11)	4	(7)
Increase / (Decrease) in 2024/25		(1,293)	(430)	967	(1,138)	1,782	(112)	(39,795)	(39,908)
Balance at 31 March 2025		(8,064)	(3,382)	(18,380)	(6,508)	(12,289)	(48,623)	(935,364)	(983,988)

Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the balance sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the authority. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Council.

	<i>Notes</i>	31 March 2026 £'000	31 March 2025 £'000
Property, plant and equipment	14	1,238,233	1,254,982
Heritage Assets		70	77
Investment properties	15	4,900	4,900
Intangible assets	16	1,000	1,192
Long-term Investments	17.2	3,605	3,606
Long-term Debtors	18	4,571	4,409
Non-current assets		1,252,379	1,269,166
Short-term investments	17.2	24,196	14,282
Inventories		73	75
Short-term debtors	18	17,956	18,192
Current assets		42,225	32,549
Short-term borrowing	17.2	(43,541)	(30,966)
Short-term creditors	20	(42,046)	(43,459)
Cash and cash equivalents	19	(1,365)	(793)
Current liabilities		(86,952)	(75,218)
Provisions	21	(3,458)	(3,862)
Long-term borrowing	17.2	(241,278)	(212,163)
Other long-term liabilities	31	(2,103)	(26,459)
Capital Grants Receipts in Advance	26	(37)	(36)
Long-term liabilities		(246,876)	(242,520)
Net assets		960,776	983,977
Financed by :			
General Fund balance		(8,861)	(8,065)
Housing Revenue Account		(3,157)	(3,382)
Usable Capital Receipts Reserve		(24,327)	(18,369)
Capital Grants Unapplied Account		(6,773)	(6,508)
Earmarked reserves	8	(14,077)	(12,289)
Usable reserves		(57,195)	(48,613)
Revaluation Reserve	22.1	(405,573)	(450,802)
Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve	22.2	403	403
Capital Adjustment Account	22.3	(495,348)	(503,803)
Pensions Reserve	22.4	-	24,356
Deferred Capital Receipts		(4,436)	(4,236)
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	22.5	1,173	(1,463)
Accumulated Compensation Absence and Employment Reserve		199	181
Unusable reserves		(903,582)	(935,364)
Total reserves		(960,776)	(983,977)

Cash Flow Statement

The cash flow statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as: operating, investing, and financing activities.

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Net surplus or (deficit) on the provision of services	(10,000)	9,463
Depreciation	19,678	19,686
Impairment and downward valuations	4,401	(3,862)
Amortisation	192	176
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(7,535)	7,596
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	1,793	(5,057)
(Increase)/decrease in inventories	2	(43)
Movement in pension liability	(1,365)	(5,726)
Carrying amount of non-current assets and non-current assets held for sale, sold or derecognised	24,598	21,691
Other non-cash items charged to the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services	(603)	(1,626)
Adjustment to surplus or deficit on the provision of services for noncash movements*	41,161	32,836
Proceeds from short (not considered to be cash equivalents) and long-term investments (includes investments in associates, joint ventures and subsidiaries)	-	14,234
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	(14,395)	(8,139)
Any other items for which the cash effects are investing or financing cash flows	(3,204)	(4,313)
Adjust for items included in the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities*	(17,600)	1,782
Net Cash flows from operating activities	13,561	44,081
Purchase of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	(59,440)	(43,039)
Purchase of short and long-term investments	(9,824)	(14,176)
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	14,395	8,139
Other receipts from investing activities	3,245	4,315
Net cash flows from investing activities	(51,625)	(44,761)
Cash receipts of short and long-term borrowing	70,700	23,000
Repayments of short and long-term borrowing	(29,819)	(27,469)
Other receipts/(payments) for financing activities	(3,389)	4,457
Net cash flows from financing activities	37,492	(12)
Net increase or (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(572)	(688)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	(793)	(105)
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	(1,365)	(793)
Net increase or (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(572)	(688)

The cash flows for operating activities include the following items:

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Interest received	1,489	1,647
Interest paid	(7,932)	(7,275)

Notes to the accounts

1. Accounting policies

1.1 General principles

The statement of accounts summarises the Council's financial transactions for the 2025/26 financial year and its position at the year end of 31 March 2026. The authority is required to prepare an annual statement of accounts by the Accounts and Audit regulations 2015 (as amended), and this requires the preparation to be in accordance with proper accounting practices.

These practices under Section 21 of the 2003 Local Government Act primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2025/26, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and statutory guidance issued under Section 12 of the 2003 Local Government Act.

The accounting convention adopted in the statement of accounts is principally historic cost, modified by the revaluation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments.

1.2 Accruals of income and expenditure

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

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

1.3 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that

mature in three calendar months or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

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

1.4 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 authority'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.

1.5 Charges to revenue for Non-Current Assets

Services, support services and trading accounts are debited with the following amounts to record the real 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 losses can be written off,
- amortisation of intangible non-current 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 a prudent annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisation are therefore replaced by the contribution in the general fund balance (Minimum Revenue Provision or the statutory repayment of loans fund advances), by way of an adjusting transaction with the capital adjustment account in the movement in reserves statement for the difference between the two.

1.6 Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates (England)

The Council acts as a billing authority, or agent on behalf of major preceptors in relation to Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR). In this case the Council is collecting Council Tax and NDR income on behalf of itself and preceptors (Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner (HPCC) in relation to Council Tax and Government and HCC in relation to Non-Domestic Rates).

The Council is required by statute to maintain a separate fund (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.

The implication for this is that any balance sheet transactions at the year end, in relation to these Agent relationships, are split between the principal parties and, therefore, the balances contained on the Balance Sheet for a particular debt are the Council's own proportion of the debt and associated balances. The proportions of transactions that relate to the other parties to the relationship are shown as debtors or creditors due from/to these parties.

Business Improvement Districts

A Business Improvement District (BID) scheme applies across Welwyn Garden City town centre. The scheme is funded by a BID levy paid by Non-Domestic Rate payers. The authority acts as principal under the scheme, and accounts for income received and expenditure incurred (including contributions to the BID project) within the relevant services within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

1.7 Employee Benefits

Benefits Payable during Employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled wholly within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages, salaries and paid annual leave and sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits for current employees and are as an expense in the year in which the employee renders the service to the Council. An accrual is made, for the cost of holiday entitlement and other forms of leave earned by employees but not taken before the year end, and which may be carried forward into the next financial year.

Any accrual made is required under statute to be reversed out of the General Fund balance by a credit to the Accumulated Compensation Absences Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Council to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for those benefits. These costs are charged on an accruals basis to the appropriate service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement at the earlier of when the authority can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council recognises costs for a restructuring.

Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, these are treated in line with statutory provisions outlined under the local government pension scheme section of the accounting policies.

Post-employment Benefits

Employees of the Authority may be members of the Local Government Pension Scheme, administered by Hertfordshire County Council. The scheme provides defined benefits to members including pensions and for some a retirement lump sum, earned as employees working for the Council.

The Local Government Pension Scheme

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

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

Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate as detailed in the notes to the accounts, under basis for estimating assets and liabilities.

The assets of Hertfordshire Pension Fund attributable to the authority 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 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**, i.e. net interest expense for the Council - the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability 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 at the beginning of the period – taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.
- Re-measurements comprising:
 - **the return on plan assets** – excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability – charged to the Pensions Reserve as other comprehensive income and expenditure,
 - **actuarial gains and losses** – changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made 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 Hertfordshire 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 authority 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 authority 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.

1.8 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.

1.9 Financial Instruments and Financial assets

Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are recognised on the balance sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (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 most of the borrowings that the authority has, this means that the amount presented in the balance sheet is the outstanding principal repayable (plus accrued interest); and interest charged to the CIES is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

Where premiums and discounts have been charged to the CIES, regulations allow the impact on the general fund balance to be spread over future years. The authority 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 CIES 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. For most of the borrowings that the Council has, this means that the amount presented on 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 in the loan agreement. Where the financial liability is a short duration payable, like creditors, with no stated interest rate an effective interest calculation has not been made.

Financial Assets

Financial assets are classified based on a classification and measurement approach that reflects the Council's business model for holding those financial assets and their cash flow characteristics.

The Council's financial assets are classified into three types and are measured at:

- amortised cost,
- fair value through profit and loss (FVPL),
- fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI).

Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost

Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the authority 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 investment. 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.

Expected Credit Loss Model

The authority recognises expected credit losses on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost either on a 12-month or lifetime basis. Only lifetime losses are recognised for trade receivables (debtors) held by the authority.

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

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit of Loss

Financial assets that are measured at FVPL are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the 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. Due to the statutory override on pooled funds, an existing investment in the Property Fund is treated differently and is reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Financial Instruments Account. The statutory override on pooled funds has been extended until 31 March 2029.

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.

1.10 Government Grants and Contributions

Whether paid on account, or by instalments or in arrears, grants and third party contributions are recognised as due to the Authority when there is reasonable assurance that the authority will comply with the conditions attached to the payments, and the grant or contribution will be received.

Amounts recognised as due to the Authority 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 regarding the use of the grant which if not met would render the grant returnable to the transferor.

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been met are carried as creditors in the Balance Sheet. When conditions are satisfied the item is credited to taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure (non-ringfenced revenue grants and all capital grants) or the appropriate service line in the CIES.

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 Account. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Grants Unapplied Account are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

1.11 Heritage Assets

The carrying amounts of heritage assets recognised by the Council is included in the Balance Sheet and are reviewed where there is evidence of impairment of these assets. Any impairment is recognised and measured in accordance with the authority's general policies on impairment.

1.12 Intangible Assets

Expenditure on non-monetary assets that do not have physical substance but are controlled by the authority 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 authority.

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 authority 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.

Expenditure on the development of websites is not capitalised if the website is solely or primarily intended to promote or advertise the authority's goods or services.

Intangible assets are measured initially at cost. The depreciable amount of an intangible asset is amortised over its useful life to the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Useful lives for intangibles generally range from between 3-7 years.

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.

1.13 Inventories and Long Term Contracts

Inventories are included in the balance sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value. The cost of inventories is assigned using the first in – first out (FIFO) costing formula.

Long term contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the surplus or deficit on the provision of services with the value of works and services received under the contract during the financial year.

1.14 Investment Property

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

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, based on the amount at which the asset could be exchanged between knowledgeable parties in an arm's length transaction. Investment Properties are not depreciated but are re-valued annually according to market conditions at the year end. Gains and losses on revaluation are posted to the Financing and Investment 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 property are credited to the Financing and Investment line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, and result in a gain for the General Fund balance.

Revaluation and disposal gains and losses are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the General Fund balance. Gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment

Account or (for any sale where cash received is greater than £10,000) the Capital Receipts Reserve.

1.15 Joint Operations

Joint operations are arrangements where the parties that have joint control of the arrangement have rights to the assets and obligations for the liabilities relating to the arrangement. The activities undertaken by the Authority in conjunction with other joint operators involve the use of the assets and resources of those joint operators. In relation to its interest in a joint operation, the Authority as a joint operator recognises:

- its assets, including its share of any assets held jointly,
- its liabilities, including its share of any liabilities incurred jointly,
- its revenue from the sale of its share of the output arising from the joint operation,
- its share of the revenue from the sale of the output by the joint operation,
- its expenses, including its share of any expenses incurred jointly.

1.16 Leases

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfers 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 operational leases.

Where a lease covers both land and buildings the land and building 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 payments are accounted for under this policy where fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent on the use of specific assets.

The Authority as Less Accounting standard IFRS 16 Leases became mandatory from 1 April 2024 and replaces the existing accounting standard for leases (IAS 17). The introduction of IFRS 16 Leases removes the distinction between finance and operating leases where the authority is the lessee. Any property, plant and equipment held under a lease 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 Authority are added to the carrying amount of the asset. Premiums paid on entry into a lease are applied to writing down the lease liability. Contingent rents are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

Lease payments are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property, plant and 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 a lease 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 assets estimated useful life.

The authority is not required to raise council tax to cover depreciation or revaluation and impairment losses arising on leased assets (see accounting policy 1.5).

All material operating leases are held on the balance sheet, as specified by IFRS 16 Leases. The Council still holds a number of peppercorn operating leases, but as these are immaterial, it is not proposed to change the current accounting treatment of these.

The Authority as Lessor

Finance leases

Where the authority 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 authority'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 Authority 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., if there is a premium paid at the commencement of the lease).

1.17 Overheads and support services

Where applicable, the cost of overheads and support services are charged to those services that benefit from the supply or services.

1.18 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 in the accounts. Expenditure in excess of £10,000 on non-current assets is capitalised, provided that the non-current asset yields benefits to the Council and the services it provides, for a period of more than one year. This excludes expenditure on routine repairs and maintenance of non-current assets that is charged direct to service revenue accounts.

Where an element of staff time has been capitalised and the actual figures were not available an estimate has been calculated based on the charges to date.

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising all expenditure that is directly attributable to bringing the asset into working condition for its intended use. The authority does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred while assets are under construction.

Assets are carried in the balance sheet using the following measurement bases:

- council dwellings: current value determined using the basis of existing use value for social housing basis i.e. 38% of market value,
- property: surplus assets are included in the balance sheet at fair value, determined using the amount that would be paid for the asset in its 'best use',
- property: other land and buildings are included in the balance sheet at current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV),
- property: where no market exists or the property is specialised, current value is measured at depreciated replacement cost,
- vehicles, plant and equipment: depreciated historic cost,
- infrastructure assets: depreciated historic cost,
- community assets: depreciated historic cost,
- assets under construction: depreciated historic cost.

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at fair value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their current value at the year-end, but as a minimum every five years. The last full valuation was carried out in March 2014 for General Fund assets, after which we started valuing all General Fund assets on a rolling programme where all high value (more than £1.0m) assets and approximately 20% of the remaining assets are revalued each year. For those assets not being revalued in a year, indexation will be applied if it is deemed material.

From 1 April 2025, the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) requirements changed in respect of revaluations of property, plant and equipment. All assets, including high value assets, are now revalued once every five years with annual indexation applied during the four intervening years for assets subject to indexation as per the requirements of the Code. Where indices cannot be obtained without undue cost or effort, assets will be revalued quinquennially with a desktop revaluation in year three.

A full valuation for housing is completed every five years and has been completed in 2025/26.. A desktop valuation is completed each year between full valuations of the Housing Stock. Social housing valuations use a beacon approach and all assets are revalued every year.

Increases in valuations are matched by credits in the revaluation reserve to recognise unrealised gains. Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement where they arise from the reversal of a revaluation loss or an impairment loss previously charged to a service revenue account. 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 they 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 as for decreases in value explained above.

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 all property, plant and equipment assets (other than land, certain community assets and assets under construction) where a finite useful life has been determined. This is with the intention of writing off their balance sheet values in equal annual instalments over their remaining expected useful lives. This is commonly referred to as the 'straight line' method. Depreciation is charged from the end of the year following the year of acquisition. Useful lives for asset types are shown below.

Type of asset	Life (years)
Council dwellings	20-60
Other land and buildings	20-50
Car parks	25-30
Vehicles, plant and equipment	5-10
Footway lighting	20

Where an item of property, plant and equipment has major components, the cost of which is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately. Where a component is replaced or restored the carrying amount of the old component is derecognised to avoid double counting; the new component is reflected in the carrying amount. Componentisation does not apply to investment properties.

Revaluation gains are also depreciated, with an amount equal to the difference between current value depreciation charge 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 previously recognised losses in the surplus or deficit on the provision of services. Depreciation is not charged on assets held for sale.

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 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. Any receipts from disposals are credited to the same line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement. Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the revaluation reserve are transferred to the capital adjustment account.

Amounts received for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. A proportion of capital receipts relating to housing disposals may be payable to the government. The balance of receipts remains within the capital receipts reserve and can then only be used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the authority's underlying need to borrow (the

capital financing requirement). Receipts are appropriated to the Capital Receipts Reserve through the movement in reserves statement.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are appropriated to the capital adjustment account from the general fund balance in the movement in reserves statement.

1.19 Rent to mortgage properties

The Council's equity interest in rent to mortgage property is assessed as current vacant possession value, based on a beacon principle, less the remaining discount awarded but not taken. The asset is considered to be a long term debtor and this is matched by a deferred capital receipt.

1.20 Provisions and Contingent Liabilities

Provisions

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

The Council maintains a provision for the funding of the self-financed element of insurance claims. This provision is funded through contributions from the relevant service revenue accounts.

Provisions for bad or doubtful debts are separately disclosed against debtors on the Balance Sheet and are not included in the provisions figure. They have been made within the accounts for expected losses of income in respect of sums due but not received from debtors. Known uncollectible debts have been written off.

Provisions are charged to the appropriate revenue account and when payments for expenditure are incurred to which the provision relates they are charged direct to the provision. Provisions are reviewed at each balance sheet date and if no longer required the provision is reversed.

Contingent liabilities

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the authority 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 authority. 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.

1.21 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. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service

revenue account in that year to count against the Net Cost of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES). The reserve is then transferred back to 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, retirement benefits and employee benefits. They do not represent usable resources for the Council.

Capital reserves are not available for revenue purposes and certain ones can only be used for specific statutory purposes.

The Capital Adjustment Account represents the amounts set aside from revenue or capital receipts to finance expenditure on non-current assets, provision for the repayment of external loans and the reversal of amounts included in the CIES which are not required by statute to be included in the General Fund or Housing Revenue Account balance.

The Revaluation Reserve contains valuation gains recognised since 1 April 2007.

The Major Repairs Reserve is required by statutory provision in relation to the Housing Revenue Account.

The Council also has other specific earmarked reserves set out in more detail in the Notes to the Accounts. These are set aside for purposes falling outside the definition of provisions. They are earmarked specifically to meet future items of revenue or capital expenditure.

1.22 Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute (REFCUS)

Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute (REFCUS) relates to transactions which would not be capitalised under relevant accounting standards, but that are defined as capital expenditure under the Local Government Act 2003 (and associated regulations). They do not result in the creation of a non-current asset controlled by the authority. REFCUS incurred during the year is written off as expenditure to the relevant service revenue account in the year. Examples include grants to third parties for capital purposes and expenditure on private sector housing renewal. Where the Council meets the cost of the REFCUS from existing capital resources a transfer to the Capital Adjustment Account then reverses out the amounts charged in the Movement in Reserves Statement so there is no impact on the level of council tax.

1.23 VAT

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

1.24 Fair value measurement of non-financial assets

Investment properties, surplus assets, some assets held for sale (and some financial instruments) are held at fair value at the 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 transaction is assumed to take 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.

This method should take the asset in its highest or best use.

There is a three level hierarchy for inputs into a fair value calculation:

- Level 1 – quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities e.g., bond prices,
- Level 2 – inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability e.g., interest rates or yields for similar assets,
- Level 3 – unobservable inputs for the asset or liability e.g., cash flow forecasts.

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

Accounting standards issued but not yet adopted are disclosed below. These areas will be introduced in the 2026/27 CIPFA Code of Practice.

- Amendments to FRS102 relating to Heritage Assets
- Amendments to IFRS 7 and IFRS 9 relating to Financial Instruments

Neither of these are expected to have a significant effect on local authority financial statements.

3. Critical judgments in applying accounting policies

In applying the accounting policies set out in Note 1, the Council has made certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertain events.

There is uncertainty about future funding for Local Government, although the recent multi-year settlement announced by central government has helped alleviate some of this uncertainty. The Council has determined that this uncertainty is not sufficient to provide an indication that the assets of the Authority might be impaired as a result of a need to close facilities and reduce levels of service provision.

The process of the reorganisation of local councils within Hertfordshire is ongoing. However, until such time as statutory instruments are laid in relation to this, the Council assumes that it will be ongoing as an organisation.

Other key items of uncertainty are highlighted in Note 4 and the Narrative Report.

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

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported for assets and liabilities as at the balance sheet date and the amounts reported for the revenues and expenses during the year. However, the nature of estimation means that actual outcomes could differ from those estimates.

The key judgements and estimation uncertainty that have a significant risk of causing material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are:

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if Actual Results Differ from Assumptions
Property, Plant and Equipment	<p>Assets are depreciated over useful lives that are dependent on assumptions about the level of repairs and maintenance that will be incurred in relation to individual assets.</p> <p>The current economic climate makes it uncertain that the Authority will be able to sustain its current spending on repairs and maintenance, bringing into doubt the useful lives assigned to assets.</p> <p>There is also uncertainty about asset valuations. All high value assets, investment assets and council dwellings are currently valued every year but for other operational assets, only a proportion of the asset portfolio is valued each year as part of a 5-year rolling programme.</p> <p>From 26/27 high value assets will no longer be valued every year. Instead, they will be valued as part of the 5-year rolling programme with other operational assets and indexed in the intervening years.</p> <p>Based on valuer expertise and best practice as per the CIPFA Code, operational property, plant and equipment assets are usually valued using Existing Use Value (EUV). Specialised assets are valued at Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRV). Investment properties are valued at Fair Value (FV). Council dwellings are valued at Existing Use Value – Social Housing (EUV-SH). There are various assumptions which feed into each valuation, and these affect the values given.</p>	<p>If the useful life of assets is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying amount of the assets falls.</p> <p>It is estimated that the annual depreciation charge would increase by £1.140m for every year that useful lives had to be reduced.</p> <p>The effect of a 1% uplift in General Fund asset valuations would be £1.672m.</p> <p>The effect of a 1% uplift in Housing Revenue Account valuations would be £10.468m.</p>
Pensions Liability	<p>Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. A firm of consulting actuaries is engaged</p>	<p>The effects on the net pension liability of changes in individual assumptions can be measured. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a 0.1% decrease in the Real Discount Rate would result in an increase in the pension liability of 1.16% (£2.21m),

	<p>to provide the Authority with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.</p> <p>Pension fund defined liabilities are provided by the Hertfordshire County Council actuary, and are based on significant estimates that are likely to prove to be materially different, but represent the best estimate as at 31 March 2026.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a 0.1% increase in the Rate of Salary Increase would result in an increase in pension liability of 1.12%, (£0.063m), • a 0.1% increase in the Pension Increase rate would result in an increased pension liability of 1.16% (£2.28m).
Arrears	<p>At 31 March 2026, the Authority had an outstanding balance of short-term debtors of £17.95m. A review of significant debt types has led to an updated impairment allowance of debts of £6.99m. However, in the current economic climate, it is not certain that such an allowance would be sufficient.</p>	<p>An understatement of doubtful debts would lead to a future adjustment and impairment to be reflected. The allowance held is based on policies adapted to the nature of the debt and service area.</p> <p>If collection rates on dwelling rents were to deteriorate by 1%, the impairment allowance for doubtful debts would require an additional £0.620m to be set aside.</p>
NDR Appeals Provision	<p>Under the business rates retention scheme Local Authorities are liable for their proportionate share of successful appeals against business rates charged in the period to 31 March 2026. A provision based on best available information including the Valuation Office (VAO) ratings list of appeals, and an analysis of successful appeals to date has been recognised for this liability of £2.11m.</p>	<p>The income losses which are recognised in the Council's comprehensive income and expenditure statement, associated with these liabilities, are capped at 7.5% of its baseline funding.</p>

5. Material items of income and expense

The Code of Practice requires the disclosure of the nature and amount of any material items of income and expenditure which are not separately disclosed on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The following material items of income and expenditure are included in the Cost of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

Category	Description	Comment
Housing Services	Contract Payments	The Authority paid a total of £9.7 million to Morgan Sindall Property Services Ltd for housing maintenance.
Service Delivery Contracts	Contract Payments	The Authority paid a total of £1.9 million to Liberata UK Ltd to provide Council Tax, Housing Benefit, and Business Rates Services.
Environmental Services	Contract Payments	The Authority paid a total of £5.4 million to FCC Recycling (UK) Ltd and £1.8m to Krinkles UK Ltd for grounds maintenance, recycling and refuse collection.

6. Events after the Balance Sheet date

The Statement of Accounts was authorised for issue by the Executive Director (Finance and Transformation) on 26 June 2026. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statements or notes.

Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing at 31 March 2026, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect the impact of this information.

Key items of estimation uncertainty are highlighted in Note 4 and the Narrative Report.

7. Adjustment between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations

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

2025/26

	Usable Reserves				
	General Fund £'000	Housing Revenue Account £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Major Repairs Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000
Adjustments to the Revenue Resources:					
Amounts by which income and expenditure included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement are different from revenue for the year calculated in accordance with statutory requirements:					
Pensions costs (transferred to (or from) the Pensions Reserve)	966	399	-	-	-
Financial Instruments (transfers to or from the Capital Adjustment Account)	(0)	-	-	-	-
Council tax and NDR (transfers to or from Collection Fund)	(2,635)	-	-	-	-
Holiday pay (transferred to the Accumulated Absences Reserve)	(15)	(4)	-	-	-
Reversal of entries included in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in relation to capital expenditure (these items are charged to the Capital Adjustment Account):	(6,204)	(27,571)	-	(15,382)	-
Total Adjustments to Revenue Resources	(7,888)	(27,177)	-	(15,382)	-

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources:					
Transfer of non-current asset sale proceeds from revenue to the Capital Receipts Reserve and Deferred Capital Receipts	98	14,298	(14,395)	-	-
Payments to the government housing receipts pool (funded by a transfer from the Capital Receipts Reserve)	-	-	-	-	-
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt (transfer from the Capital Adjustment Account)	1,017	-	-	-	-
Capital expenditure financed from revenue balances (transfer to the Capital Adjustment Account)	677	3,411	-	-	-
Total Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources	1,792	17,709	(14,395)	-	-
Adjustments to Capital Resources:					
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance capital expenditure	-	-	8,437	-	-
Use of the Major Repairs Reserve to finance capital expenditure	-	-	-	15,382	-
Application of capital grants to finance capital expenditure	1,359	1,845	-	-	(264)
Total Adjustments to Capital Resources	1,359	1,845	8,437	15,382	(264)
Total Adjustments	(4,737)	(7,622)	(5,958)	-	(264)

2024/25

	Usable Reserves				
	General Fund Balance £'000	Housing Revenue Account £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Major Repairs Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000
Adjustments to the Revenue Resources:					
Amounts by which income and expenditure included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement are different from					
Pensions costs (transferred to (or from) the Pensions Reserve)	4,084	1,642	-	-	-
Financial Instruments (transfers to or from the Capital Adjustment Account)	68	-	-	-	-
Council tax and NDR (transfers to or from Collection Fund)	4,475	-	-	-	-
Holiday pay (transferred to the Accumulated Absences Reserve)	(30)	(9)	-	-	-
Reversal of entries included in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in relation to capital expenditure (these items are charged to the Capital Adjustment Account):	(4,241)	(19,167)	-	(14,773)	-
Total Adjustments to Revenue Resources	4,355	(17,534)	-	(14,773)	-

Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources:					
Transfer of non-current asset sale proceeds from revenue to the Capital Receipts Reserve and Deferred Capital Receipts	240	7,899	(8,139)	-	-
Payments to the government housing receipts pool (funded by a transfer from the Capital Receipts Reserve)	-	-	-	-	-
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt (transfer from the Capital Adjustment Account)	1,038	-	-	-	-
Capital expenditure financed from revenue balances (transfer to the Capital Adjustment Account)	83	9,138	-	-	-
Total Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources	1,361	17,037	(8,139)	-	-
Adjustments to Capital Resources:					
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance capital expenditure	-	-	9,106	-	-
Use of the Major Repairs Reserve to finance capital expenditure	-	-	-	14,773	-
Application of capital grants to finance capital expenditure	2,664	1,649	-	-	(1,138)
Total Adjustments to Capital Resources	2,664	1,649	9,106	14,773	(1,138)
Total Adjustments	8,380	1,152	967	-	(1,138)

8. Transfers to / from earmarked reserves

This note sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund and HRA balances in earmarked reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans and the amounts posted back from earmarked reserves to meet General Fund and HRA expenditure in 2025/26.

	Balance at 31 March 2026	Net movement in year	Balance at 31 March 2025	Net movement in year	Balance at 31 March 2024	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Strategic Initiatives Reserve	(1,338)	39	(1,377)	-	(1,377)	For use for one-off specific projects and fixed term growth directly delivering corporate objectives.
Business Rates Retention Reserve	(5,377)	(1,117)	(4,261)	893	(5,154)	To manage volatility of the Business Rates Retention Scheme and Collection Fund Deficits.
Pensions Reserve	-	401	(401)	400	(801)	This reserve is necessary to help mitigate the impact of additional costs arising in the triennial review cycle.
Transformation Reserve	(982)	-	(982)	6	(988)	For use on transformation projects to deliver longer term efficiencies.
Commitments Reserve	(254)	(10)	(244)	57	(301)	These reserves manage expenditure and projects the Council is committed to but for which actual expenditure has not yet been incurred.
Grants and Contributions Reserve	(4,560)	(1,398)	(3,163)	(190)	(2,973)	These reserves set aside grants received for specific purposes which will fund future expenditure.
Local Plan Reserve	(253)	141	(394)	59	(453)	Funds set aside to aid the Local Plan
Civic Buildings Reserve	(301)	-	(301)	-	(301)	The reserve is for Decarbonisation Projects and High Level repairs to the Civic Buildings
Social Housing Commitments Reserve (HRA)	(776)	135	(911)	541	(1,452)	To manage expenditure and projects relating to the HRA.
Other Reserves	(236)	19	(255)	16	(271)	Other miscellaneous reserves.
Total	(14,077)	(1,790)	(12,289)	1,782	(14,071)	

9. Other operating expenditure

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Parish Council Precepts	2,384	2,217
(Gains) / losses on disposal of non-current assets	10,002	13,474
Total	12,386	15,691

10. (Income) and expenditure in relation to investment

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Interest payable and similar charges	8,989	7,331
Net interest on the defined benefit pension liability	1,276	410
Interest receivable and similar income	(1,583)	(1,625)
Changes in Fair Value of Financial Instruments	-	(68)
Income and expenditure in relation to investment properties and changes in their fair value	(338)	(748)
Impairment loss allowances	258	59
Total	8,600	5,359

11. Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Council tax income	(13,154)	(12,559)
Non domestic rates income and expenditure	(609)	(3,216)
Revenue Support Grant	(192)	(151)
Services Grant	-	(20)
Business Rates related Grants	(2,961)	(4,471)
New Homes Bonus Grant	(224)	(165)
Funding Guarantee Grant	-	(1,072)
New Burdens Grants	(281)	(172)
National Insurance Grant	(212)	-
Capital Grants	(3,204)	(4,313)
Extended Producer Responsibility Grant	(1,086)	-
Contributions and other items	(862)	(178)
Total	(22,784)	(26,317)

12. Expenditure and income analysed by nature

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Expenditure		
Employee Benefit Expenses	21,510	16,221
Premises Expenditure	6,781	6,472
Travel Expenditure	115	121
Supplies and Services	9,576	9,573
Third Party Payments	33,460	30,571
Transfer Payments	28,890	29,988
Depreciation, Amortisation, Revaluations and Impairment	24,576	16,791
Other Expenditure below Net Cost of Service	21,498	31,677
Total Expenditure	146,406	141,414
Income		
Fees, Charges and other Service Income	(113,110)	(113,933)
Other Income below Net Cost of Service	(23,296)	(36,944)
Total Income	(136,406)	(150,877)
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	10,000	(9,463)

13. Revenue from contracts with service recipients

Amounts included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for contracts with service recipients:

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Revenue from contracts with service recipients	643	644
Total included in Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	643	644

Amounts included in the Balance Sheet for contracts with service recipients:

	At 31 March	At 31 March
	2026	2025
	£'000	£'000
Receivables, which are included in debtors	186	29
Total included in Net Assets	186	29

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

The value of revenue that is expected to be recognised in the future related to performance obligations that are unsatisfied (or partially unsatisfied) at the end of the year is:

	At 31 March 2026 £'000	At 31 March 2025 £'000
Not later than one year	186	29
Amounts of transaction price, partially or fully unsatisfied	186	29

14. Property, plant and equipment

Movements on Balances in 2025/26

	Dwellings £'000	Other land and buildings £'000	Vehicles, plant and equipment £'000	Infrastructure £'000	Community assets £'000	Assets under construction £'000	Total property, plant and equipment £'000
Cost or valuation							
At 31 March 2025	1,080,360	155,205	15,042	4,047	921	15,724	1,271,300
Additions	49,453	16,989	596	185	90	800	68,113
Disposals	(25,988)	-	(141)	-	-	-	(26,129)
Reclassifications	1,455	8,355	215	387	-	(10,412)	-
Write out of depreciation on revaluation	(13,811)	(6,342)	-	-	-	-	(20,153)
Revaluation gains / (losses) recognised in Revaluation Reserve	(41,864)	5,673	-	-	-	-	(36,191)
Revaluation gains / (losses) recognised in surplus/deficit on provision of services	(2,186)	(2,215)	-	-	-	-	(4,401)
At 31 March 2026	1,047,417	177,665	15,711	4,620	1,012	6,113	1,252,538
Depreciation and impairments							
At 31 March 2025	-	(4,006)	(9,181)	(2,474)	(676)	-	(16,338)
Charge for the year	(15,244)	(2,836)	(1,418)	(162)	(7)	(5)	(19,673)
Disposals	1,433	-	115	-	-	-	1,548
Reclassifications	-	-	(5)	-	-	5	-
Write out of depreciation on Revaluation	13,811	6,342	-	-	-	-	20,153
At 31 March 2026	-	(501)	(10,489)	(2,636)	(683)	-	(14,309)
Balance Sheet amount as at 31 March 2024							
At 31 March 2026	1,047,417	177,164	5,222	1,984	328	6,113	1,238,229
Nature of asset holding							
Owned	1,047,417	177,122	5,222	1,984	328	6,113	1,238,187
Finance lease	-	42	-	-	-	-	42
At 31 March 2026	1,047,417	177,164	5,222	1,984	328	6,113	1,238,233

Movements on Balances in 2024/25

	Dwellings £'000	Other land and buildings £'000	Vehicles, plant and equipment £'000	Infrastructure £'000	Community assets £'000	Assets under construction £'000	Total property, plant and equipment £'000
Cost or valuation							
At 31 March 2024	1,041,582	148,075	15,732	4,015	1,343	13,643	1,224,390
Additions	39,560	3,133	560	32	-	2,083	45,368
Disposals	(22,298)	(30)	(1,249)	-	(421)	(96)	(24,094)
Reclassifications	-	(133)	-	-	-	133	-
Write out of depreciation on revaluation	(13,978)	(2,840)	-	-	-	-	(16,818)
Revaluation gains / (losses) recognised in Revaluation Reserve*	33,094	5,611	-	-	-	-	38,705
Revaluation gains / (losses) recognised in surplus/deficit on provision of services*	2,419	1,389	-	-	-	(39)	3,768
At 31 March 2025	1,080,379	155,205	15,042	4,047	921	15,724	1,271,319
Depreciation and impairments							
At 31 March 2024	-	(3,366)	(9,018)	(2,313)	(1,090)	-	(15,786)
Charge for the year	(14,614)	(3,484)	(1,413)	(162)	(7)	-	(19,680)
Disposals	637	3	1,249	-	421	-	2,310
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Write out of depreciation on Revaluation	13,978	2,840	-	-	-	-	16,818
At 31 March 2025	-	(4,006)	(9,181)	(2,474)	(676)	-	(16,338)
Balance Sheet amount as at 31 March 2025							
At 31 March 2024	1,080,379	151,199	5,861	1,573	245	15,724	1,254,982
Nature of asset holding							
Owned	1,080,379	151,155	5,861	1,573	245	15,724	1,254,938
Finance lease	-	44	-	-	-	-	44
At 31 March 2025	1,080,379	151,199	5,861	1,573	245	15,724	1,254,982

*Restated to differentiate gains/losses recognised in Revaluation Reserve and gains/losses recognised in surplus/deficit on provision of services

Capital Commitments

As at 31 March 2026, the Council is committed to a number of contracts to deliver major construction or enhancement of property, plant and equipment in future years. The major capital commitments are:

- Gracelands Complete Maintenance Services Ltd (£3.200m per year) – for housing internal works required across the borough. This contract expires in December 2027.
- Sureserve Compliance Central & British Gas Social Housing Ltd T/A PH Jones (£2.627m per year) – for gas servicing and installation in the Council's dwelling stock in Welwyn Garden City (Sureserve Compliance Central), and Hatfield and surrounding areas (PH Jones). These contracts expire in March 2028.
- Novus Property Solutions Limited (£7.500m per year) - for housing repairs required across the borough. This contract expires in March 2028.
- Equans Regeneration Limited (£7.500m per year) - for housing repairs required across the borough. This contract expires in March 2028.
- Morgan Sindall (£11.000m per year) – for housing repairs required across the borough. This contract expires in September 2032.

Revaluation

The Authority conducts a full valuation every five years of HRA assets. A full valuation for HRA assets were carried out with an effective date of 31 March 2026.

In between these five yearly valuations an annual desktop review is undertaken.

All General Fund assets were revalued on 1 April 2014. A proportion of the assets have been valued each year since and will continue to be so in future years as part of a rolling programme whereby all assets will be valued at least once every 5 years. Indexation will be applied in the intervening years where appropriate. Where indices cannot be obtained without undue cost or effort, those assets will be revalued quinquennially with a desktop revaluation in year three.

Full valuations are carried out in accordance with RICS Red Book requirements, while indexation reflects market-based movements applied in intervening periods. Although the valuation approaches differ, both are treated equally for accounting purposes under the revaluation model.

The Council uses external valuers for asset valuation.

Valuations of land and buildings were carried out in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

Valuations of fixed assets carried at current value

The following statement shows the progress of the Council's programme for the valuation of fixed assets.

	Council Dwellings	Other Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	Infra- structure	Community Assets	Assets Under Construction	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Valued at depreciated historical cost			15,711	4,620	1,012	6,113	27,456
Valued at current value in:							
2025/26 (31 March 2026)	1,047,417	167,717					1,215,134
2024/25 (31 March 2025)		6,613					6,613
2023/24 (31 March 2024)		1,413					1,413
2022/23 (31 March 2023)							-
2021/22 (31 March 2022)		1,923					1,923
Total	1,047,417	177,665	15,711	4,620	1,012	6,113	1,252,538

15. Investment Property

The authority does not hold any investment property under operating leases.

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

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Rental income from investment property	(393)	(406)
Direct operating expenses and overheads	55	37
Net (gains)/ losses from fair value adjustment	-	(380)
Net (gain) / loss	(338)	(748)

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

The Authority has no contractual obligation to purchase, construct or develop investment property or repairs, maintenance or enhancement.

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

	2025/26	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Balance at start of the year	4,900	4,520
Net gains / (losses) from fair value adjustment	-	380
Balance at end of the year	4,900	4,900

15.1 Fair Value Hierarchy

Details of the authority's investment properties and information about the fair value hierarchy are as follows:

		Fair Value as at 31 March 2026	Fair Value as at 31 March 2025
		£'000	£'000
Commercial Units	Other significant observable inputs (Level 2)	4,900	4,900

15.2 Transfers between Levels of the Fair Value Hierarchy

There were no transfers between levels 1, 2, or 3 during the year.

15.3 Valuation Techniques used to Determine Level for Investment Properties Significant Observable Inputs – Level 2

The fair value for the investment properties (at market rents) has been based on the market approach using current market conditions and recent sale prices and other relevant information for similar assets in the local authority area. Market conditions are such that similar properties

are purchased and sold and the levels of observable inputs are significant, leading to the properties being categorised at Level 2 in the fair value hierarchy.

15.4 Highest and Best Use of Investment Properties

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

15.5 Valuation Techniques

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

15.6 Valuation Process for Investment Properties

The fair value of the authority's investment property is measured annually at each reporting date. All valuations are carried out externally, in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. The authority's valuers work closely with finance officers, who report directly to the Executive Director (Finance and Transformation) on a regular basis regarding all valuation matters.

16. Intangible Assets

	2025/2026 £'000	2024/2025 £'000
Balance at 1 April		
Gross carrying amounts	2,198	4,117
Accumulated amortisation	(1,006)	(3,003)
Net carrying amount at start of year	1,192	1,114
Additions:		
- Internal development	0	0
- Purchases	0	258
- Acquired through business combinations	0	0
Other disposals	0	(3)
Amortisation for the period	(192)	(176)
Other changes	0	0
Net carrying amount at end of year	1,000	1,192
Comprising:		
- Gross carrying amounts	2,198	2,198
- Accumulated amortisation	(1,198)	(1,006)
Balance at 31 March	1,000	1,192

17. Financial instruments

17.1 Financial Instruments - Classifications

A financial instrument is a contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Non-exchange transactions, such as those relating to taxes, benefits and government grants, do not give rise to financial instruments.

Financial Liabilities

A financial liability is an obligation to transfer economic benefits controlled by the Council and can be represented by a contractual obligation to deliver cash or financial assets or an obligation to exchange financial assets and liabilities with another entity that is potentially unfavourable to the Council.

The majority of the Council's financial liabilities held during the year are measured at amortised cost and comprise:

- long-term loans from the Public Works Loan Board,
- short-term loans from other local authorities
- lease payables,
- trade payables for goods and services received.

Financial Assets

A financial asset is a right to future economic benefits controlled by the Council that is represented by cash, equity instruments or a contractual right to receive cash or other financial assets or a right to exchange financial assets and liabilities with another entity that is potentially favourable to the Council. The financial assets held by the Council during the year are accounted for under the following classifications:

- Amortised cost (where cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest and the Council's business model is to collect those cash flows) comprising:
 - cash in hand,
 - bank current, notice and deposit accounts,
 - deposits with the UK government and other local authorities,
 - trade receivables for goods and services provided.
- Fair value through profit and loss (all other financial assets) comprising:
 - money market funds managed by five fund managers,
 - a property fund managed by CCLA fund managers.

Financial assets held at amortised cost are shown net of a loss allowance reflecting the statistical likelihood that the borrower or debtor will be unable to meet their contractual commitments to the Council.

17.2 Financial Instruments - Balances

The financial assets and liabilities disclosed in the Balance Sheet are analysed across the following categories:

Financial Assets

	Long term		Current	
	31 March 2026 £'000	31 March 2025 £'000	31 March 2026 £'000	31 March 2025 £'000
Amortised Cost:				
Principal at amortised cost	-	-	6,000	-
Accrued interest	-	-	94	-
Loss Allowance	-	-	-	-
Fair value through Profit and Loss:				
Fair value	3,605	3,606	18,000	14,176
Accrued interest	-	-	102	106
Total investments	3,605	3,606	24,196	14,282
Amortised Cost:				
Cash (including bank accounts)			(1,365)	(793)
Cash equivalents at amortised cost			-	-
Accrued interest			-	-
Total cash and cash equivalents			(1,365)	(793)
Amortised Cost:				
Loans made to subsidiaries				
Accrued interest				
Loss Allowance				
Lease receivables	101	101		
Trade receivables	4,470	4,309	1,686	1,950
Total debtors *	4,571	4,410	1,686	1,950

* - The debtors lines on the Balance Sheet include £16,268k (2025: £16,276k) short term debtors that do not meet the definition of a financial asset as they relate to non-exchange transactions.

Financial Liabilities

	Long term		Current	
	31 March 2026	31 March 2025	31 March 2026	31 March 2025
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Loans at amortised cost:				
Accrued interest at amortised cost			2,355	1,547
Principal sum borrowed - PWLB loan	241,278	212,163	41,186	29,419
Short term Loan				
Total borrowing **	241,278	212,163	43,541	30,966
Liabilities at amortised cost:				
Trade payables			30,289	29,911
Finance lease liabilities	2,103	2,103		
Total creditors ***	2,103	2,103	30,289	29,911

** - The total short-term borrowing includes £2.36m (2025: £1.55m) representing accrued interest and £41.19m (2025: £29.42m) principal repayments that are due within 12 months on long term borrowings.

*** - The creditors lines on the Balance Sheet include £11.757k (2025: £13.632k) short term creditors that do not meet the definition of a financial liability as they relate to non-exchange transactions.

17.3 Financial Instruments - Gains and Losses

The gains and losses recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in relation to financial instruments consist of the following:

2025/26

	Financial liabilities		Financial assets	
	Amortised cost	Amortised Cost	FVPL	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Interest expense	8,805	-	-	8,805
Fees paid	25	-	23	48
Total expense in (surplus) / deficit on provision of services	8,830	-	23	8,853
Interest income	-	(1,402)	(191)	(1,593)
Total income in (surplus) / deficit on provision of services	-	(1,402)	(191)	(1,593)
Net (gain) / loss for the year	8,830	(1,402)	(168)	7,260

2024/25

	Financial liabilities	Financial assets		Total
	Amortised cost	Amortised Cost	FVPL	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Interest expense	7,154	-	-	7,154
Fees paid	8	-	22	30
Total expense in (surplus) / deficit on provision of services	7,162	-	22	7,184
Interest income	-	(1,421)	(205)	(1,626)
Total income in (surplus) / deficit on provision of services	-	(1,421)	(205)	(1,626)
Net (gain) / loss for the year	7,162	(1,421)	(183)	5,558

17.4 Financial Instruments - Fair Values

Financial instruments, except those classified at amortised cost, are carried in the Balance Sheet at fair value. For most assets, including bonds, and shares in money market funds and other pooled funds, the fair value is taken from the market price.

Financial instruments classified at amortised cost are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost. Their fair values have been estimated by calculating the net present value of the remaining contractual cash flows at 31 March 2026 using the following methods and assumptions:

- Loans borrowed by the Council have been valued by discounting the contractual cash flows over the whole life of the instrument at the appropriate market rate for local authority loans,
- The fair values of other long-term loans and investments have been discounted at the market rates for similar instruments with similar remaining terms to maturity on 31 March,
- The fair values of finance lease assets and liabilities have been calculated by discounting the contractual cash flows,
- No early repayment or impairment is recognised for any financial instrument,
- The fair value of short-term instruments, including trade payables and receivables, is assumed to approximate to the carrying amount given the low and stable interest rate environment.

Fair values are shown in the table below, split by their level in the fair value hierarchy:

- Level 1 – fair value is only derived from quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities, e.g., bond prices,
- Level 2 – fair value is calculated from inputs other than quoted prices in active markets that are observable for the asset or liability, e.g., interest rates or yields for similar instruments, or quoted prices in inactive markets.

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

- Level 3 – fair value is determined using unobservable inputs, e.g., non-market data such as cash flow forecasts or estimated creditworthiness.

	Fair Value Level	31 March 2026		31 March 2025	
		Balance sheet £'000	Fair value £'000	Balance sheet £'000	Fair value £'000
Financial liabilities held at amortised cost					
Loans from PWLB	2	284,819	263,456	243,129	220,881
Short term Loan	2				
Lease payables	3	2,103	2,103	2,103	2,103
Trade payables	3	30,289	30,289	29,911	29,911
Total		317,211	295,848	275,143	252,895
Total financial liabilities		317,211		275,143	
Recorded on balance sheet as:					
Short term creditors		30,289		29,911	
Short term borrowing		43,541		30,966	
Long term creditors		2,103		2,103	
Long term borrowing		241,278		212,163	
Total financial liabilities		317,211		275,143	

	Fair Value Level	31 March 2026		31 March 2025	
		Balance sheet £'000	Fair value £'000	Balance sheet £'000	Fair value £'000
Financial assets held at fair value:					
Money market funds	1	18,051	18,051	14,234	14,234
Property fund	2	3,656	3,656	3,654	3,654
Financial assets held at amortised cost:					
Corporate and covered bonds					
Short term deposits with local authorities	2	6,094	6,094	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents	2	(1,365)	(1,365)	(793)	(793)
Lease receivables	3	101	101	101	101
Trade receivables	3	6,156	6,156	6,259	6,259
Total		32,693	32,693	23,455	23,455
Total financial assets		32,693		23,455	
Recorded on balance sheet as:					
Long term debtors		4,571		4,410	
Long term investments		3,605		3,606	
Short term debtors		1,686		1,950	
Short term investments		24,196		14,282	
Cash and cash equivalents		(1,365)		(793)	
Total financial assets		32,693		23,455	

The fair value of short-term financial assets held at amortised cost is assumed to be approximate to the carrying amount.

17.5 Financial Instruments - Risks

The Council complies with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management and Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

In line with the Treasury Management Code, the Council approves a Treasury Management Strategy before the commencement of each financial year. The Strategy sets out the parameters for the management of risks associated with financial instruments. The Council also maintains Treasury Management Practices specifying the practical arrangements to be followed to manage these risks.

The Treasury Management Strategy includes an Investment Strategy in compliance with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government Guidance on Local Government Investments. This Guidance emphasises that priority is to be given to security and liquidity, rather than yield. The Council's Treasury Management Strategy and its Treasury Management Practices seek to achieve a suitable balance between risk and return or cost.

The main risks covered are:

- **Credit Risk:** The possibility that the counterparty to a financial asset will fail to meet its contractual obligations, causing a loss to the Council,
- **Liquidity Risk:** The possibility that the Council might not have the cash available to make contracted payments on time,
- **Market Risk:** The possibility that an unplanned financial loss will materialise because of changes in market variables such as interest rates or equity prices.

Credit Risk: Treasury Investments

The Council manages credit risk by ensuring that treasury investments are only placed with organisations of high credit quality as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy. These include commercial entities with a minimum long-term credit rating of A-, the UK government, other local authorities, and organisations without credit ratings upon which the Council has received independent investment advice. Recognising that credit ratings are imperfect predictors of default, the Council has regard to other measures including credit default swaps and equity prices when selecting commercial entities for investment.

A limit of £4m of the total portfolio is placed on the amount of money that can be invested with a single counterparty (other than the UK government). For unsecured investments in banks, building societies and companies, a smaller limit of £3m applies. No more than £5m in total can be invested for a period longer than one year.

The table below summarises the credit risk exposures of the Council's treasury investment portfolio by credit rating and remaining time to maturity:

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

	Long Term		Short Term	
	31 March	31 March	31 March	31 March
	2026	2025	2026	2025
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
AAA	-	-	18,051	14,234
AA-	-	-	-	-
Unrated local authorities	-	-	6,094	-
Total	-	-	24,145	14,234
Credit risk not applicable*	3,605	3,606	51	48
Total investments	3,605	3,606	24,196	14,282

* Credit risk is not applicable to the property pooled fund where the Council has no contractual right to receive any sum of money.

Loss allowances on treasury investments have been calculated by reference to historic default data published by credit rating agencies, multiplied by 110% (2025: 52%) to adjust for current and forecast economic conditions. A two-year delay in cash flows is assumed to arise in the event of default. Investments are determined to have suffered a significant increase in credit risk where they have been downgraded by three or more credit rating notches or equivalent since initial recognition, unless they retain an investment grade credit rating. They are determined to be credit-impaired when awarded a "D" credit rating or equivalent. At 31 March 2026 the loss allowance related to treasury investments was zero (2025: zero) as the only treasury investments held at that date were either with the UK local authorities where a probability of a loss is negligible, or in Money Market Funds which due to them being instant access means the probability of loss is also negligible.

17.6 Credit Risk: Trade and Lease Receivables and Contract Assets

The Council manages its risk on trade receivables by following a debt management process which includes multiple reminders, chasing and eventually taking legal action if required.

The Council's credit risk on lease receivables is mitigated by its legal ownership of the assets leased, which can be repossessed if the debtor defaults on the lease contract.

The following analysis summarises the Council's trade and lease receivables, by due date. Only those receivables meeting the definition of a financial asset are included.

Credit Risk - Trade and Lease Receivables

	At 31 March 2026		At 31 March 2025	
	Trade receivables	Lease receivables	Trade receivables	Lease receivables
Neither past due nor impaired	-	-	-	-
Past due < 90 days	914	-	905	-
Past due 91-365 days	328	-	109	-
Past due 12+ months	4,914	101	5,243	101
Total	6,156	101	6,257	101
	Gross receivable	Loss allowance	Gross receivable	Loss allowance
Sundry Debtors	6,257	772	6,358	1,044

Loss allowances on trade receivables have been calculated on the total of debts over 90 days which are not being repaid according to an agreed instalment plan or are owed by UK central or Local Government. Although these amounts have been written off to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, steps are still being taken to collect the sums owing under the debt management procedure.

17.7 Liquidity Risk

The Council has ready access to borrowing at favourable rates from the Public Works Loan Board and other local authorities, and at higher rates from banks and building societies. There is no perceived risk that the Council will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments. It is however exposed to the risk that it will need to refinance a significant proportion of its borrowing at a time of unfavourably high interest rates. This risk is managed by maintaining a spread of fixed rate loans and setting percentage of portfolio limits on maturity periods annually as part of the Treasury Management Strategy. The Council holds £18m (2025: £14.176m) of liquid financial assets which can be withdrawn or sold at short notice if required to meet cashflows on financial liabilities.

The maturity analysis of financial instruments is as follows:

Time to maturity (years)	31 March 2026			31 March 2025		
	Borrowing £'000	Investments £'000	Net £'000	Borrowing £'000	Investments £'000	Net £'000
Not over 1	41,186	(24,000)	17,186	29,419	(14,176)	15,243
Over 1 but not over 2	33,685	-	33,685	39,219	-	39,219
Over 2 but not over 5	82,057	-	82,057	62,756	-	62,756
Over 5 but not over 10	85,729	-	85,729	70,895	-	70,895
Over 10 but not over 20	38,457	-	38,457	39,293	-	39,293
Over 20 but not over 50	1,350	-	1,350	-	-	-
Uncertain date*	-	(3,605)	(3,605)	-	(3,606)	(3,606)
Total	282,464	(27,605)	254,859	241,582	(17,782)	223,800

* - The Council has a holding in the CCLA property fund, which is held for as a strategic investment, therefore the maturity date is uncertain.

17.8 Market risk

Interest rate risk

The Council is exposed to risk in terms of its exposure to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. Movements in interest rates have a complex impact on the authority. For instance, a rise in interest rates would have the following effects:

- borrowings at fixed rates – the fair value of the liabilities will fall,
- investments at variable rates – the interest income will rise,
- investments at fixed rates – the fair value of the assets will fall.

Investments measured at amortised cost and loans borrowed are not carried at fair value, so changes in their fair value will have no impact on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. All borrowings are at fixed rates, however, changes in interest receivable on variable rate investments will be posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services.

Movements in the fair value of fixed rate investments measured at fair value will be reflected in

Other Comprehensive Income or the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services as appropriate.

If all interest rates had been 1% higher (with all other variables held constant) the financial effect would be:

	31 March 2026	31 March 2025
	£'000	£'000
Increase in interest receivable on variable rate investments	157	130
Impact on Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	157	130
Decrease in fair value of loans and investments at amortised cost*	(11)	-
Decrease in fair value of fixed rate borrowing*	(11,147)	(9,099)

* - No impact on Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

The approximate impact of a 1% fall in interest rates would be as above but with the movements being reversed.

Price risk

The Council's investment in a pooled property fund is subject to the risk of falling commercial property prices. This risk is limited by the Council's maximum exposure to property investments of £4m. A 5% fall in commercial property prices at 31 March 2026 would result in a £170k (2025: £144k) charge to Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure which is then transferred to Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve. The government has extended the statutory override for existing pooled investments until 1 April 2029, which reverses out the impacts to the income and expenditure account through the movement in reserves statement.

18. Debtors

An analysis of long-term debtors is shown below:

Long-term debtors	Balance at 31 March 2026 £'000	Balance at 31 March 2025 £'000
Other entities and individuals	4,571	4,409
Total long-term debtors	4,571	4,409

An analysis of short-term debtors is shown below, offset by the bad debt provisions held:

Short-term debtors	Balance at 31 March 2026 £'000	Balance at 31 March 2025 £'000
Government departments	1,216	3,264
Other local authorities	6,984	5,652
Other entities and individuals	8,664	8,462
Prepayments	1,091	814
Total short-term debtors	17,956	18,192

The following bad debt impairment allowances have been included in the above table:

Bad Debt Impairment Allowances	Balance at 31 March 2026 £'000	Balance at 31 March 2025 £'000
Housing Rents and Garages	(3,518)	(3,447)
Council Tax/Summons Fees	(1,395)	(1,303)
Business Rates/Summons Fees	(735)	(483)
Benefits Overpayments	(1,341)	(1,479)
Total Bad Debt Provisions	(6,989)	(6,712)

19. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	Balance at 31 March 2026 £'000	Balance at 31 March 2025 £'000
Bank current accounts and Cash held*	(1,365)	(793)
Total cash and cash equivalents	(1,365)	(793)

* - Negative current account balances show an overdraft.

20. Creditors

An analysis of creditors is shown below:

	Balance at 31 March 2026	Balance at 31 March 2025
	£'000	£'000
Government departments	4,695	9,207
Other local authorities	1,706	2,117
Other entities and individuals		
- current creditors	35,646	32,135
Total	42,046	43,459

21. Provisions

The total value of specific provisions held at 31 March 2026 is:

	Claims provision	NNDR Provision for Appeals	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance at 31 March 2025	(1,544)	(2,318)	(3,862)
Additional provisions made	(207)	(5,834)	(6,041)
Amounts used	100	3,574	3,674
Unused amounts reversed	304	2,466	2,770
Balance at 31 March 2026	(1,347)	(2,112)	(3,458)

NDR Provision for Appeals

Business Rate Payers are entitled to appeal against the rateable value allocated to it by the Valuation Office Agency. From 1 April 2013 onwards, in the event that the appeal is successful, the Council is responsible for repaying its share of Business Rate income to the ratepayer. This provision has been made based on the expected outcome of the appeals outstanding with the VOA as at 31 March 2026 and other available data such as Government statistics.

Claims provision

The Council is self-insured up to specific limits for various categories of risk. Any claims beyond these specific limits are insured externally. The level of provision made is adequate to meet the Council's estimated known liabilities under its self-insurance arrangements for all outstanding claims.

Following the demise of Municipal Mutual Insurance Ltd, the MMI Scheme of Arrangement was established in January 1994 to offer financial provision for claim settlements under policies incepted with MMI. This Council paid £50,000 into the scheme, under the proviso that should a solvent run-off not be achieved, any payments made on our behalf can be clawed back, less the £50,000.

The directors of MMI “triggered” MMI’s Scheme of Arrangement on 13th November 2012. The Scheme provides that following the occurrence of a Trigger Event, a Levy may be imposed on all those Scheme Creditors who have been paid an amount in respect of Established Scheme Liabilities which exceed £50,000 in aggregate. Payments made after the imposition of the Levy to Scheme Creditors will be made at a reduced rate.

After 13th November 2012 a review was carried out of the assets and liabilities of MMI, to determine whether a Levy on Scheme Creditors was required. It was subsequently concluded that a Levy of 15% be imposed and a charge of £62,984 was made in February 2014.

The Scheme requires a review of the Levy rate at least once every 12 months and includes provisions for the rate to be adjusted up or down, as the liability trends evolve. Due to the nature of many of the claims the projections are subject to substantial uncertainty. An additional levy of 10% was therefore imposed on 1 April 2016 and £42,118 paid. As the levy has been imposed twice, the decision was taken at the time to provide for the full remaining clawback liability.

As of 31 March 2026, the total amount liable to claw back is £363k. This issue is likely to run for many years before final resolution is achieved.

The claims provision also includes provision for HRA related claims.

22 Unusable Reserves

22.1 Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Authority arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment. The balance is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

- Re-valued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost,
- Used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation, or
- Disposed of and the gains are realised.

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

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Balance at 1 April	(450,802)	(419,630)
Upward Revaluation of assets	(11,982)	(54,215)
Downward Revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the surplus deficit on the provision of service	48,173	15,604
Difference between fair value depreciation and historic cost	6,395	6,162
Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	2,644	2,558
Amounts written off to the Capital Adjustment Account	-	(1,281)
Balance at 31 March	(405,573)	(450,802)

22.2 Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve

The Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve is made up of the accumulated gains and losses made from the changes in the value of the investments held at Fair Value through Profit & Loss. The balance is reduced when investments with accumulated gains are revalued downwards or impaired, or when the investment is disposed of and the gains are realised.

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Balance at 1 April	403	471
Revaluation of investments not charged to the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	(68)
Balance at 31 March	403	403

22.3 Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions. The Account is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement as depreciation; impairment losses and amortisation are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (with reconciling postings from the Revaluation Reserve to convert fair value figures to a historical cost basis). The Account is credited with the amounts set aside by the Authority as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and enhancement.

The Account contains accumulated gains and losses on Investment Properties that have yet to be consumed by the Authority. 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. Note 7 provides details of the source of all the transactions posted to the Account, apart from those involving the Revaluation Reserve.

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

	2025/2026 £000	2024/2025 £000
Balance at 1 April	(503,804)	(497,324)
Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:		
Charges for depreciation and impairment of non-current assets	19,679	19,686
Revaluation gains / (losses) on Property, Plant and Equipment	4,401	(3,862)
Amortisation of intangible assets	192	176
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	490	959
Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain / loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	24,598	21,692
Transfers from Revaluation Reserve on disposal of assets	(2,644)	(2,558)
	46,716	36,094
Adjusting amounts written out of the Revaluation Reserve	(6,395)	(4,881)
Net written out amount of the cost of non-current assets consumed in the year	40,321	31,213
Capital financing applied in the year:		
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	(8,437)	(9,106)
Use of the Major Repairs Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	(15,382)	(14,773)
Capital grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	(2,450)	(2,216)
Application of grants to capital financing from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	(490)	(959)
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment charged against the General Fund balances	(1,017)	(1,038)
Capital expenditure charged against the HRA balances	(4,088)	(9,220)
Total capital financing applied in year	(31,865)	(37,312)
Movements in the market value of Investment Properties and Assets Held For Sale debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	-	(380)
	(31,865)	(37,692)
Balance at 31 March	(495,348)	(503,803)

22.4 Pension Reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Authority accounts for post-employment benefits in the

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Authority makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pay any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Authority has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding has been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

The Pension Reserve reflects the amounts recorded in the IAS19 report regarding the position of the pension fund. Although The Code suggests that the post-employment benefit cost should also be recorded in the pension reserve the Council have accounted for the costs of termination in the Employment reserve to enable the pension fund reserve to continue to be consistent with the IAS19 report on pension liabilities.

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Balance at 1 April	24,356	21,908
Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability	(22,991)	8,174
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	3,389	(1,359)
Employers' pensions contributions	(4,754)	(4,367)
Balance at 31 March	-	24,356

22.5 Collection Fund Adjustment Account

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

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Balance at 1 April	(1,463)	3,013
Amount by which council tax and non-domestic rating income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from council tax and non-domestic rating income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	2,635	(4,475)
Balance at 31 March	1,173	(1,463)

23 Members Allowances

The Authority paid the following amounts to members of the council during the year.

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Basic allowance	309	303
Special responsibility allowance	145	142
Travelling and subsistence	1	1
Total	456	446

24 Officers Remuneration

The Accounts and Audit Regulations contain a legal requirement for the accounts to disclose remuneration of senior employees. In particular, senior employees whose salary is £50,000 or more per year but less than £150,000 are required to be listed individually by way of job title and this is shown in the following table. The Council has no employees with a salary greater than £150,000.

Senior officers' remuneration –

2025/26

Post Title	Note	Salary £'000	Compensation for loss of office £'000	Pension contributions £'000	Total remuneration including pension contributions £'000
Chief Executive		169	-	33	202
Executive Director (Finance and Transformation) (Section 151 Officer)		127	-	25	152
Executive Director (Resident Services and Climate Change)		127	-	25	152
Executive Director (Place)		121	-	24	145
Assistant Director (Legal and Governance) (Monitoring Officer)		97	-	19	116
Total		641	-	126	767

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

2024/25

Post Title	Note	Compensation			Total remuneration including pension contributions
		Salary	for loss of office	Pension contributions	
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive		149	-	29	178
Executive Director (Finance and Transformation) (Section 151 Officer)		112	-	22	134
Executive Director (Resident Services and Climate Change)		107	-	21	128
Executive Director (Place)	1	46	-	9	55
Executive Director (Place)	2	24	-	5	29
Assistant Director (Legal and Governance) (Monitoring Officer)	3	17	22	1	40
Assistant Director (Legal and Governance) (Monitoring Officer)	4	36	-	7	43
Legal Services Manager	5	32	-	6	38
Total		523	22	100	645

Note 1: The previous Executive Director (Place) left the council on 08/09/24. The annualised salary for this post was £109,387

Note 2: The current Executive Director (Place) started in this position on 07/01/25. The annualised salary for this post is £103,006

Note 3: The previous Assistant Director (Legal and Governance) left the council on 21/04/24. The annualised salary for this post was £76,733

Note 4: The current Assistant Director (Legal and Governance) started in this position on 01/11/24. The annualised salary for this post is £87,129

Note 5: The Assistant Director (Legal and Governance) role fulfills the statutory requirement of Monitoring Officer. The annualised salary for this post was £72,431. The Legal Services Manager fulfilled this role between 20/05/24 to 31/10/24.

Officers' remuneration

The number of employees – including senior officers shown in the note above - whose remuneration, excluding employer's pension contributions, was £50,000 or more is shown below in bands of £5,000. Remuneration includes all amounts paid to recipients including those in respect of redundancy and severance pay in the financial year.

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	Number of employees	
£50,000 - £54,999	20	20
£55,000 - £59,999	7	10
£60,000 - £64,999	6	5
£65,000 - £69,999	5	1
£70,000 - £74,999	2	4
£75,000 - £79,999	1	2
£80,000 - £84,999	3	2
£85,000 - £89,999	2	0
£90,000 - £94,999	2	0
£95,000 - £99,999	2	0
£105,000 - £109,999	0	1
£110,000 - £114,999	0	1
£120,000 - £124,999	1	0
£125,000 - £129,999	2	0
£145,000 - £149,999	0	1
£165,000 - £169,999	1	0
Total	54	47

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

(a) Exit package cost band (including special payments)	(b) Number of compulsory redundancies		(c) Number of other departures agreed		(d) Total number of exit packages by cost band (b)+(c)		(e) Total cost of exit packages for each band	
	2025/2026	2024/2025	2025/2026	2024/2025	2025/2026	2024/2025	2025/2026	2024/2025
							£'000	£'000
£0 - £20,000	2	0	3	5	5	5	48	8
£20,001 - £40,000	2	0	0	1	2	1	57	22
£40,001 - £60,000	1	0	0	0	1	0	57	0
£60,001 - £80,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
£80,001 - £100,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
£100,001 - £150,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	0	3	6	8	6	162	30

Termination Benefits

The table above includes amounts paid to the pension fund under statutory provision amounting to £0k in 2025/26. There were payments of £0k made in 2024/25.

25 External audit costs

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

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Fees payable with regard to external audit services carried out by the appointed auditor*	169	241
Audit-related assurance services (Housing Benefit)**	277	114
Fees payable for the certification of grant claims and returns***	10	5
Total	457	360

*The amount disclosed above is made up of current auditor KPMG's baseline audit fee for 2025/26 (£190k), KPMG scale fee variation 24/25 (£9.2k) less a credit for lower than expected prior year audit fees (£30k).

**The amount disclosed above is made up of current auditor KPMG's Housing Benefit Assurance Process fees for 2022/23 (£78k), 2023/24 (£125k), 2024/25 (£39k) and 2025/26 (£35k).

***The amount disclosed above is made up of Pooling audit fees for 2024/25 (£2.2k) and 2025/26 (£7.2k).

26 Grant Income

The Authority credited grants, contributions and donations to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Grants credited to taxation and non-specific income and expenditure are detailed in Note 11.

The Authority credited the following grants, contributions and donations to the services:

	2025/2026 £'000	2024/2025 £'000
Credited to Services		
Housing Benefit Administration Grant	(318)	(316)
Housing Benefit Subsidy Grant	(23,327)	(27,263)
Other Housing General Fund	(1,314)	(1,159)
Other Grant Income	(1,075)	(1,275)
Total	(26,034)	(30,013)

Capital Grants and Contributions Received in Advance

The Authority has received contributions that have yet to be recognised as income as they have conditions attached to them that may require the return of balances. The balances at the year-end are as follows:

	31 March 2026 £'000	31 March 2025 £'000
Capital Contributions Received in Advance		
Developers Contributions	(37)	(36)
Total	(37)	(36)

27 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. Disclosures of these transactions allow readers to assess the extent to which the Council might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party's ability to bargain freely with the Council.

Central Government has significant influence over the general operations of the Council – it is responsible for providing the statutory framework, within which the Council operates, provides the majority of its funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Council has with other parties (e.g., housing benefits). Grants received from government departments are set out in Note 26 (Grant Income) and Note 11 (Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income and Expenditure). Capital grants received in advance at 31 March 2026 are shown in Note 26.

Members of the Council have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies. The total of members' allowances paid in 2025/26 is shown in Note 23. During 2025/26 payments totalling £309k have been given to voluntary organisations where councillors have declared an involvement. In all instances, the payments were made with proper consideration of

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

The organisations involved are as follows:

Organisation	2025/2026				2024/2025			
	Value of transactions	Amount owed by/(to) the Council	Nature of transactions	Number of Councillors/Senior Officers declaring a related party	Value of transactions	Amount owed by/(to) the Council	Nature of transactions	Number of Councillors/Senior Officers declaring a related party
	£'000	£'000			£'000	£'000		
Breaks Manor Youth and Community Centre	1	0	Building hire	1	1	0	Building hire	0
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	293	0	Grants	1	256	0	Grants	2
Friends of Danesbury Fernery	1	0	Grants	1	0	0	Grants	0
Hertfordshire Building Control Limited	54	65	Building control	1	33	(84)	Building control	1
Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust	6	0	Annual contribution	2	6	0	Annual contribution	1
Ludwick Family Club	0	34	Building hire	0	-3	-4	Building hire	4
Sporting Inspirations	8	0	Grants	0	6	0	Grants	1
Women's Refuge	0	0	Grants	2	20	0	Grants	3
Total	363	99		8	320	(88)		12

Broste Rivers Limited

The council partnered with seven other local authorities across Hertfordshire to create a fully integrated building control service (Hertfordshire Building Control Limited which is part of the Broste Rivers Limited group) which was launched in August 2016; the council holds 12.5% share of Broste Rivers Limited (share capital £1) and is represented on the board. The company aims to provide a more flexible and efficient response to building control issues across the county. Control is shared equally among the eight partners and the company is operating out of Campus East, Welwyn Garden City. In 2025/26 the proportionate share of Broste Rivers Limited profit was £15k (in 2024/25 this was a profit of £0.4k). In August 2016 the council made a loan to Broste Rivers Limited of £107k. The first repayment has now been made and the remaining balance is £82k which is held in Long Term Debtors (other loans) on the balance sheet.

28 Capital expenditure and financing

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	306,979	297,821
Capital Investment		
Property, plant and equipment assets	67,838	45,272
Community assets	90	-
Infrastructure assets	185	-
Intangible assets	-	258
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute	490	959
Sources of finance		
Capital receipts and Reserves	(23,819)	(23,879)
Government grants and other contributions	(2,952)	(3,189)
Revenue Contribution to Capital	(4,088)	(9,221)
Statutory Provision for the repayment of debt	(1,017)	(1,038)
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	343,706	306,979
Explanation of movements in year		
Increase / (Decrease) in underlying need to borrowing (unsupported by government financial assistance)	36,726	9,161
Increase / (decrease) in capital financing requirement	36,726	9,161

29 Leases

29.1 Authority as Lessee

Finance leases

The Council has acquired two properties under finance leases: Weltech Business Centre and Chantry Court. The assets acquired under these leases are carried as Property, Plant and Equipment in the Balance Sheet at the following net amounts:

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

	31 March 2026	31 March 2025
	£'000	£'000
Other land and buildings	90	63
	90	63

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

	31 March 2026	31 March 2025
	£'000	£'000
Finance lease liabilities (net present value of minimum lease payments):		
- Non current	2,103	2,103
Finance costs payable in future years	14,216	14,361
Minimum lease payments	16,319	16,464

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

	Minimum lease payments		Finance lease liabilities	
	31 March 2026	31 March 2025	31 March 2026	31 March 2025
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Not later than one year	145	145	-	-
Later than one year and not later than five years	579	579	-	-
Later than five years	15,595	15,740	2,103	2,103
Total	16,319	16,464	2,103	2,103

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

29.2 Authority as Lessor

Finance leases

The Authority has leased out property at the Gosling Sports Centre on a finance lease with a remaining term of 106 years. The Authority has a gross investment in the lease, made up of the minimum lease payments expected to be received over the remaining term.

The minimum lease payments comprise settlement of the long-term debtor for the interest in the property acquired by the lessee and finance income that will be earned by the Authority in future years whilst the debtor remains outstanding. The gross investment is made up of the following amounts:

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

	31 March 2026	31 March 2025
	£'000	£'000
Finance lease debtor (net present value of minimum lease payments):		
- Non current	101	101
Unearned finance income	599	605
Gross investment in the lease	700	706

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

	Gross Investment in the Lease 31 March 2026	Minimum Lease Payments 31 March 2026	Gross Investment in the Lease 31 March 2025	Minimum Lease Payments 31 March 2025
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Not later than one year	-	7	-	7
Later than one year and not later than five years	-	26	-	26
Later than five years	101	667	101	673
Total	101	700	101	706

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

Operating leases

The Council is a lessor of a number of properties, including town centre shops, garages and industrial units. These items are held in the balance sheet as other land and buildings within property, plant and equipment. The gross value of these properties is outlined in Note 14. The future lease payments receivable in future years are shown in the table below:

	31 March 2026	31 March 2025
	£'000	£'000
Not later than one year	5,367	4,023
Later than one year and not later than five years	12,342	9,869
Later than five years	37,163	32,616
Total	54,873	46,509

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

30 Defined Benefit Pension Scheme

30.1 Pension scheme

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

The authority participates in two post-employment schemes:

- The Local Government Pension Scheme, administered locally by Hertfordshire County Council – this is a funded defined benefit final salary scheme, meaning that the Authority 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 pension liabilities, and cash has to be generated to meet actual pension payments as they eventually fall due.

The principal risks to the authority 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 required by statute as described in the accounting policies note.

30.2 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 eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge the Authority is required to make against council tax is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of post-employment/retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement. 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:

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

	2025/2026 £'000	2024/2025 £'000
Cost of services		
Current service cost	2,113	2,481
Past service costs / (gain)	-	-
Gains and losses on curtailments / settlements	-	(4,250)
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure		
Net Interest Cost	1,276	410
Total post employment benefit charged to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services	3,389	(1,359)
Other post employment benefit charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		
Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability comprising:		
- Actuarial gains and losses arising on changes in demographic assumptions	4,474	(3,213)
- Return on plan assets (excluding the amount included in the net interest expense)	(2,674)	3,633
- Actuarial gains and losses arising on changes in financial assumptions	(6,785)	(23,164)
- Other actuarial gains and losses	(2,813)	-
- Changes in asset ceiling	(22,446)	32,265
- Other	7,253	(1,347)
Other post employment benefit charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(22,991)	8,174
Total post employment benefit charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(19,602)	6,815

Movement in Reserves Statement

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Reversal of net charges made to the surplus or deficit for the provision of services for post employment benefits in accordance with the Code	(3,389)	1,359
Actual amount charged against the General Fund balance for pensions in the year		
Employers' contributions payable to scheme	4,754	4,367
Total changes to movements in reserves	1,365	5,726

The latest actuarial report showed that the net pension fund position has changed from a surplus of £43.647m in 2024/25 to a surplus of £49.501m in 2025/26. The change is mainly due to an increase in asset values and a decrease in the value of liabilities. As pension fund assets are now greater than funded obligations, an asset ceiling has been applied as IAS19 accounting standards restrict the amount of surplus that can be disclosed.

The surplus on the Pension Fund is not fully realisable by the authority in the form of reductions in employer contributions or refunds, and therefore, disclosing the surplus without adjustment is not providing a true picture of the amount of economic benefit available to the authority.

The asset ceiling applied, as calculated by the actuary, was £49.501m. This adjusts the net closing position on the Pension Fund to a net nil position.

30.3 Pensions Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

The amount included in the Balance Sheet arising from the authority's obligation in respect of its defined benefit plans is as follows:

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Present value of the defined benefit obligation	222,715	234,458
Fair Value of Plan assets	(222,715)	(210,102)
Net liability arising from defined benefit obligation	0	24,356

30.4 Reconciliation of the Movements in the Fair Value of Scheme Assets

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Opening fair value of scheme assets	(210,102)	(191,494)
Interest Income	(12,046)	(10,990)
Remeasurement gain / (loss):		-
- The return on plan assets, excluding the amount included in the net interest expense	(2,674)	3,633
- Other	(2,813)	-
Contributions from employer	(4,754)	(4,367)
Contributions from employees into the scheme	(1,008)	(1,374)
Benefits paid	10,666	9,703
Losses / (gains) on curtailments / settlements	-	(15,213)
Other	16	-
Closing fair value of scheme assets	(222,715)	(210,102)

30.5 Reconciliation of Present Value of the Scheme Liabilities (Defined Benefit Obligation)

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Opening balance at 1 April	234,458	213,402
Current service cost	2,097	2,481
Interest Cost	9,378	9,763
Contributions from scheme participants	1,008	1,374
Remeasurement (gains) and losses:		
- Actuarial gains / losses arising from changes in demographic assumptions	4,474	(3,213)
- Actuarial gains / losses arising from changes in financial assumptions	(6,785)	(23,164)
- Changes in asset ceiling	(18,502)	33,902
- Other	7,253	(1,347)
Past service cost	-	-
Losses / (gains) on curtailments / settlements	-	10,963
Benefits paid	(10,666)	(9,703)
Closing balance at 31 March	222,715	234,458

Reconciliation of Change in Impact of Asset Ceiling

	2025/2026	2024/25
	£'000	£'000
Opening impact of asset ceiling	68,003	34,101
Interest on impact of asset ceiling	3,944	1,637
Actuarial losses/(gains)	(22,446)	32,265
Closing impact of asset ceiling	49,501	68,003

30.6 Local Government Pension Scheme assets comprised

	2025/2026 £'000		
	Quoted prices in active markets	Quoted prices not in active markets	Total
Fixed Interest Government Securities			
-UK	4,454	0	4,454
-Overseas	2,227	0	2,227
Index Linked Government Securities			
-UK	17,817	0	17,817
-Overseas	0	0	
Corporate Bonds			
-UK	4,454	0	4,454
-Overseas	6,681	0	6,681
Equities			
-UK	2,227	0	2,227
-Overseas	64,587	0	64,587
Property	0	26,726	26,726
Hedge Fund	0	11,136	11,136
Private Equity	0	17,817	17,817
Infrastructure	0	4,454	4,454
Unit trust	40,089	0	40,089
Derivatives	8,909	0	8,909
Insurance Linked Strategies	0	2,227	2,227
Private Credit	0	2,227	2,227
Cash/Temporary Investments	6,681	0	6,681
Net Current Assets			
-Debtors	0	0	0
-Creditors	0	0	0
Closing Balance as at 31 March	158,128	64,587	222,715

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

	2024/2025 £'000		
	Quoted prices in active markets	Quoted prices not in active markets	Total
Fixed Interest Government Securities			
-UK	4,202		4,202
-Overseas	2,101		2,101
Index Linked Government Securities			
-UK	21,010		21,010
-Overseas			
Corporate Bonds			
-UK	6,303		6,303
-Overseas	10,505		10,505
Equities			
-UK	2,101		2,101
-Overseas	54,627		54,627
Property		29,414	29,414
Hedge Fund		10,505	10,505
Private Equity		18,909	18,909
Infrastructure		4,202	4,202
Unit trust	37,818		37,818
Derivatives			
Insurance Linked Strategies		2,101	2,101
Private Credit		2,101	2,101
Cash/Temporary Investments	4,202		4,202
Net Current Assets			
-Debtors			
-Creditors			
Closing Balance as at 31 March	142,869	67,233	210,102

30.7 Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, etc. The Local Government Pension Scheme liabilities have been assessed by Barnett Waddingham, an independent firm of actuaries, for the County Council Fund being based on the latest full valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2025. The Council changed actuaries from Hymans Robertson to Barnett Waddingham on 1 September 2024 as part of the Hertfordshire Pension Fund change in actuary. The principal assumptions used by the actuary are shown below.

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

	2025/2026	2024/2025
Mortality assumptions:		
Longevity at 65 for current pensioners:		
Men	22.8	21.2
Women	24.6	24.1
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners:		
Men	24.3	21.9
Women	26.3	25.2
Rate of increase in pensions	2.9%	2.9%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.9%	3.9%
Rate of discounting scheme liabilities	6.1%	5.8%

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. The sensitivity analyses below have been determined based on reasonably possible changes of the assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period and assumes for each change that the assumption analysed changes while all the other assumptions remain constant. The assumptions in longevity, for example, assume that life expectancy increases or decreases for men and women. In practice, this is unlikely to occur, and changes in some of the assumptions may be interrelated. The estimations in the sensitivity analysis have followed the accounting policies for the scheme, i.e., on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method. The methods and types of assumptions used in preparing the sensitivity analysis below did not change from those used in the previous period and are before the application of an asset ceiling.

Impact on the Defined Benefit Obligation in the Scheme

	Approximate % increase to Employer Liability	Approximate monetary amount (£'000)
0.1% decrease in Real Discount Rate	1.16%	2,212
1 year increase in member life expectancy	1.15%	6,374
0.1% increase in Salary Increase Rate	1.12%	63
0.1% increase in the Pension Increase Rate	1.16%	2,283

30.8 Impact on the Authority's Cash Flows

The actuaries anticipate Employers Contributions for the period to 31 March 2027 will be approximately £2.532m.

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. Other employee benefits are accounted for using the policies as are applied to the local government pension scheme.

31 Contingent Liabilities

Guarantees

Mortgages

The Council acts as a guarantor for mortgages on equity share properties. In the event of default by the associations or the mortgagee, the Council will be liable for the debt.

Pensions

Only certain organisations can participate in the Local Government Pension Scheme. A Transferee Admission Body is usually formed when a service or function offered by a local authority is contracted out to the private sector. These bodies gain entry into the Pension Fund by entering into an admission agreement with the Administering Authority (HCC) and the Outsourcing Scheme Employer. The Outsourcing Scheme Employer (i.e. Welwyn Hatfield) must guarantee the admitted body's liabilities in respect of the pension scheme.

The guarantee means that if an admitted body fails to pay its pension obligations to the Pension Fund then the guarantor will take on those obligations, however it is a contract requirement that the admitted body provides a Bond in case of default on payment.

The Council has the following agreements with Bonds in place:

- FCC Waste Management Limited (previously Urbaser Ltd)
- Morgan Sindall Group
- Liberata

The Council does not have a Bond in place for Welwyn Hatfield Leisure Limited (novated to Greenwich Leisure Limited on 1 May 2018), or with Communities First and is therefore liable for any non-payment and deficit at the end of the schemes.

32 Contingent Assets

The Council is expected to receive a financial benefit from disposal of interests in two assets. The timing of these are uncertain but they are not expected to occur within the next 12 months. The disposal proceeds are dependent on planning consent and other conditions being met.

Housing Revenue Account Income and Expenditure Statement

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

	<i>Notes</i>	2025/2026	2024/2025
		£'000	£'000
Expenditure			
Repairs and maintenance		18,365	16,993
Supervision and management		11,236	11,840
Special services		4,089	3,404
Rent, rates, taxes and other charges		1,831	1,055
Increase/(decrease) in impairment allowance for doubtful debts		499	24
Depreciation and impairments of non-current assets	<i>H5</i>	19,928	12,354
Debt management expenses		33	33
Sums directed by the Secretary of State		56	50
IAS19 adjustments		(772)	(1,760)
Total expenditure		55,265	43,992
Income			
Dwelling rents		(59,124)	(60,110)
Non-dwelling rents		(725)	(547)
Tenants' charges for services and facilities		(2,157)	(2,231)
Leaseholders' charges for services and facilities		(872)	(1,167)
Contributions towards expenditure		(253)	(238)
Total income		(63,132)	(64,293)
Net cost of HRA services as included in the council's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		(7,868)	(20,300)
HRA share of corporate and democratic core		1,283	865
Net income from HRA services		(6,584)	(19,436)
(Gain) or loss on sale of HRA non-current assets		8,727	13,698
Interest payable and similar charges		7,555	6,405
Net Interest on the Net Defined Benefit Liability		373	118
HRA interest and investment income		(248)	(173)
Non-Specific Grants, Contributions & Other Capital		(1,845)	(1,649)
(Surplus) / Deficit for the year on HRA services		7,978	(1,037)

Movement on the Housing Revenue Account Statement

The HRA Income and Expenditure Account shows the actual financial performance for the year, measured in terms of the resources consumed and generated over the last twelve months. However, the Council is required to account for its statutory housing activity on a different accounting basis, the main differences being:

- The gain or loss on the disposal of HRA assets has to be reversed before a final balance is calculated; and
- Any impairment on HRA assets, either due to economic consumption or valuation, has to be reversed from the account before a statutory balance can be finalised,

This reconciliation statement summarises the differences between the outturn on the Income and Expenditure Account and the Housing Revenue Account Balance.

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Opening balance on HRA as at 01 April	(3,382)	(2,952)
(Surplus) / Deficit on the HRA Income and Expenditure Statement	7,978	(1,037)
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations:		
Difference between any other item of income and expenditure determined in accordance with the code and determined in accordance with statutory HRA requirements (revaluation loss)	(4,546)	2,419
Holiday pay (transferred to the Accumulated Absences Reserve)	(4)	-
Gain or loss on sale of HRA non-current assets	(8,727)	(13,698)
Non Specific Grants, Contributions & Other Capital		-
Capital Grants transferred to capital grant unapplied account	1,845	1,649
Net increase or decrease before transfers to or from reserves	(3,454)	(10,668)
Transfers to or from earmarked reserves:		
Revenue Contribution to Capital	3,411	9,138
HRA share of contributions to or from Pension Reserve	399	1,643
HRA Other Earmarked Reserves	(135)	(541)
(Increase) / Decrease in year on HRA	225	(429)

Notes to the Housing Revenue Account

H1 Housing stock numbers and values

H1.1 Number and type of dwellings in housing stock

	2025/2026 Number	2024/2025 Number
Houses and bungalows	6,175	6,229
Flats and maisonettes	2,808	2,805
Equity share	5	4
Total	8,988	9,038

H1.2 Asset values

	31 March 2026 £'000	31 March 2025 £'000
Operational assets		
Dwellings	1,047,417	1,080,360
Other land and buildings	4,077	2,740
Equipment	259	544
Non-operational assets		
Assets Under Construction	2,922	3,628
Total	1,054,676	1,087,272

H2 Vacant possession value of housing stock

The vacant possession value and balance sheet value of dwellings within the HRA show the economic cost of providing council housing at less than open market rents.

	2025/2026 £'000	2024/2025 £'000
Vacant possession value of housing stock at 1 April	2,843,052	2,740,954

H3 Analysis of movement on the major repairs reserve

This reserve was set up on the 1 April 2001 and is financed by the depreciation charge to the HRA account. The reserve may only be used for capital related expenditure on the housing stock. The movement was as follows:

	2025/2026 £'000	2024/2025 £'000
Opening balance as at 1 April	-	-
Transfer to major repairs reserve during financial year	(15,382)	(14,773)
Capital expenditure	15,382	14,773
Closing balance as at 31 March	-	-

H4 Summaries of total capital expenditure and receipts

H4.1 Summary of total capital expenditure

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Total capital expenditure in year	50,202	40,810
Financed by:		
Direct revenue funding	3,411	9,138
Grants and Contributions	2,209	1,716
Capital receipts reserve	7,880	7,952
Increase/(Decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement	21,319	7,231
Major repairs reserve	15,382	14,773
Total financing	50,202	40,810

H4.2 Summary of total capital receipts

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
House sales	15,083	7,899
Discounts recovered	128	-
Total receipts	15,211	7,899

H5 Depreciation and impairment of assets

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Depreciation:		
HRA Dwellings	15,244	14,614
Other land and buildings	57	66
Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	81	92
Revaluation Losses / (Gains):		
HRA Dwellings	2,186	(2,419)
Other land and buildings	2,360	
Total	19,928	12,354

H6 Rent arrears

	2025/2026	2024/2025
	£'000	£'000
Outstanding rent arrears at 31 March	2,497	2,128
Provision for uncollectable debts at 31 March	(2,176)	(1,813)

Collection Fund

The Collection Fund is an agent's statement that reflects the statutory obligation for billing authorities to maintain a separate collection fund. The statement shows the transactions of the billing authority in relation to the collection from taxpayers and distribution to local authorities and the government of council tax and non-domestic rates.

2025/26

	Council Tax £'000	Business Rates £'000	Total £'000
Income			
Council Tax Receivable	(103,225)	-	(103,225)
Business Rates Receivable	-	(75,466)	(75,466)
Total income	(103,225)	(75,466)	(178,690)
Expenditure			
Precepts, Demands and Shares:			
- Hertfordshire County Council	78,317	8,392	86,710
- Hertfordshire Police Authority (Council Tax only)	11,726	-	11,726
- Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council	13,213	33,569	46,782
- Central Government (Business Rates only)	-	41,962	41,962
Charges to Collection Fund:			
- Less costs of collection	-	156	156
- Less increase / (decrease) allowances for impairment	428	619	1,047
- Less increase / (decrease) provision for appeals	-	3,800	3,800
Transitional Payment Protection due	-	949	949
Contribution towards previous year (deficit) / surplus:			
- Hertfordshire County Council	(111)	(318)	(428)
- Hertfordshire Police Authority (Council Tax only)	(16)	-	(16)
- Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council	(19)	(1,271)	(1,290)
- Central Government (Business Rates only)	-	(1,588)	(1,588)
Total Expenditure	103,538	86,269	189,808
Movement on fund balance	314	6,489	6,803
Balance at beginning of year	437	(3,797)	(3,360)
Balance at end of year (surplus) / deficit	751	2,692	3,443
Shares of balance			
- Hertfordshire County Council	569	276	845
- Hertfordshire Police Authority (Council Tax only)	85	-	85
- Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council	96	1,076	1,172
- Central Government (Business Rates only)	-	1,341	1,341
	751	2,692	3,443

2024/25

	Council Tax £'000	Business Rates £'000	Total £'000
Income			
Council Tax Receivable	(97,554)	-	(97,554)
Business Rates Receivable	-	(83,690)	(83,690)
Total income	(97,554)	(83,690)	(181,245)
Expenditure			
Precepts, Demands and Shares			
- Hertfordshire County Council	73,963	8,116	82,079
- Hertfordshire Police Authority (Council Tax only)	11,013	-	11,013
- Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council	12,642	32,464	45,106
- Central Government (Business Rates only)	-	40,580	40,580
Charges to Collection Fund			
- Less costs of collection	-	155	155
- Less increase / (decrease) allowances for impairment	578	(248)	329
- Less increase / (decrease) provision for appeals	-	(3,649)	(3,649)
Transitional Payment Protection due	-	-	-
Contribution towards previous year (deficit) / surplus			
- Hertfordshire County Council	(1,964)	(427)	(2,391)
- Hertfordshire Police Authority (Council Tax only)	(291)	-	(291)
- Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council	(339)	(1,710)	(2,048)
- Central Government (Business Rates only)	-	(2,137)	(2,137)
Total Expenditure	95,601	73,144	168,745
Movement on fund balance	(1,953)	(10,546)	(12,500)
Balance at beginning of year	2,390	6,750	9,140
Balance at end of year (surplus) / deficit	437	(3,797)	(3,360)
Shares of balance			
- Hertfordshire County Council	331	(373)	(42)
- Hertfordshire Police Authority (Council Tax only)	49	-	49
- Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council	56	(1,520)	(1,464)
- Central Government (Business Rates only)	-	(1,904)	(1,904)
	437	(3,797)	(3,360)

Notes to the Collection Fund

C1 Non-domestic rates

The total non-domestic rateable value as at 31 March 2026 was £181.74m.

The national non-domestic rate multiplier for the 2025/26 year was 49.9p for small business and 55.5p for other businesses.

C2 Calculation of council tax

The tax base calculation is derived by first multiplying the estimated number of domestic properties in each tax band less exemptions by a weighting factor. This result is then reduced by a percentage to allow for losses on collection and reductions through appeals.

Band	Property number less exemptions and discounts	Factor	Band D equivalents
A	776.3	6/9	517.5
B	4,831.9	7/9	3,758.1
C	14,483.1	8/9	12,873.8
D	11,167.4	1/1	11,167.4
E	5,142.5	11/9	6,285.3
F	4,230.5	13/9	6,110.7
G	3,754.1	15/9	6,256.8
H	700.1	2/1	1,400.3
Total	45,085.8		48,369.9
	Less adjustment for Council Tax Support		(3,852.4)
	Total tax base before Collection Rate Adjustment		44,517.5
	Less adjustment for collection rates at 99.4%		99.4%
	Council tax base		44,250.4

Statement of responsibilities

The Council's responsibilities

The council is required to:

- make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this authority, that officer is the Executive Director (Finance and Transformation),
- manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of its resources and safeguard its assets,
- approve the Statement of Accounts by 30 June (for 2025/26).

The Chief Financial Officer's responsibilities

The chief financial officer is responsible for the preparation of the authority's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA / LASAAC *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom* (the Code).

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, I have:

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

I have also:

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

Chief Financial Officer's certification

I certify that the Statement of Accounts presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at the reporting date and of its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Richard Baker (CPFA)
Executive Director (Finance and Transformation)

Independent Auditors Report to the members of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

The independent auditors report will follow once the audit has been completed.

Glossary of Terms

Accounting Policies

Those principles, bases, conventions, rules and practices applied by an entity that specify how the effects of transactions and other events are to be reflected in its financial statements through:

- recognising,
- selecting measurement bases for, and
- presenting,

assets, liabilities, gains, losses and changes to reserves.

Accruals

The inclusion of income or expenditure in the accounts for the financial year in which the activity occurred rather than when the money was received or paid.

Accumulated Absences

Holiday entitlements or any other form of leave such as time off in lieu earned by employees, which has not been taken by the end of the financial year and can be carried forward to the next financial year.

Actuarial Gains and Losses

The changes in actuarial deficits or surpluses that arise because:

- events have not coincided with the assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation (experience gains and losses), or
- the actuarial assumptions have changed.

Amortisation

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

Asset

An asset is anything owned that can be given a monetary value, such as buildings, investments or cash.

- A current asset is one that will be used or cease to have material value by the end of the next financial year,
- A long term asset provides benefits for a period of more than one year.

Capital Expenditure

Expenditure on the acquisition of a fixed asset or expenditure which adds to and not merely maintains the value of an existing fixed asset. Expenditure which does not fall within this definition must be charged to a revenue account.

Capital Receipts

The proceeds from the disposal of land or other assets which can be used to finance new capital expenditure.

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

The amount the council would need to borrow to finance its capital expenditure.

Cash Equivalent

Current asset investments that are available for disposal 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 traded in an active market.

CIPFA

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy is the professional body for accountants in the public sector.

Code of Practice (the Code)

Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting sets out the arrangements required to be followed in the Statement of Accounts. It constitutes 'proper accounting practice' and is recognised as such by statute.

Collection Fund

Every billing authority (District/Borough Council) is required to maintain a Collection Fund into which is paid the Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates collected from the tax/rate payers. For Council Tax, payments are made from the fund to the precepting authorities (County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner) whilst a share of Non-Domestic Rates income is passed to central government and the County Council.

Community Assets

Assets that the local authority 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 historical buildings.

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, or
- 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.

Corporate and Democratic Core

The corporate and democratic core comprises all activities which local authorities engage in specifically because they are elected, multi-purpose authorities. The cost of these activities are thus over and above those which would be incurred by a series of independent, single-purpose, nominated bodies managing the same services. There is therefore no logical basis for apportioning these costs to services.

Creditors

Amounts owed by the council for goods and services received but not paid on 31 March.

Current Service Cost (Pensions)

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

Curtailment (Pensions)

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 closing a factory or discontinuing a segment of a 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 provided but where payment has not been received by 31 March.

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 re-valued amount of the benefits of the fixed asset that have been consumed during the period.

Consumption includes the wearing out, using up or other reduction in the useful life of a fixed asset whether arising from use, the passage 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.

Earmarked Reserve

These are funds that are set aside for a specific purpose, or a particular service, or type of service.

Estimation

The methods adopted by an entity to arrive at estimated monetary amounts, corresponding to the measurement bases selected, for assets, liabilities, gains, losses and changes to reserves.

Estimation techniques implement the measurement aspects of accounting policies. An accounting policy will specify the basis on which an item is to be measured; where there is uncertainty over the monetary amount corresponding to that basis, the amount will be arrived at by using an estimation technique. Estimation techniques include, for example:

- methods of depreciation, such as straight-line and reducing balance, applied in the context of a particular measurement basis, used to estimate the proportion of the economic benefits of a tangible fixed asset consumed in a period, or
- different methods used to estimate the proportion of debts that will not be recovered, particularly where such methods consider a population as whole rather than individual balances.

Events after the Balance Sheet Date

Events after the Balance Sheet date are those events, favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the Balance Sheet date and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue.

Exceptional Items

Material items which derive from events or transactions that fall within the ordinary activities of the authority and which need to be disclosed separately by virtue of their size or incidence to give fair presentation of the accounts.

Fair Value

The value of an asset or liability based on the current market price.

Finance Lease

A finance lease is one that transfers substantially all of the risks and rewards of ownership of a fixed asset to the lessee.

Financial Instruments

A financial instrument is any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability of another.

Going Concern

The concept that the authority will remain in operational existence for the foreseeable future, in particular that the income and expenditure accounts and Balance Sheet assume no intention to curtail significantly the scale of operations.

Government Grants

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

Heritage Assets

A heritage asset is an asset with historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that is held and maintained principally for its contribution to knowledge and culture.

International Accounting Standards (IAS) and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)

IASs are an earlier form of an international accounting standard. Since 2000 all international standards are IFRSs. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with IFRS, adapted for public sector where appropriate.

Impairment

A reduction in the value of an asset below its carrying amount on the Balance Sheet.

Infrastructure Assets

These are assets that comprise public facilities and which provide essential services and enhance the productive capacity of the economy, for example highways and footpaths.

Intangible Assets

An intangible asset is an *identifiable* non-monetary asset without physical substance (typically software).

Inventory

The amount of unused or unconsumed inventory 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, and
- finished goods.

Investment Properties

Interest in land and/or buildings:

- in respect of which construction work and development have been completed; and
- which is held for its investment potential, with any rental income being negotiated at arm's length.

Investments (Non-Pensions Fund)

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 so 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, other than those in relation to the Pensions Fund, that do not meet the above criteria should be classified as current assets.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

The minimum amount that the council must charge to the income and expenditure statement to provide for repayment of debt.

Net Book Value

The amount at which fixed assets are included in the Balance Sheet, i.e., their historical cost or current value less the cumulative amounts provided for depreciation.

Net Interest on the Net Defined Benefit Liability (Pensions)

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

Net Realisable Value

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

Non-Current Assets

Assets held by the council which yield a return for more than one year.

Operating Leases

A lease other than a finance lease.

Past Service Cost (Pensions)

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

Precepts

Sums levied by District/Borough, County and Parish Councils and police authorities on the Collection Funds of billing authorities (Districts and Boroughs) and forming part of the overall demand for Council Tax.

Prior Period Adjustments

Material adjustments applicable to prior years arising from changes in accounting policies or from the correction of fundamental errors. A fundamental error is one that is of such significance as to destroy the validity of the financial statements. They do not include normal recurring corrections or adjustments of accounting estimates made in prior years.

Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)

A government agency established to provide long term loans to local authorities to finance part of their capital expenditure.

Rateable Value

A value on all non-domestic properties subject to Non-Domestic Rates (NDR). The value is based on a notional rent that the property could be expected to yield and revaluations take place every five years.

Related Parties

A related party is a person or entity that is related to the entity that is preparing its financial statements.

A person or a close member of that person's family is related to a reporting entity if that person:

- has control or joint control over the reporting entity,
- has significant influence over the reporting entity, or

- is a member of the key management personnel of the reporting entity or of a parent of the reporting entity.

An entity is related to a reporting entity if any of the following conditions applies:

- The entity and the reporting entity are members of the same group (which means that each parent, subsidiary and fellow subsidiary is related to the others),
- One entity is an associate or joint venture of the other entity (or an associate or joint venture of a member of a group of which the other entity is a member),
- Both entities are joint ventures of the same third party,
- One entity is a joint venture of a third entity and the other entity is an associate of the third entity,
- The entity is a post-employment benefit plan for the benefit of employees of either the reporting entity or an entity related to the reporting entity. If the reporting entity is itself such a plan, the sponsoring employers are also related to the reporting entity,
- The entity is controlled or jointly controlled by the person identified,
- The person identified has significant influence over the entity or is a member of the key management personnel of the entity (or of a parent of the entity).

Related Party Transactions

A related party transaction is the transfer of resources or obligations between a reporting entity and a related party, regardless of whether a price is charged.

It should be noted that the definition of related party should be read both ways – i.e., considering the local authority as both a controller/influencer and a controlled/influenced entity.

Remeasurement on the Net Defined Benefit Liability (Pensions)

Comprises Actuarial Gains and Losses and Return on Plan Assets.

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:

- an employer's decision to terminate an employee's employment before the normal retirement date, or
- 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

The day to day running costs incurred by the Council in providing its services.

Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute (REFCUS)

Capital expenditure which does not create or add to the value of an item of property, plant or equipment belonging to the authority. For instance, capital grants given to external bodies, or loans awarded for capital purchases.

Scheme Liabilities (Pensions)

The liabilities of a defined benefit scheme for outgoings due after the valuation date. Scheme liabilities measured using the projected unit method reflects the benefits that the employer is committed to provide for service up to the valuation date.

Service Reporting Code of Practice (SeRCOP)

SeRCOP establishes proper practices with regard to consistent financial reporting for services. It is an official CIPFA statement – all local authorities in the United Kingdom are expected to adopt its mandatory requirements and detailed recommendations.

Settlement (Pensions)

An irrevocable action that relieves the employer (or the defined benefit scheme) of the primary responsibilities 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.

UK GAAP

The body of accounting standards and other guidance which make up the current set of guidance (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) followed by the local authority.

Useful Life

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