



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2023/24

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NARRATIVE REPORT

West Oxfordshire District Council

In the last decade the population of West Oxfordshire has increased by 9% to 116,300, the fastest rise in the South East but it is still the least densely populated.

The district's population is spread out over a wide area, however it is mainly concentrated in the towns of Witney (26%) and Carterton (15%). Other towns are Burford, Charlbury, Chipping Norton and Woodstock.

A third of the District lies within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with tourism playing a major role in the district's economy, attracting over four million visits and around £282.5 million to West Oxfordshire per year with destinations such as Blenheim Palace - a UNESCO world heritage site, Cotswold Wildlife Park and miles of unspoilt countryside dotted with towns and villages of honey coloured stone.

West Oxfordshire has a strong and diverse economy and one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country.

Corporate Plan Action Tracker

The Council Plan 2023-2027 was adopted in January 2023. The Plan sets out the Council's key priorities and shows how the Council intends to achieve its ambitions for supporting local communities and the delivery of local services as follows:

1. Putting residents first
2. Enabling a good quality of life for all
3. Creating a better environment for people and wildlife
4. Responding to the climate and ecological emergency
5. Working together for West Oxfordshire

Putting Residents First

West Oxfordshire District Council has been working in partnership with the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Vale of White Horse, Cherwell, South and Vale District Councils and town and parish councils to strengthen partnership working across all tiers of local government in Oxfordshire.

We have worked collaboratively to develop an Oxfordshire Councils Charter which sets out our

principles and commitments to achieve two aims: stronger partnership working and enhanced local democracy.

The Charter was endorsed by the Executive on 12th June 2024.

Enabling a Good Quality of Life For All

The Strategic Housing Project at the Council is undergoing significant developments focused on identifying and advancing innovative ideas and models for increased affordable housing. The project includes assessing the scope for investment and modelling, exploring the best route for more interventionist housing delivery, developing business cases for existing Council-owned sites, and further exploration of modular building options. This comprehensive strategy underscores the council's commitment to addressing housing challenges through proactive planning and innovative solutions.

The Council were successful in their bid for funding from the Local Authority Housing Fund to relieve pressures on short term accommodation with a longer term objective of seeing the housing used for more general affordable purposes. Collaborating with Cotsway Housing Association and Miller Homes, the Council facilitated the construction of 23 additional affordable units within the district.

A Market Towns Study was commissioned as part of the government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund Levelling Up scheme. The study recommended establishing town partnerships in order to identify detailed projects in each of the towns, for which £158,000 has been allocated to Witney Town Partnership with the agreed priorities to:

1. Develop a long term strategic plan for the Town
2. Promote the town to increase footfall

Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife

The Council has committed to the preparation of a new Local Plan covering the period up to 2041. The emerging plan is currently at the 'Regulation 18' stage of plan preparation, where views are sought on the content of the plan and different options and alternatives are considered and tested. During consultation 405 individuals and stakeholder organisations made representations with further public consultation taking place in 2024.

The Environment Agency has launched their 'Spheres of Influence' Project, for which WODC is one of three pilot areas nationally. Participation in this

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initiative will help shape local plan policies related to the water environment.

The Council is collaborating with the Wychwood Forest Trust on a funding bid for the Windrush in Witney project. This initiative aims to implement landscape scale enhancements across the Witney Floodplains area. Partnering with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), Witney Town Council (WTC), and the Wychwood Forest Trust, the project will focus on introducing grazing, enhancing floral diversity, pollarding willow trees, establishing a new volunteer group, and organising a series of community engagement and rural skills training events.

The Coronation Community Orchard Scheme seeks to facilitate the planting of trees in non woodland areas, strategically located near residential areas. The Council has secured £50,000 from the DEFRA Coronation Living Heritage Fund to support this initiative. Following the closure of the first round of applications in January 2024, six community groups have been awarded grants to commence fruit tree planting. Currently, grant claim submissions are underway. The second round of funding is slated to open in June 2024, with the goal of completing all planting activities by March 2025.

Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency

In June 2019 the Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and pledged to become a carbon neutral council by 2030. The Executive approved the Carbon Action Plan for 2030 in March 2024. A tender process has been initiated for establishing the carbon baseline, which will serve as the foundation for the new Climate Change Strategy. Nine bids have been received and are currently under evaluation, with decisions expected in April 2024.

The Council has custodianship of approximately 106 hectares of greenspace, including parks, fields, greens and public spaces within housing estates. There is a recognition of the ongoing need to enhance these areas for both wildlife and public enjoyment.

The Council's New Nature Recovery Plan aims to make these areas more vibrant and resilient ecosystems for the benefit of both wildlife and the community.

Working Together for West Oxfordshire

The Community Infrastructure Fund aims to revitalise and grow local infrastructure as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Levelling Up scheme. It offers capital grants of up to £20,000 or 50% of the project's target. The Council encourages submissions emphasising environmental sustainability, aiding vulnerable communities, and addressing exclusion

due to mental health, physical or mental disability, or financial hardship. There is a particular focus on projects for or by young people, aligning with the Council's commitment to empower young voices.

Funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Wild Oxfordshire, a charity dedicated to fostering a more natural, resilient, and biodiverse Oxfordshire, is collaborating with Officers to update a Biodiversity Toolkit. This toolkit aims to offer guidance for Town and Parish Councils interested in managing their land in nature friendly ways.

Rural England Prosperity Fund

Announced in September 2022, the government has allocated £716,216 for capital projects to provide new and improved community infrastructure and help small businesses to develop new facilities and products that will benefit the local economy. Awards of £165,000 were given to 33 successful applicants in 2023/24 from the first tranche of funding.

Publica Group (Support) Limited

Publica Group (Support) Limited ['Publica'] is wholly owned by West Oxfordshire District Council, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and Cheltenham Borough Council. It is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee with no share capital and operates with Mutual Trading Status to deliver services under contract on behalf of the Member Councils.

Publica is a Teckal company fulfilling the conditions set out in Regulation 12(4) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The Company is subject to management supervision by the Members. As such, the Company is a body governed by public law as defined in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

While Publica works closely with the Council, the company has its own board of Directors, its own Management team, and operates independently from the Council.

Following an LGA peer review at Cotswold District Council a report was commissioned from external consultants to review the appropriateness of services remaining in Publica. The report recommended that the majority of services should return to the individual Councils in two phases. Phase one, the TUPE of 270 staff (85 to West Oxfordshire) is due to be implemented on 1st November 2024 subject to the approval of the Detailed Transition Plan by full Council in July 2024.

The aim of the transition is to be more agile and to provide sharper focus on the delivery of Council priorities through direct control of services. Publica will retain a number of services where it has been

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determined that they offer the most effective delivery model i.e. Revenues & Benefits, Homelessness, ICT and Customer Services.

Ubico Ltd

Ubico Ltd was established in 2011/12 by Cheltenham Borough Council and Cotswold District Council to deliver integrated environmental services including household and commercial refuse collection.

During 2015/16 West Oxfordshire District Council became a shareholder of Ubico Ltd. The Council holds an equal 1/8th shareholding in the Company.

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

The financial impact of the new Council priorities is reflected in the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24. The Council operates a rolling 5 year MTFS which was approved by the Executive as part of the budget papers on 8th February 2023. That update reflected:

- The expected loss of £2.2m of funding through the Business Rates Reset delayed until 2026/27.
- Significant inflationary pressures in both contract costs and wages growth
- The erosion of General Fund balances to fill the funding gap.
- The re-profiling of our Investment Strategy to recognise the difficulty in bringing suitable projects to fruition exacerbated by the increased PWLB restrictions on Public Sector borrowing and the significant rise in interest rates.
- Changes in assumptions on tax base growth and inflation

The Medium Term Financial Strategy has since been revised for the Executive and the revisions shared with wider members as part of member training. It will continue to be updated regularly to forecast the current position and evaluate the impact, both negative and positive of decisions made.

The version of the Medium Term Financial Strategy published with the budget papers can be found on the Council's website within the documents of the Executive meeting of 8th February 2023.

Financial Performance

The Council's 2023/24 budget strategy assumed a contribution from General Fund balances of £0.35m. The outturn position (after transfers to earmarked reserves) was a surplus for the year of £11,215.

The full Q4 outturn report can be viewed by visiting the Council website and reading the Executive papers of 22nd July 2024.

Retained Business Rates

There is a £0.695m deficit in our retained Business Rate income for 2023/24 due to the extension of government reliefs to the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Sectors. The corresponding Section 31 compensation grant received in the year from Central Government has been moved to Earmarked Reserves to fund the repayment of the deficit on the Collection Fund in 2024/25. This deficit has been taken into account when setting the 2024/25 budget.

Capital Programme

The Council maintains a capital programme to support investment and manage its assets. The approved budget for the year was £11.69m.

In 2023/24 the Council spent £4.247m on:

Capital Investment in the year	£000
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	49
UK Rural Prosperity Fund	177
Affordable Housing	253
Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)	771
S106 Funded Projects	1,354
Community Grants	123
IT Equipment and Infrastructure	94
Chipping Norton Leisure Centre	265
Agile Working Programme	703
Ubico Fleet Replacement	334
Council Building Maintenance	86
Other Minor Schemes	38
	4,247

Financial Position

Net Assets decreased in the year by approximately £1.022m. The Council continues to maintain a strong Balance Sheet despite financial challenges.



Net Assets 22/23
£147.321m

Net Assets 23/24
£149.643m

Movement
£2.332.m

The movement is due to the downward revaluation of our Property portfolio (£0.93m), the reduction of short term borrowing (5.013m) and changes in Debtors, Creditors and Cash (£1.25m)

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Pension Liability

West Oxfordshire District Council is a member of the Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund, for which Oxfordshire County Council is the administering authority. The scheme is a defined benefit statutory scheme that is administered in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 (as amended).

At the balance sheet date the actuarial valuation had the pension fund in surplus (assets exceed liabilities).

The valuation is represented as follows:

Pension assets and liabilities	£000
Fair value of employer assets	78,970
Present value of obligations	(73,316)
Asset Ceiling Adjustment	(10,624)
Surplus / (deficit) on the pension	(4,970)

The actuarial valuation of the pension scheme shows a movement from a net deficit of £4.874m in 2022/23 to a net asset of £5.654m in 2023/24. When a pension scheme returns a net asset IAS19 requires the Council to recognise an additional liability to maintain a minimum funding level to meet all future liabilities, known as the asset ceiling. In 2023/24 the asset ceiling calculation increased the Council's pension liability by £10.624m.

The significant movement in the assets of the scheme was as a result of global economic conditions and high investment returns. Whilst the scheme is in deficit it represents the net value of what the Council owes across all future years. The Council makes contributions to cover liabilities accruing for employees that are current members.

Operational Performance and Efficiency

In December 2023 the Council decommissioned the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees – Finance and Management; Economic and Social; and Climate & Environment and replaced them with one overarching Overview and Scrutiny Committee – to monitor the Council's progress towards achieving its aims and priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy and Plan.

Service Performance is reported to Members quarterly through a set of Service Dashboards which measure a range of metrics such as the recycling rate achieved, the average caseload per Planner and planning decisions made within the target of 8 weeks of receipt, the Council Tax & Business Rates collection rates, the level of Aged Debt, the on call time and response time in Customer Services and the number of households in temporary emergency accommodation.

For more details on the year's performance please refer to the Council website and the 'Service

Performance Report 2023/2024 Quarter 4 from the Executive meeting of 12 June 2024.

Explanation of the Accounting Statements

The Statement of Accounts sets out the Council's income and expenditure for the year, and its financial position at 31 March. It comprises core and supplementary statements, together with supporting notes. The format and content of the financial statements is prescribed by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, which in turn is underpinned by International Financial Reporting Standards. A glossary of key terms and abbreviations can be found at the end of this publication.

The **Core Statements** are:

The **Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement** – this records all the Council's income and expenditure for the year. The top half of the statement provides an analysis by service area / directorate. The bottom half of the statement deals with corporate transactions and funding.

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.

Reserves are divided into "usable", which can be invested in service improvements or capital investment, and "unusable" which must be set aside for specific purposes.

The **Balance Sheet** is a 'snapshot' of the Council's assets, liabilities, cash balances and reserves as at the year-end, 31 March 2024.

The **Cash Flow Statement** shows the reason for changes in the Council's cash balances during the year, and whether that change is due to operating activities, new investment or financing activities (such as borrowing or other long term liabilities).

The **Supplementary Statements** are:

The **Collection Fund** summarises the transactions relating to council tax and business rates collection, and the redistribution of that money.

Business Rates are distributed to Central Government, Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council. Council Tax is distributed between Oxfordshire County Council, the Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, West Oxfordshire District Council and the Town & Parish Councils within the West Oxfordshire district.

The **Annual Governance Statement** which sets out the governance structures of the Council and its key internal controls.

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Facing the Challenges Ahead

2023/24 was a financially challenging year. In February 2023, the Council set a balanced budget using £350,129 of general fund reserves and the in-year quarterly reporting consistently forecast a higher figure for the use of general funds by the year end.

The final outturn position was more favourable than forecast with a contribution to reserves of £11,215. This was due to one off beneficial variances, such as treasury management investment income and reduced capital expenditure due to the lack of suitable investments resulting in savings on budgeted interest costs and below budget Minimum Revenue Provision. These events cannot be relied upon in the future.

One of our largest controllable risks continues to be the Leisure contract with our provider Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL). A very prudent income contingency and reduced income target was included in the 2023/24 budget. However, during the year fee income was invoiced at the contracted level and all but 12% had been paid by the year end. The resulting underspend also had a significantly positive impact on our year end position.

In recent months discussions have been started with GLL, to review the nature of the contract subject to a change of HMRC policy on VAT recovery. The current leisure contract expires in 2027 and is likely to change both the nature of the leisure offering in West Oxfordshire and the income return.

The Ubico waste contract, whose costs continue to rise, is another area of concern, The contract has been extended until March 2026, with an option to extend to March 2027 at the latest, and Officers are working diligently to review the efficiency and cost of this service provision going forwards.

It was a mixed year for investment Property due to voids, rent free periods and service charges. This position is in line with quarterly financial reporting but below budget, which demonstrates that the 2023/24 budget was not realistic. The 2024/25 budget setting process considered the variances in 2023/24, and the 2024/25 budget was also based on a detailed cashflow as well as including a budget for the service charges and business rates. Therefore, we should see less volatility in the quarterly reporting in 2024/25.

In October of 2020, the Council adopted an ambitious investment strategy which it hoped would help stabilise the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) from the impact of the anticipated reset of business

rates income, which has been deferred for several years, and the discontinuation of New Homes Bonus. West Oxfordshire has benefitted disproportionately from both and therefore is expected to suffer a disproportionate impact in funding levels if the government do not provide interim compensation funding to dampen the impact of these changes over the first few years. The MTFS for 2024/25 assumed that the government would provide this compensation funding, when these reforms do take place, but there is no guarantee of this.

During 2023/24 the investment strategy has proven difficult to realise with the lack of suitable investment opportunities for the Investment Recovery Programme due to high interest rates and rising costs. This, combined with slippage on some major projects such as Waste Fleet replacement, meant that the Council did not need to take out external borrowing in 2023/24. This resulted in savings on budgeted interest costs and correspondingly, without additional assets, the Minimum Revenue Provision was also below budget. This was another significant factor in the better than forecast year end position.

This does however mean that some income we had previously hoped to generate, from the Investment Recovery Programme, will also not be achieved.

Work on the Council chamber was completed during the year, and this will provide a community space which is available for local people to use. The new technology which has been installed will allow residents to watch Council meetings online, thereby making the Council more transparent and hopefully increase engagement with local democracy.

While there are challenges ahead, our relationship with key partners such as GLL and Ubico, partner Councils and other local organisations remain strong and effective. Working collaboratively is crucial to deliver on our aspirations and the priorities in the Council Plan.

While our reserves are adequate, they are not infinite. There are several key factors which impact the financial stability of the Council. Some, such as the recycling and leisure contracts, are within the control of the Council while others, such as the financial settlement and interest rate movements, the Council has no control over.

By careful financial management and doing the best possible in terms of the factors within our control, the Council can put itself in the best position to be able to withstand the adverse impact of factors beyond our control going against us.

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Recent announcements by the new Labour government do give some grounds for cautious optimism. A one year spending review will be carried out this autumn, followed by a more comprehensive multi year spending review next Spring and a commitment to hold a three year spending review every two years. It is hoped that this will give greater certainty with regards to financial reforms and funding.

The chancellor envisages that all levels of government will be run “effectively and efficiently” and we in turn hope that the Government will give us the tools to be able to do that by way of sufficient and certain funding and greater clarity with regards to the timeline for key reforms

Further information

For further information on the accounts please contact:

Madhu Richards, Director of Finance,
West Oxfordshire District Council,
Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB;

or via email at madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk

The Authority's responsibilities

The Authority is required to:

- Make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this Authority, that officer is the Chief Finance Officer.
- Manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.
- Approve the Statement of Accounts.

The Chief Finance Officer's responsibility

The Chief Finance 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, the Chief Finance Officer has:

- Selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently.
- Made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent.
- Complied with the Local Authority Code.

The Chief Finance Officer has also:

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

CERTIFICATE

I certify that the Statement of Accounts presented here gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the authority at the accounting date and of its income and expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2023.

Madhu Richards
Director of Finance and S151 Officer

Date: _____

In accordance with regulation 10(3) Accounts and Audit Regulations 2016, the statement of accounts is approved by the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council.

Cllr Carl Rylett
Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee

Date: _____

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

2022/2023					2023/2024		
Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure		Note	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure
£	£	£			£	£	£
*Restated							
1,416,516	(638,259)	778,257	Environmental and Regulatory Services		1,358,171	(598,880)	759,291
1,323,577	(207,870)	1,115,707	Finance, Human Resources & Procurement		1,126,814	(17,710)	1,109,104
2,855,798	(719,139)	2,136,659	ICT, Change and Customer Services		2,780,614	(707,156)	2,073,458
2,131,525	(969,549)	1,161,976	Land, Legal and Property Services		2,622,087	(895,765)	1,726,322
23,399,253	(22,101,685)	1,297,568	Revenues and Housing Support Services		18,488,953	(19,656,427)	(1,167,474)
1,250,980	(40,371)	1,210,609	Democratic Services		1,326,044	(84,069)	1,241,975
11,628,622	(3,557,560)	8,071,062	Environmental Services		12,717,389	(3,730,345)	8,987,044
5,210,386	(2,887,505)	2,322,881	Leisure and Communities Services		5,292,520	(3,078,464)	2,214,056
4,876,613	(3,315,384)	1,561,229	Planning and Strategic Housing Services		3,163,116	(1,488,140)	1,674,976
1,808,015	(465,323)	1,342,692	Other Retained Services		3,743,772	(1,468,653)	2,275,119
522,941	(91,067)	431,874	Covid-19 Income & Expenditure	B2A	(49,935)	130,619	80,684
56,424,226	(34,993,712)	21,430,514	Cost of Services	B1	52,569,545	(31,594,990)	20,974,555
4,424,653	(996,494)	3,428,159	Other Operating Expenditure	B3	4,622,260	(674,869)	3,947,391
2,718,795	(5,136,030)	(2,417,235)	Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	B4	721,009	(7,054,123)	(6,333,114)
0	(21,453,812)	(21,453,812)	Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	B5	0	(21,679,927)	(21,679,927)
63,567,674	(62,580,048)	987,626	(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	B1 / B2	57,912,814	(61,003,909)	(3,091,095)
		1,607,582	(Surplus) / deficit on revaluation of non current assets				242,937
		1,299,757	(Gains) / Losses on Financial Instruments at FV through				47,125
		(21,462,000)	Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability				469,000
		(18,554,661)	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				759,062
		(17,567,035)	Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				(2,332,033)

*Please refer to Annex A, Prior Period Adjustment

THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

	Note	Usable Reserves				Total Usable Reserves £	Unusable Reserves £	TOTAL RESERVES £
		General Fund - Unallocated £	General Fund - Earmarked £	Capital Receipts Reserve £	Capital Grants Unapplied £			
Balance at 1st April 2022		(12,813,345)	(17,801,003)	(6,674,464)	(11,518,508)	(48,807,321)	(80,946,883)	(129,754,204)
Movements in reserves 2022/23		(1,702,630)	1,702,630	0	0	0	0	0
Restated Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		987,626	0	0	0	987,626	(18,554,661)	(17,567,035)
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	C1	1,288,001	1,378,738	5,200,671	(1,684,802)	6,182,607	(6,182,607)	0
(Increase) / Decrease in Reserves 2022/23		572,997	3,081,367	5,200,671	(1,684,802)	7,170,233	(24,737,268)	(17,567,035)
Balance at 31 March 2023 - Restated*		(12,240,347)	(14,719,636)	(1,473,793)	(13,203,310)	(41,637,088)	(105,684,151)	(147,321,239)
Movements in reserves 2023/24		2,849,697	(2,849,697)	0	0	0	0	0
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		(3,091,095)		0	0	(3,091,095)	759,062	(2,332,033)
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	C1	230,181	0	(717,530)	868,191	380,841	(380,841)	0
(Increase) / Decrease in Reserves 2023/24		(11,217)	(2,849,697)	(717,530)	868,191	(2,710,254)	378,221	(2,332,033)
Balance at 31 March 2024		(12,251,565)	(17,569,333)	(2,191,323)	(12,335,119)	(44,347,343)	(105,305,931)	(149,653,272)

*Please refer to Annex A, Prior Period Adjustment

THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

	Note	Usable Reserves					Total Usable Reserves £	Unusable Reserves £	TOTAL RESERVES £
		General Fund - Unallocated £	General Fund - Earmarked £	Capital Receipts Reserve £	Capital Grants Unapplied £				
Balance at 1st April 2021		(12,808,751)	(19,095,758)	(6,255,744)	(7,940,560)	(46,100,813)	(66,822,333)	(112,923,146)	
Movements in reserves 2021/22		(1,294,755)	1,294,755	0	0	0	0	0	
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		(3,307,527)	0	0	0	(3,307,527)	(13,523,531)	(16,831,058)	
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	C1	4,597,687	0	(418,720)	(3,577,948)	601,019	(601,019)	0	
(Increase) / Decrease in Reserves 2021/22		(4,594)	1,294,755	(418,720)	(3,577,948)	(2,706,508)	(14,124,550)	(16,831,058)	
Balance at 31 March 2022		(12,813,345)	(17,801,003)	(6,674,464)	(11,518,508)	(48,807,321)	(80,946,883)	(129,754,204)	
Movements in reserves 2022/23		(1,702,630)	1,702,630	0	0	0	0	0	
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		987,626		0	0	987,626	(21,639,661)	(20,652,035)	
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	C1	1,288,001	1,378,738	5,200,671	(1,684,802)	6,182,607	(6,182,607)	0	
(Increase) / Decrease in Reserves 2022/23		572,997	3,081,367	5,200,671	(1,684,802)	7,170,233	(27,822,268)	(20,652,035)	
Balance at 31 March 2023		(12,240,348)	(14,719,636)	(1,473,793)	(13,203,310)	(41,637,088)	(108,769,151)	(150,406,239)	

*Please refer to Annex A, Prior Period Adjustment

BALANCE SHEET

31st March 2023		Note	31st March 2024
£			£
78,000,580	Property, Plant & Equipment	D1	75,127,761
91,084	Heritage Assets		91,084
51,305,000	Investment Property	D2	53,244,000
(0)	Intangible Assets	D3	(0)
13,375,411	Non-Current Investments	F2	13,767,762
11,882,089	Non-Current Debtors	D7	11,212,474
154,654,163	Non-Current Assets		153,443,081
64,433	Investments	F2	77,210
20,925	Inventories		16,609
13,202,483	Debtors	D4	14,799,553
7,686,021	Cash and Cash Equivalents		1,914,139
20,973,862	Current Assets		16,807,511
(14,991,598)	Creditors	D5	(12,072,629)
(5,013,041)	Short Term Borrowing		0
(1,314,063)	Creditors - s.106 balances	D5	(1,262,311)
(1,743,670)	Provisions	D6	(1,885,750)
(23,062,372)	Current Liabilities		(15,220,690)
(4,874,000)	Defined Benefit Pension Liability	F1	(4,970,000)
(370,413)	Capital Grants Receipts in Advance	B9	(406,628)
(5,244,413)	Non-Current Liabilities		(5,376,628)
147,321,240	Net Assets		149,653,274
(41,637,088)	Usable reserves		(44,347,343)
(105,684,151)	Unusable Reserves	C3	(105,305,931)
(147,321,239)	Total Reserves		(149,653,274)

*Please refer to Annex A, Prior Period Adjustment

These financial statements were certified by the Chief Finance Officer on 31st July 2024.

Madhu Richards
Director of Finance, West Oxfordshire District Council.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

	<i>Note</i>	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Net surplus or (deficit) on provision of services		(987,626)	3,091,095
Adjustments to net surplus or (deficit) on the provision of services to exclude non-cash movements	<i>E1a</i>	(10,572,052)	(3,803,312)
Adjustments for items included in the net surplus or (deficit) on the provision of services that are investing or financing activities	<i>E1b</i>	(3,034,335)	(1,784,733)
Net cash flows from Operating Activities		(14,594,013)	(2,496,950)
Investing Activities	<i>E1c</i>	(3,446,453)	1,723,876
Financing Activities	<i>E1d</i>	5,000,000	(5,000,000)
Net increase or (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(13,040,466)	(5,773,074)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		20,707,926	7,667,460
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		7,667,460	1,894,387
Comprising:			
Cash and bank current accounts		(472,539)	(220,611)
Short term investments		8,140,000	2,115,000
		7,667,461	1,894,389

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

B1. Expenditure and Funding Analysis

	2023/2024					
	Net Expenditure in CI&ES £	Adjs. between accounting and funding basis £	Transfers to /(from) GF Earmarked Reserves £	Net Exp. Chargeable to the General Fund £	Management Reporting Adjs. £	Outturn Reported to Management £
Environmental and Regulatory Services	759,291	(22,387)	0	736,904	3,327	740,231
GO Shared Services	1,109,104	(15,901)	0	1,093,203	0	1,093,203
ICT, Change and Customer Services	2,073,458	(136,794)	0	1,936,664	95,197	2,031,861
Land, Legal and Property Services	1,726,322	(553,034)	0	1,173,288	166,704	1,339,992
Revenues and Housing Support Services	(1,167,474)	(420,594)	0	(1,588,068)	423,367	(1,164,701)
Democratic Services	1,241,975	(49)	0	1,241,926	0	1,241,926
Environmental Services	8,987,044	(613,334)	0	8,373,710	333,024	8,706,734
Leisure and Communities Services	2,214,056	(2,968,532)	0	(754,476)	1,231,504	477,028
Planning and Strategic Housing Services	1,674,976	(293,557)	0	1,381,419	9,274	1,390,693
Other Retained Services	2,275,119	(100,535)	0	2,174,584	228,230	2,402,814
Covid-19 Income & Expenditure	80,684	1,032	0	81,716	0	81,716
Cost of Services	20,974,555	(5,123,685)	0	15,850,870	2,490,627	18,341,497
Other Income and Expenditure	(24,065,650)	5,353,868	2,849,697	(15,862,085)	(2,490,627)	(18,352,712)
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	(3,091,095)	230,183	2,849,697	(11,215)	0	(11,215)
Opening General Fund Balance (Unallocated) at 1 April				(12,240,347)		
(Surplus) / Deficit for the year				(11,215)		
Closing General Fund Balance (Unallocated) at 31 March				(12,251,562)		

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

	2022/2023					
	Net Expenditure in CI&ES £	Adjs. between accounting and funding basis £	Transfers to /(from) GF Earmarked Reserves £	Net Exp. Chargeable to the General Fund £	Management Reporting Adjs. £	Outturn Reported to Management £
Environmental and Regulatory Services	778,257	(193,694)	0	584,563	(14,034)	570,529
GO Shared Services	1,115,707	(135,619)	0	980,088	1,197	981,285
ICT, Change and Customer Services	2,136,659	(381,589)	0	1,755,070	138,577	1,893,647
Land, Legal and Property Services	1,161,976	(229,195)	0	932,781	156,257	1,089,038
Revenues and Housing Support Services	1,297,568	(312,398)	0	985,170	55,882	1,041,052
Democratic Services	1,210,609	(58,825)	0	1,151,784	0	1,151,784
Environmental Services	8,071,062	(489,491)	0	7,581,571	449,803	8,031,374
Leisure and Communities Services	2,322,881	(2,984,518)	0	(661,637)	1,426,647	765,010
Planning and Strategic Housing Services	1,561,229	(644,415)	0	916,814	1,040	917,854
Other Retained Services	1,342,692	377,985	0	1,720,677	275,721	1,996,398
Covid-19 Income & Expenditure	431,874	0	0	431,874	0	431,874
Cost of Services	21,430,514	(5,051,759)	0	16,378,755	2,491,091	18,869,846
Other Income and Expenditure	(20,442,888)	6,339,760	(1,702,630)	(15,805,758)	(2,491,091)	(18,296,848)
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	987,626	1,288,001	(1,702,630)	572,997	0	572,997
Opening General Fund Balance (Unallocated) at 1 April (Surplus) / Deficit for the year				(12,813,346) 572,997		
Closing General Fund Balance (Unallocated) at 31 March				(12,240,349)		

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis shows how annual expenditure is used and funded compared with the resources consumed or earned by the Council in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices as shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account. It also shows how these amounts are allocated for decision making purposes across the Council's Directorates and Services. The adjustments between these amounts are detailed below:

	2023/2024						
	Adjustments between funding and accounting basis (see MiRS Note C1)			Total adjs between funding and accounting £	Adjustments between amounts chargeable to the General Fund and Management Reporting		Total Management Reporting Adjustments £
	Capital Adjs £	Pension Adjs £	Other Adjs £		Depreciation £	Other Segment Adjs. £	
Environmental and Regulatory Services	0	22,387		22,387	0	3,327	3,327
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	0	15,901		15,901	0	0	0
ICT, Change and Customer Services	95,197	41,597		136,794	95,197	0	95,197
Land, Legal and Property Services	548,771	4,263		553,034	166,704	0	166,704
Revenues and Housing Support Services	393,589	27,005		420,594	42,211	381,156	423,367
Democratic Services	0	49		49	0	0	0
Environmental Services	431,714	181,620		613,334	318,214	14,810	333,024
Leisure and Communities Services	2,955,515	13,017		2,968,532	1,215,883	15,621	1,231,504
Planning and Strategic Housing Services	253,500	40,057		293,557	0	9,274	9,274
Other Retained Services	893,400	(792,865)		100,535	188,100	40,130	228,230
Covid-19 I&E		(1,032)		(1,032)			0
Cost of Services	5,571,686	(448,001)	0	5,123,685	2,026,309	464,318	2,490,627
Other Income and Expenditure	(4,851,212)	75,000	(577,656)	(5,353,868)	(2,026,309)	(464,318)	(2,490,627)
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	720,474	(373,001)	(577,656)	(230,183)	0	0	0

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

	2022/2023						
	Adjustments between funding and accounting basis (see MiRS Note C1)			Total adjs between funding and accounting	Adjustments between amounts chargeable to the General Fund and Management Reporting		Total Management Reporting Adjustments
	Capital Adjs	Pension Adjs	Other Adjs		Depreciation	Other Segment Adjs.	
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Environmental and Regulatory Services	0	193,694		193,694		(14,034)	(14,034)
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	1,197	134,422		135,619	1,197		1,197
ICT, Change and Customer Services	138,577	243,012		381,589	138,577		138,577
Land, Legal and Property Services	185,713	43,482		229,195	141,032	15,225	156,257
Revenues and Housing Support Services	67,430	244,968		312,398	46,566	9,316	55,882
Democratic Services	0	58,825		58,825			0
Environmental Services	480,115	9,376		489,491	480,115	(30,312)	449,803
Leisure and Communities Services	2,801,972	182,546		2,984,518	915,651	510,996	1,426,647
Planning and Strategic Housing Services	279,915	364,500		644,415	1,040		1,040
Other Retained Services	(308,160)	(69,825)		(377,985)		275,721	275,721
Cost of Services	3,646,759	1,405,000	0	5,051,759	1,724,178	766,913	2,491,091
Other Income and Expenditure	(2,645,229)	0	(3,694,531)	(6,339,760)	(1,724,178)	(766,913)	(2,491,091)
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	1,001,530	1,405,000	(3,694,531)	(1,288,001)	0	0	0

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

Capital Adjustments

This column adjusts for depreciation and impairment, revaluations gains and losses in service lines and for transfers of income / net value of assets written off on disposals in Other Operating Income and Expenditure. Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income is credited with capital grants receivable in the year without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied in the year.

Pension Adjustments

This column removes the impact of IAS19 Employee Benefits. For services, this removes current or past service costs and replaces them with the actual employer pension contributions payable. In Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure, the net interest on the net defined benefit liability is removed.

Other Adjustments

This adjustment represents the difference between the amounts chargeable under statutory regulations for Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates and the income recognised under generally accepted accounting practices in the Code. This is a timing difference as any difference will be brought forward in future Surpluses or Deficits on the Collection Fund.

B2. Expenditure and Income Analysed by Nature

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Expenditure		
Employee benefits expenses	2,323,225	2,013,300
Publica Contract Charges	10,945,341	10,957,980
Housing Benefit & Other Transfer Payments	14,541,926	14,130,260
Covid grant payments	522,941	(49,935)
Other service expenses	21,846,127	19,814,698
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	1,724,178	2,731,611
Interest payments and similar expense	683,000	75,000
Precepts and Levies	4,424,653	4,622,260
Other expenditure	6,556,283	3,617,641
Total Expenditure	63,567,674	57,912,815
Income		
Fees, charges & other service income	(11,338,967)	(10,954,101)
Housing Benefit Subsidy	(14,615,574)	(14,636,464)
Government Grants (incl Covid)	(14,019,352)	(12,262,521)
Income from Council Tax	(9,866,659)	(10,441,675)
Income from Non Domestic Rates	(1,210,215)	(2,209,646)
Non Government Grants & Contributions	(9,214,416)	(5,865,224)
Investment Interest and similar income	(1,318,370)	(2,220,407)
Other income	(996,494)	(2,413,871)
Total Income	(62,580,047)	(61,003,909)
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	987,627	(3,091,094)

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

B2a COVID

Expenditure	£
Contain Outbreak Management	62,626
Business Lockdown Grants	(118,504)
Restart Grants	5,942
	(49,936)
Income	£
Contain Outbreak Management	
Business Lockdown Grants	235,737
Restart Grants	(105,118)
	130,619
Total	80,683

B3. Other Operating Income and Expenditure

	2022/23	2023/24
	£	£
(Gains) / losses on disposal of non current assets	(30,670)	(74,430)
Unattached capital receipts	(965,824)	(600,439)
Town and Parish Council support grant	0	0
Town and Parish Council precepts	4,424,653	4,622,260
	3,428,159	3,947,391

B4. Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

	2022/23	2023/24
	£	£
Interest payable and similar charges	13,260	6,027
Interest receivable and similar income	(1,364,483)	(1,780,931)
Movement in the fair value of financial assets*	327,112	(439,476)
Movement in the creditor loss allowance	319,803	468,661
Movement in the fair value of investment property	1,002,462	(1,739,000)
Net investment property (income) / expenditure	(3,398,346)	(2,923,395)
Net interest on the net defined benefit pension liability	683,000	75,000
	(2,417,192)	(6,333,114)

*Movement in the fair value of financial assets largely reflects the increase in value at balance sheet date of pooled investment funds.

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

B5. Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
National Non Domestic Rates:		
- Redistribution	(2,545,704)	(2,762,336)
- Renewable Energy	(209,076)	(271,541)
- Business rates levy	1,700,607	2,239,995
- Surplus from the pool	(822,139)	(1,674,960)
- (Surplus) / Deficit	834,112	413,475
	<u>(1,042,200)</u>	<u>(2,055,367)</u>
Council Tax income (Council and Town/Parish Council shares)	(9,866,659)	(10,441,675)
Revenue Support Grant	(82,008)	(215,801)
New Homes Bonus	(2,378,105)	(1,579,635)
S31 NDR Compensation Grant	(4,432,596)	(4,895,907)
Capital grants and contributions	(2,588,665)	(1,075,999)
Other non-ringfenced government grants	(1,063,579)	(1,415,543)
	<u>(21,453,812)</u>	<u>(21,679,927)</u>

B6. Members' Allowances

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances	427,711	410,567
Expenses	1,090	4,133
	<u>428,801</u>	<u>414,700</u>

B7. External Audit Costs

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

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
External audit services carried out by the appointed auditor	62,878	150,476
Certification of grant claims and returns carried out by KPMG	39,930	10,080
	<u>102,808</u>	<u>160,556</u>

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

Most disclosures within the Statement of Accounts give additional details about the amounts receivable and payable included in the core statements. The amounts for External Audit Costs are disclosed in accordance with annually agreed audit fee schedules. The fee for the audit of the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts is £139,375 and there is a fee variation relating to 2021/22 of £11,101.

B8. Officer Remuneration

Senior Officer Remuneration

The Council's senior officers are those with statutory responsibility within the Council.

Post	2023/2024		
	Salary, allowances & other benefits £	Pension Contributions £	Total Remuneration £
Chief Executive	100,943	18,501	119,444
Chief Finance Officer	40,589	7,144	47,732
Director of Governance & Monitoring Officer	68,994	12,143	81,137
	210,526	37,788	248,313
Post	2022/2023		
	Salary, allowances & other benefits £	Pension Contributions £	Total Remuneration £
Chief Executive	84,117	15,236	99,353
Chief Finance Officer/Deputy Chief Executive	80,281	14,129	94,410
Interim Monitoring Officer	70,608	0	70,608
	235,006	29,366	264,372

Other Officer Remuneration

The majority of the Council's staff TUPE-transferred to Publica Group (Support) Limited on 1 November 2017, only a small number of staff are now employed directly by the Council and none of the Authority's employees (excluding those identified above) received more than £50,000 remuneration in the year. (No employees received more than £50,000 in 2022/23).

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

B9. Grant Income

The following significant grants and contributions were credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement during the year.

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
<u>Revenue grants credited to Cost of Services</u>		
Housing Benefit Subsidy	(14,322,427)	(14,453,696)
Housing Benefit Administration Subsidy	(186,895)	(182,768)
Council Tax Rebate Scheme	(4,740,584)	0
	(19,249,906)	(14,636,464)
<u>Revenue grants credited to Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income</u>		
New homes bonus grant	(2,378,105)	(1,579,635)
Revenue Support Grant	(82,007)	(215,801)
S31 NDR compensation grant	(4,432,596)	(4,895,907)
Rural services delivery grant	(133,225)	(148,899)
Funding Guarantee	0	(910,865)
Other specific government grants	(494,573)	(355,779)
	(7,520,506)	(8,106,886)
<u>Capital grants credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement</u>		
Better Care Funding	(807,750)	(807,750)
S.106 Receipts & other capital grants	(2,588,665)	(1,075,999)
	(3,396,415)	(1,883,749)

Where the Council has been given grants or contributions with conditions attached, which the Council has yet to meet, these grants are treated as receipts in advance until the conditions are met. The grants and contributions held at the balance sheet date are as follows:

	2022/23 £	2023/2024 £
Environment Agency Grant [for specific Land drainage works]	(174,265)	(174,266)
Better Care Grant Funding	(196,148)	(232,362)
Long Term Capital Receipt in advance	(370,413)	(406,628)
S106 Capital Contributions [due to third parties]	(29,493)	(64,157)
Short Term Capital Receipt in advance	(29,493)	(64,157)
Total Capital Receipt in Advance	(399,906)	(470,785)

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

B10. Termination Benefits

Redundancy and Compensation

There is no redundancy and compensation cost in 2023/24. (£0 in 2022/23)

Pension Strain

There is no pension strain cost in 2023/24 (nil in 2022/23). Any additional contributions (strain contributions and augmentation contributions) that are due to be paid in the year by the Council, under any agreement with the pension fund, are recognised immediately as an expense.

Exit Packages

There are no exit packages charged to the Council's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the current year. (£0 in 2022/23)

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

C1. Adjustments Between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Regulations

	2023/24			
	General Fund - Unallocated	General Fund - Earmarked	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied
	£	£	£	£
Capital Adjustments				
<u>Reversal of entries included in the CI&ES relating to Capital Expenditure</u>				
Charges for depreciation, amortisation and impairment	(2,026,311)			
Revaluation losses on Property, Plant and Equipment	(1,552,245)			
Movements in the fair value of Investment Properties	1,739,000			
Capital Grants and Contributions applied	1,037,732			
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital Under Statute	(2,764,668)			
Non current assets written off on disposal or sale	(334,490)			
<u>Adjustments between Capital & Revenue Resources</u>				
Transfer of cash sale proceeds from disposal of non current assets	334,490			
Capital expenditure charged against General Fund Balance	494,683			
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt	501,616			
Capital grants and contributions credited to CI&ES	809,804			(809,804)
Unattached Capital Receipts	600,439		(600,439)	
<u>Adjustments to Capital Resources</u>				
Application of grants to capital financing trfd to CAA				1,677,994
Use of capital receipts reserve to finance new capital expenditure			863,533	
Capital loan repaid			(253,941)	
Transfer from Deferred Capital Receipts on receipt of cash			(726,683)	
Financial Instrument Adjustments				
Reversal of changes in fair value on Pooled Investment Funds	439,476			
Pension Adjustments				
Pension costs transferred to / (from) the Pensions Reserve	373,000			
Accumulated Absences Adjustments				
Movement in accumulated absences adjustment transferred to / (from) Accumulated Absences Adjustment Account	0			
Other Adjustments				
Council Tax and NDR transfers to / (from) the Collection Fund Adjustment Account	577,656			
Capital expenditure charged against General Fund Balance				
	230,181	0	(717,530)	868,191

NOTES TO THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

	2022/23			
	General Fund - Unallocated	General Fund - Earmarked	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied
	£	£	£	£
Capital Adjustments				
Reversal of entries included in the CI&ES relating to Capital Expenditure				
Charges for depreciation, amortisation and impairment	(1,724,178)			
Revaluation losses on Property, Plant and Equipment	(371,793)			
Movements in the fair value of Investment Properties	(1,002,462)			
Capital Grants and Contributions applied	2,479,256			
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital Under Statute	(4,614,415)			
Non current assets written off on disposal or sale	(445,669)			
Adjustments between Capital & Revenue Resources				
Transfer of cash sale proceeds from disposal of non current assets	445,669			
Capital expenditure charged against General Fund Balance	308,160			
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt	420,313			
Capital grants and contributions credited to CI&ES	2,537,766			(2,537,766)
Unattached Capital Receipts	965,824		(965,824)	
Adjustments to Capital Resources				
Application of grants to capital financing trfd to CAA				852,964
Use of capital receipts reserve to finance new capital expenditure			7,055,961	
Capital loan repaid			(223,670)	
Transfer from Deferred Capital Receipts on receipt of cash			(665,796)	
Financial Instrument Adjustments				
Reversal of changes in fair value on Pooled Investment Funds				
Pension Adjustments				
Pension costs transferred to / (from) the Pensions Reserve	(1,405,000)			
Accumulated Absences Adjustments				
Movement in accumulated absences adjustment transferred to / (from) Accumulated Absences Adjustment Account	0			
Other Adjustments				
Council Tax and NDR transfers to / (from) the Collection Fund Adjustment Account	3,694,531			
Capital expenditure charged against General Fund Balance		1,378,738		
	1,288,001	1,378,738	5,200,671	(1,684,802)

NOTES TO THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

C2. Usable Reserves

Earmarked Reserves

The Council's General Fund comprises an unallocated element, used to meet day-to-day spending and 'Earmarked Reserves' – amounts set aside to provide financing for future specific expenditure or projects. Material transfers in 2023/24 are £750,000 to set up a Financial Instrument Revaluation reserve ahead of the removal of the Pooled Fund Statutory Override on 31st March 2025, £1,353,837 to set up a Publica Review reserve to fund both the one off and ongoing costs of the TUPE of staff from Publica to the Council, £750,000 to fund void and rent free periods in our Investment Property portfolio, £1,227,910 to repay the Business Rates deficit in 2024/25 & 2025/26 and £995,001 to the Budget Deficit reserve to ameliorate the pressure on the revenue budget as identified in the MTFS.

Movements in 'Earmarked Reserves' during the year are shown below:

Earmarked Reserves	Balance 1 April 2023 £	Transfers between reserves £	Transfers Out £	Transfers in £	Balance 31 March 2024 £
High Speed Broadband	(22,176)				(22,176)
Investment Property Improvement	(329,730)		329,730		0
Business Rate Movement	(514,937)	514,937			0
DCLG Community Housing Fund	(59,799)				(59,799)
Garden Village Grant	(535,887)		80,146		(455,741)
Benefits Subsidy Smoothing Reserve	(685,063)	685,063			0
Financial Instrument Revaluation Impact Reserve	(0)			(750,000)	(750,000)
Flexible Homelessness Support Grant	(406,186)			(212,093)	(618,279)
Rev & Bens One-off Grant Funding	(256,824)			(44,776)	(301,600)
Delivery of Council Priorities	(500,073)		30,000		(470,073)
Pay Inflation	(300,000)	300,000			0
Non Pay Inflation	(500,000)	500,000			0
Investment Property Reserve	0			(750,000)	(750,000)
Homes for Ukraine	0			(994,670)	(994,670)
Afghan Resettlement	0			(492,998)	(492,998)
Local Plan Review	(733,757)		46,107		(687,650)
Covid Workstreams	(211,517)		99,429		(112,088)
New Initiatives	(534,616)		41,591		(493,025)
Contain Outbreak Management Grant	(704,844)		63,659		(641,185)
Business Rates Deficit	(2,867,500)		1,272,090	(2,500,000)	(4,095,410)
Covid Recovery	(1,000,000)	1,000,000			0
Publica Contract Growth	(1,154,735)		184,468		(970,267)
New Burdens	(386,098)		41,804		(344,294)
Project Contingency	(230,450)			(75,000)	(305,450)
Budget Deficit Reserve	(670,206)			(995,001)	(1,665,207)
Publica Review Reserve	0			(1,353,837)	(1,353,837)
Other earmarked reserves	(2,115,237)		129,654		(1,985,583)
	(14,719,636)	3,000,000	2,318,678	(8,168,375)	(17,569,333)

NOTES TO THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

C3. Unusable Reserves

Summary of Unusable Reserves

	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24
	£	Restated £	£
Revaluation Reserve	(31,823,758)	(31,823,758)	(30,959,325)
Capital Adjustment Account	(79,170,345)	(79,170,345)	(79,174,743)
Pension Reserve	1,789,000	4,874,000	4,970,000
Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve	(2,294,942)	(2,294,942)	(1,902,750)
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	1,055,651	1,055,651	477,995
Accumulated Absences Account	15,587	15,587	15,587
Pooled Investment Fund Reserve	1,689,657	1,689,657	1,220,181
Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve	(30,000)	(30,000)	47,125
	(108,769,150)	(105,684,150)	(105,305,930)

Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Authority 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 1st 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.

	2022/23	2023/24
	£	£
Opening Balance - 1 April	(33,919,536)	(31,823,758)
Upward revaluation of assets	(894,621)	(4,303,929)
Downward revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	2,502,202	4,546,866
<i>Surplus / deficit on revaluation of non current assets not posted to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services</i>	<i>1,607,582</i>	<i>242,937</i>
Difference between fair value and historic cost depreciation	488,196	546,230
Other balances written out to the Capital Adjustment Account	0	75,266
<i>Amount written off to the Capital Adjustment Account</i>	<i>488,196</i>	<i>621,496</i>
Closing Balance - 31 March	(31,823,758)	(30,959,325)

NOTES TO THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

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 while depreciation, impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. 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. The Account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before 1st April 2007 [the date at which the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains].

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Opening Balance - 1st April	(74,568,945)	(79,170,345)
<u>Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement</u>		
Charges for depreciation of non current assets	1,724,178	2,026,311
Revaluation losses on Property, Plant and Equipment	371,793	1,552,245
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	4,614,415	2,764,668
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	445,669	334,490
	7,156,055	6,677,715
<u>Adjusting amounts written out of the Revaluation Reserve</u>		
Amounts written out on disposal or sale of non current assets	0	0
Amount written off to Capital Adjustment account	0	(75,266)
Historical cost depreciation adjustment	(488,196)	(546,230)
	(488,196)	(621,496)
Net written out amount of the cost of non current assets consumed in year	6,667,859	6,056,219
<u>Capital financing applied in year</u>		
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	(6,832,291)	(609,592)
Capital grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	(2,479,256)	(1,037,732)
Earmarked Reserves credited to Ci&ES to capital financing	(1,378,738)	0
Application of grants to capital financing from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	(852,964)	(1,677,994)
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt	(420,313)	(501,616)
Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund Balance	(308,160)	(494,683)
	(12,271,721)	(4,321,617)
Movements in the market value of Investment Properties debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	1,002,462	(1,739,000)
Transfer from Deferred Cap Reserves		
Closing Balance - 31 March	(79,170,345)	(79,174,743)

NOTES TO THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

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 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.

Statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Council makes employer's contributions to the pension fund or pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The negative balance on the Pensions Reserve represents 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 will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

	2022/23	2022/23 Restated	2023/24
	£	£	£
Opening Balance - 1 April	24,931,000	24,931,000	4,874,000
Return on plan assets	4,757,000	4,757,000	(5,480,000)
Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability	(29,304,000)	(29,304,000)	(1,590,000)
Reversal of items debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	3,055,000	3,055,000	1,335,000
Employers' pension contributions	(1,650,000)	(1,650,000)	(1,708,000)
Asset Ceiling Adjustment	0	3,085,000	7,539,000
Closing Balance - 31 March	1,789,000	4,874,000	4,970,000

*Please refer to Annex A, Prior Period Adjustment

Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve

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

	2022/23	2023/24
	£	£
Opening Balance - 1 April	(2,515,069)	(2,294,942)
New loans / new deferred receipt	(445,669)	(334,490)
Transfer to the Capital Receipts Reserve on receipt of cash	665,796	726,683
Closing Balance - 31 March	(2,294,942)	(1,902,750)

NOTES TO THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

Collection Fund Adjustment Account

The Collection Fund Adjustment Account manages the differences arising from the recognition of council tax 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.

	Balance 1 April 2023 £	Transfers in £	Balance 31 March 2024 £
Amounts by which income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements:			
Council Tax	(219,626)	366	(219,260)
NNDR	1,275,277	(578,022)	697,255
	1,055,651	(577,656)	477,995

Accumulated Absences Adjustment Account

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the General Fund Balance from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year [the cost of the annual leave entitlement still owed by the Council to its employees at 31st March.

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Opening Balance - 1 April	15,587	15,587
Movement in year	0	0
Closing Balance - 31 March	15,587	15,587

NOTES TO THE MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

Pooled Investment Fund Adjustment Account

The pooled investment fund adjustment account is used solely for recognising fair value gains and losses on the Council's pooled investment funds under statutory provisions.

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Opening Balance - 1 April	389,900	1,689,657
movement between reserves		(30,000)
Changes in fair value of Pooled Investment Funds	1,299,757	(439,476)
Closing Balance - 31 March	1,689,657	1,220,181

Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve

The financial instruments revaluation reserve contains the gains and losses arising from changes in the fair value of its investments that are measured at fair value through other comprehensive income.

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Opening Balance - 1 April	(30,000)	(30,000)
movement between FIRR and PIFAA		30,000
Changes in fair value of financial assets elected to FV through Other Comprehensive Income	0	47,125
Closing Balance - 31 March	(30,000)	47,125

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

D1. Property, Plant and Equipment

Property, Plant and Equipment

Movements in 2023/24	Land & Buildings £	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £	Community Assets £	Surplus Assets £	TOTAL PP&E £
Asset Cost or Valuation					
Asset values at 1 April 2023	73,252,841	2,771,591	993,713	3,361,762	80,379,906
Additions	1,054,890	428,273			1,483,163
Revaluation increases / (decreases)	(2,322,529)			228,500	(2,094,029)
Revaluation decreases to I&E	(1,832,480)				(1,832,480)
Derecognition - disposals		(334,490)			(334,490)
Transfer	(200,000)				
Asset values at 31 March 2024	69,952,722	2,865,373	993,713	3,590,262	77,402,070
Depreciation					
Accumulated depreciation at 1 April 2023	(483,863)	(1,895,463)	0	0	(2,379,326)
Depreciation charge for the year	(1,792,469)	(232,092)			(2,024,561)
Depreciation written out on revaluation	1,851,093			(1,750)	1,849,343
Depreciation written out to I&E	280,235				
Derecognition - disposals					0
Derecognition - others					0
Accumulated depreciation at 31 March 2024	(145,004)	(2,127,555)	0	(1,750)	(2,274,309)
Net Book Value of Assets					
1st April 2023	72,768,978	876,127	993,713	3,361,762	78,000,580
31st March 2024	69,807,718	737,818	993,713	3,588,512	75,127,761

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

Movements in 2022/23	Land & Buildings £	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £	Community Assets £	Surplus Assets £	TOTAL P&P&E £
- Asset Cost or Valuation					
Asset values at 1 April 2022	63,789,114	2,442,942	917,659	3,615,262	70,764,978
Additions	9,542,112	774,318	76,054		10,392,483
Revaluation increases / (decreases)	(2,651,273)			(206,263)	(2,857,536)
Revaluation decreases to I&E	(327,112)			(47,237)	(374,349)
Derecognition - disposals		(445,669)			(445,669)
Transfer	2,900,000				
Asset values at 31 March 2023	73,252,841	2,771,591	993,713	3,361,762	80,379,906
- Depreciation					
Accumulated depreciation at 1 April 2022	(415,270)	(1,508,918)	0	0	(1,924,188)
Depreciation charge for the year	(1,318,478)	(386,545)		(2,625)	(1,707,649)
Depreciation written out on revaluation	1,249,886			2,625	1,252,511
Derecognition - disposals					0
Derecognition - others					0
Accumulated depreciation at 31 March 2023	(483,863)	(1,895,463)	0	0	(2,379,326)
- Net Book Value of Assets					
1st April 2022	63,373,844	934,024	917,659	3,615,262	68,840,789
31st March 2023	72,768,978	876,127	993,713	3,361,762	78,000,580

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

The Code requires that assets are formally revalued at least every 5-years. Assets are formally revalued as part of a 5-year rolling programme, with assets revalued more frequently if there is evidence that asset values may have changed. The table below summarises valuations undertaken, by year:

	Land & Buildings £000	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £000	Community Assets £000	Surplus Assets £000	Total PPE £000
Carried at (depreciated) historic cost	0	738	994	0	1,732
Valued at current value as at 31 March:					
2019/20	122	0	0	35	157
2020/21	49	0	0	108	157
2021/22		0	0	77	77
2022/23	14,264	0	0	125	14,389
2023/24	55,373	0	0	3,243	58,616
Total	69,808	738	994	3,588	75,128

Asset valuation, amortisation and depreciation

Service areas are charged depreciation to represent the real cost of holding and using non-current assets. The value of an asset (less any residual value) will be written down on a straight-line basis over the useful economic life of the asset. The following useful lives have been used in the calculation of depreciation and amortisation:

- Land assets are generally not depreciated.
- Operational buildings are typically depreciated over 30 to 60 year useful lives, depending upon the particular asset and an estimate of the asset life from the Council's valuer.
- Car Parks – over 20-years or a lifetime agreed with the Council's valuer.
- Vehicles, Plant and Equipment are depreciated over 5 to 7 years as appropriate.
- Surplus assets will have lives based upon the type of asset – e.g. Buildings 30 to 60 years, land indefinite lifespans. Useful economic lives will be agreed with the valuer.
- Heritage and Community Assets are not depreciated.

Effects of changes in estimates

The Council has amended its policy to depreciate Vehicles and Plant over 7 years rather than 5 years. The 7 year period is aligned with the existing vehicle leasing arrangement that the Council has with Ubico.

Revaluations

The 2023/24 PPE valuations and impairment review were undertaken by Carter Jonas (Investment Property, Leisure Centres, Surplus Assets) and Publica's internal valuer (Other Land and Buildings). Valuations were undertaken in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom.

Assets are valued as part of a rolling programme of revaluations. All assets are valued on a 5-year rolling programme.

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

In estimating asset values it has been assumed that:

- The capacity of utility services [electricity, gas, water, mains drainage] are adequate for the future use of the properties.
- All assets have planning consent for their existing uses.
- Tenancies are not subject to any unusual or onerous restrictions.
- No contamination exists in relation to property assets [land and buildings] sufficient to affect value.

With the introduction and application of IFRS13 in 2015/16, the Council's surplus assets have been reviewed and measured at fair value based upon 'highest and best use'. The surplus assets that the Council owns are strips of land and therefore they are not depreciated. Within the fair-value hierarchy, the Council's Surplus Assets are deemed as 'level 2' category. Carter Jonas undertook the Surplus Assets valuation.

D2. Investment Properties

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

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Rental income	(4,149,434)	(3,563,377)
Direct operating expenses	684,674	639,982
Net (gains) / losses from fair value adjustments	1,002,462	(1,739,000)
	(2,462,298)	(4,662,395)

There are no restrictions on the Council's ability to realise the value inherent in its investment property or on the Council's right to the remittance of income and the proceeds of disposal. There are contractual obligations on the Council to repair and maintain certain investment properties and these have been included in the relevant property valuations.

Carter Jonas undertook the 2023/24 Investment Property valuations. The valuations were undertaken in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (as outlined in Note D1 above).

Under the CIPFA Code, the Council's Investment Properties are classified as 'level 2' within the fair-value hierarchy. The assets have been suitably valued, based upon current market conditions, sale prices for similar assets, or contractual income for the properties. These observable inputs have been used to classify the assets accordingly. There have been no movements between categories within the hierarchy during the year.

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

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Opening Balance - 1 April	55,207,462	51,305,000
Additions	0	
Net gains / (losses) from fair value adjustments	(1,002,462)	1,739,000
Reclassification - transfer to Operational Buildings	(2,900,000)	200,000
Closing Balance - 31 March	51,305,000	53,244,000

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

Fair value hierarchy

International Financial Reporting Standard 13 (IFRS13) 'Fair Values' requires all assets measured at fair value to be classified into one of three levels, depending upon the basis of valuation. The 'fair value' of an asset is the reasonable estimation of its market value if sold.

The Council's Investment Property assets are deemed to be categorised as Level 2 in the valuation hierarchy, as the fair value of the assets have been derived primarily from income streams. Authorities are required to maximise the use of level 1 inputs (available prices) and minimise the use of level 3 inputs (calculations based upon non-market data such as cash-flow forecasts and other non-market data).

D3. Intangible Assets

The Council accounts for its software as intangible assets, to the extent that the software is not an integral part of a particular IT system and is accounted for as part of the hardware item of Property, Plant and Equipment. The intangible assets include purchased software only, as the Authority has no internally generated software.

All intangible assets are amortised on a straight-line basis over a 5 year period. This represents the period over which the software is expected to be of use to the Council.

Amortisation of intangible assets is charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Account. For service-specific systems, amortisation is charged direct to the service using the asset. For corporate systems amortisation is allocated across all services benefitting from the asset.

Movements in Intangible Assets

	2022/23	2023/24
	£	£
<u>Asset Cost or Valuation</u>		
Asset values at 1 April	232,769	232,769
Additions		
Derecognition		
Asset values at 31 March	232,769	232,769
<u>Amortisation</u>		
Accumulated Amortisation at 1 April	(216,240)	(232,769)
Amortisation charge for the year	(16,529)	
Derecognition		
Accumulated Amortisation at 31 March	(232,769)	(232,769)
Net carrying amount at 31 March	(0)	(0)

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

D4. Current Debtors

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Government Departments	933,369	879,665
Other Local Authorities [Statutory]	2,735,399	3,401,810
Other Local Authorities [Trading]	1,449,846	1,573,497
Collection Fund debtors (WODC Share)	2,019,829	3,132,362
Housing Benefit recovery	1,224,110	1,658,102
Sundry Debtors	4,038,122	3,600,782
Finance Leases - principal outstanding	726,683	538,812
Other Debtors	2,329,559	1,979,447
Prepayments	472,425	1,142,747
	15,929,341	17,907,224
Less provision for impairment of receivables:		
Collection Fund provisions (WODC share)	(552,728)	(464,879)
Housing Benefit recovery	(1,210,147)	(1,548,247)
Sundry Debtors	(963,983)	(1,094,545)
	13,202,483	14,799,553

Current Debtors include an amount of £229,294 reflecting the amounts due in the next 12 months from the Long Term loans made to Cottsway Housing Association and Southill Solar.

D5. Current Creditors

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Government Departments	(3,566,527)	(2,906,289)
Business Grants Agency	(508,791)	0
Other Local Authorities [Statutory]	(2,553,955)	(2,895,131)
Other Local Authorities [Trading]	(491,992)	(573,125)
Collection Fund (WODC Share)	(1,249,835)	0
Sundry Creditors	(2,549,162)	(1,757,542)
Receipts in advance:		
Government Departments	(1,460,722)	(1,003,531)
Other Local Authorities	0	(141,133)
Taxpayer Creditors	(266,393)	(534,813)
Sundry Creditors receipts in advance	(2,344,219)	(2,261,065)
	(14,991,598)	(12,072,629)
Capital Receipt in Advance	(1,314,063)	(1,262,311)
	(16,305,661)	(13,334,940)

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

D6. Provisions

	Opening Provision 1 April £	New provisions in-year £	Use of provisions £	Provisions returned to revenue £	Closing Provision 31 March £
Business Rates (NDR) Appeals	(1,638,670)	(446,246)	304,166		(1,780,750)
Provision - Subsidence Claims	(30,000)				(30,000)
Carterton Leisure Centre	(75,000)				(75,000)
	(1,743,670)	(446,246)	304,166	0	(1,885,750)

Business Rates (NNDR) appeals

The NNDR provision has been set aside to cover the potential cost to the Council of outstanding appeals against property revaluations.

D7. Non - Current Debtors

	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £
Cottsway Housing Association loan	7,655,816	7,481,696
Equity Loans Scheme	232,114	232,114
Parish/Town Council Loans	119,884	107,492
Charge on former Unicorn Public House - Great Rollright	20,498	20,498
GLL - COVID supporting Loans	304,301	304,301
Vehicles Leases	1,270,212	1,065,890
Southill Solar Loan	2,279,264	2,000,484
	11,882,089	11,212,474

The balances of the loans made to Cottsway Housing Association and Southill Solar have been adjusted to remove the amounts due in the next 12 months. These balances sit in Current Debtors.

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

D8. Capital Expenditure and Financing

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

The net movement in the Capital Financing Requirement illustrates the change in the underlying need for the Council to borrow during the year to fund capital investment, which has not been funded from resources such as grants, capital receipts and direct funding from revenue.

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	25,867,518	28,379,025
Capital Investment in Year		
Property, Plant & Equipment	10,392,483	1,483,163
Intangible Assets	0	0
Capital Expenditure transfer Long term loans	0	0
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute	4,614,415	2,764,668
	<u>15,006,898</u>	<u>4,247,831</u>
Sources of Finance		
Capital Receipts	7,055,961	836,357
Government grants & other contributions	3,332,220	2,715,726
MRP / Statutory repayment of loans advance	420,313	501,616
Earmarked reserves	1,378,738	0
Direct Revenue Contributions	308,160	494,683
	<u>12,495,391</u>	<u>4,548,382</u>
Net Increase / (Decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement	2,511,507	(300,551)
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	<u>28,379,025</u>	<u>28,078,474</u>

NOTES TO THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT

E1. Notes to the Cash Flow Statement

a. Adjustments to the net surplus / (deficit) on the provision of services for non-cash movements

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	1,724,178	3,578,555
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	(13,438,940)	(3,659,845)
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	337,071	(649,621)
Increase / (decrease) in provision for bad debts	380,452	468,661
(Increase) / decrease in inventories	(407)	4,316
Pensions' liability	1,405,000	(373,000)
Carrying amount of non current assets sold	445,669	334,490
Increase / (decrease) in provisions	294,824	142,080
Movements in the fair value of investment properties	1,002,462	(1,739,000)
Other non cash items charged to Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(2,722,361)	(1,909,948)
	(10,572,052)	(3,803,312)

b. Adjustments for items included in the net surplus / (deficit) on the provision of services that are investing or financing activities.

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Capital grants and contributions	(2,588,666)	(849,804)
Proceeds from the sale of non current assets	(445,669)	(934,929)
	(3,034,335)	(1,784,733)

c. Investing Activities

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Purchase of property, plant & equipment and other capital investment	(9,958,958)	(1,974,054)
Purchase of short term and long term investments	(132,300,000)	(55,090,000)
Proceeds from the sale of non current assets	1,392,479	1,865,934
Proceeds from disposal of short term and long term investments	132,856,606	55,090,000
Other (receipts) / payments from investing activities	4,563,420	1,831,996
	(3,446,453)	1,723,876

F. Events after the Balance Sheet Date

The Chief Finance Officer authorised the Statement of Accounts on 31st July 2024. 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 2024, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect the impact of this information.

A review of Publica was announced in September 2023 which will return a number of services back to the partnership Councils. The detailed implementation plan was approved by full Council in July 2024 with phase one of the transition timetabled to go live on 1st November 2024.

The financial implications of the Publica Review have been the subject of extensive due diligence since programme inception in February 2024. The resulting financial modelling output reflects robust programme assumptions and a detailed audit trail of movements between baseline costing, of delivery via the current Publica model, to the new WODC structure post transition, as proposed in the Detailed Transition Plan. The key financial implications of the Detailed Transition Plan are:

Indicative enduring annual increase to West Oxfordshire District Council revenue budget of £185,000 per annum (pro rata for 2024/25 would be £77,000) with one-off costs of restructuring between £207,000 to £301,000, being the “most likely” and “maximum” scenario respectively.

Notice has been served by the fund managers of the UBS Multi Asset Income Fund, that it will be withdrawn on 16th September 2024. The fund has an unrealised capital loss of £526,511 as at the Balance Sheet date. This loss will be reflected in the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts and will be funded through the Financial Instrument Revaluation Impact Reserve.

Please see Annex A, Prior Year Adjustments for details of the restatement of the Pension Liability.

F1. Defined Benefit Pension Scheme

Participation in pension schemes

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

The Council participates in two post-employment schemes:

- The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is administered locally by Oxfordshire County Council. It is a defined benefit scheme, based upon final salary scheme and length of service upon retirement. The Authority and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension's 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 if they are deemed due.

Changes to the LGPS came into effect from 1st April 2014. Benefits accrued from this date are based on a career average revalued salary. Various protections will be in place for those members and benefits accrued in the scheme before the changes take effect.

The scheme is a defined benefit statutory scheme that is administered in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997 (as amended). It is contracted out of the State Second Pension.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Publica Group (Support) Limited

During 2017/18 the Council transferred the majority of its staff under TUPE legislation to Publica Group (Support) Limited, a wholly owned local authority company, limited by guarantee, operating with Mutual Trading Status to deliver services on behalf of the Council. The pension fund disclosure notes on the following pages include the staff transferred to Publica. All staff are pooled (counted as one scheme by the pension fund) as the Council continues to underwrite the pension liabilities on the whole scheme.

Transactions relating to retirement benefits

The Council recognises the cost of retirement benefits in the Cost of Services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are actually paid as pensions. However, the charge the Council makes to council tax is based upon the actual cash payable in the year, so the real cost of retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement (MiRS).

The following transactions have been charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure account and General Fund Balance during the year:

	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24
		Restated	
	£	£	£
Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement			
<i>Cost of Services:</i>			
Current Service Cost	2,372,000	2,372,000	1,260,000
Past Service Cost			
(Gains)/loss from settlements			
<i>Financing and Investment Income & Expenditure:</i>			
Net Interest Expense	683,000	683,000	75,000
Net Charge to Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services	3,055,000	3,055,000	1,335,000
<i>Other post employment benefit charged to Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement</i>			
Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability			
Return on Plan Assets	(4,757,000)	(4,757,000)	5,480,000
Actuarial (gains) / losses arising on changes in financial assumptions	34,096,000	34,096,000	3,408,000
Actuarial gains and losses - demographic assumptions	584,000	584,000	405,000
Experience (gains) / losses on defined benefit obligation	(5,376,000)	(5,376,000)	(2,223,000)
Asset Ceiling Adjustment		(3,085,000)	(7,539,000)
	24,547,000	21,462,000	(469,000)
Total post employment benefits charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	(21,492,000)	(18,407,000)	1,804,000
Movement in Reserves Statement			
Reversal of net charges made to the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services for post employment benefits in accordance with the Code	3,055,000	1,335,000	1,335,000
Actual amount charged against the General Fund Balance for pensions in the year			
Employers' contributions payable to the scheme	1,650,000	1,708,000	1,708,000

*Please see Annex A, Prior Period Adjustment

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Pension Assets and Liabilities recognised in the Balance Sheet

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

	2022/23	2022/23 Restated	2023/24
	£	£	£
Present value of the defined benefit obligation - funded	(72,555,000)	(72,555,000)	(72,874,000)
Present value of unfunded obligations	(449,000)	(449,000)	(442,000)
Fair Value of Plan Assets	71,215,000	71,215,000	78,970,000
Asset Ceiling Adjustment		(3,085,000)	(10,624,000)
Net liability arising from defined benefit obligation	(1,789,000)	(4,874,000)	(4,970,000)

*Please see Annex A, Prior Period Adjustment

Reconciliation of Movements in the Fair Value of Scheme (Plan) Assets

	2022/23	2023/24
	£	£
Opening Fair Value of Scheme Assets	74,519,000	71,215,000
Interest Income	2,003,000	3,357,000
Administration Expense		
Remeasurement Gains / (Losses)	(4,757,000)	5,480,000
Other Actuarial gains/losses		
Employers' Contributions [including Unfunded]	1,650,000	1,663,000
Employee Contributions	378,000	372,000
Benefits Paid [including Unfunded]	(2,578,000)	(3,117,000)
Settlement prices received /paid		
Closing Balance 31 March	71,215,000	78,970,000

*Please see Annex A, Prior Period Adjustment

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

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

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Opening Balance 1 April	(99,450,000)	(73,004,000)
Current Service Cost	(2,372,000)	(1,260,000)
Interest Cost	(2,686,000)	(3,432,000)
Contributions from Scheme Participants	(378,000)	(372,000)
Past Service Cost		
Remeasurement Gains / (Losses)	28,720,000	1,185,000
Change in demographic assumptions	584,000	405,000
Liabilities assumed/extinguished on settlements	0	0
Benefits Paid	2,537,000	3,117,000
Unfunded Benefits Paid	41,000	45,000
Closing Balance 31 March	(73,004,000)	(73,316,000)
	Funded	(72,555,000)
	Unfunded	(449,000)
		(72,874,000)
		(442,000)

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Composition of Scheme Assets

	Period ended 31 March 2024			
	Quoted	Unquoted	Total	Percentage
	£000	£000	£000	of total assets %
Equity Securities:				
Consumer	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Manufacturing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Energy and Utilities	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Financial Institutions	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Health and Care	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Information technology	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Debt Securities:				
Corporate Bonds (investment grade)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Corporate Bonds (non-investment grade)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
UK Government	1017.6	0.0	1017.6	1%
Other	415.7	0.0	415.7	1%
Private Equity:				
All	3,705.9	0.9	3,706.8	5%
Real Estate:				
UK Property	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Overseas Property	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Investment funds and unit trusts:				
Equities	0.0	44,077.2	44,077.2	56%
Bonds	0.0	5,052.9	5,052.9	6%
Hedge Funds	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Commodities	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Infrastructure	0.0	2,722.5	2,722.5	3%
Other	0.0	20,780.6	20,780.6	26%
Derivatives:				
Inflation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Interest rate	0.0	0.0	0.0	0%
Foreign exchange	3.6	0.0	3.6	0%
Other	0.1	0.0	0.1	0%
Cash and cash equivalents				
All	1,193.0	0.0	1,193.0	2%
Total rounded	6,335.9	72,634.1	78,970.0	100%

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Basis for estimating assets and liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method, as an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels. The financial assumptions are summarised below:

Mortality Assumptions	Males	Females
Current Pensioners	21.8	24.4
Future Pensioners	23.1	25.9
Financial Assumptions	2022/23	2023/24
Rate of increase in pensions	3.00%	2.80%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.00%	2.80%
Discount Rate	4.75%	4.75%

Sensitivity Analysis

IAS 19 requires disclosure of the sensitivity of the results to the methods and assumptions used. The sensitivities regarding the principal assumptions used to measure the scheme liabilities are set out below:

Change in assumption at 31 March 2024:	Approximate % increase to Employer Liability	Approximate monetary amount (£000)
0.1% decrease in Real Discount Rate	2%	1,213
1 year increase in member life expectancy	4%	2,933
0.1% increase in the Salary increased Rate	0%	136
0.1% increase in the Pension increase Rate (CPI)	1%	1,098

The estimated employer's contributions for the year to 31st March 2025 will be approximately £1,683,000.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

F2. Financial Instruments

Categories of Financial Instruments

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

2022/2023			2023/2024	
Non-Current £	Current £		Non-Current £	Current £
		Financial Assets at Amortised Cost		
0	0	Investments	0	0
10,239,382	7,815,609	Debtors	10,146,585	9,403,683
1,270,212	726,683	Finance Leases	1,065,890	538,812
11,509,593	8,542,292		11,212,474	9,942,495
		Fair Value through Profit or Loss		
12,375,411	64,433	Investments	12,814,887	77,210
	7,686,021	Cash and cash equivalents		1,913,919
12,375,411	7,750,454		12,814,887	1,991,129
		Fair Value through OCI		
1,000,000	0	Equity Instruments	952,875	
1,000,000	0		952,875	0
24,885,004	16,292,746	Total Financial Assets	24,980,236	11,933,624
		Financial Liabilities at Amortised Cost		
	(5,013,260)	Borrowing		
0	(4,554,405)	Creditors	0	(2,944,781)
0	(9,567,665)	Total Financial Liabilities	0	(2,944,781)

Not all short term debtors and creditors fall within the definition of financial instruments. The difference between the totals shown on the Balance Sheet and the values above is as follows:

	Non Current Debtors	Current Debtors £	Current Creditors £
Total on Balance Sheet	11,212,474	14,799,553	(12,072,629)
Statutory & Government Debtors / Creditors	(360,104)	(3,714,311)	5,187,306
Prepayments / Receipts in Advance	0	(1,142,747)	3,940,543
Finance Lease Principal / Liabilities	(1,065,890)	(538,812)	0
Total Financial Instruments	9,786,480	9,403,683	(2,944,780)

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Income, Expense, Gains and Losses

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

2022/2023				2023/2024		
Financial Assets				Financial Assets		
Loans & Receivables	Available for Sale	Fair Value through OCI		Amortised Cost	Fair Value through Profit or Loss	Fair Value through OCI
£	£	£		£	£	£
13,260			<u>Financing & Investment Income and Expenditure</u>			
(706,594)	(586,078)	(26,875)	Interest Expense	6,027		
	1,269,757		Interest / Dividend income	(1,058,359)	(639,415)	(28,500)
			Changes in fair value		(439,476)	
			<u>Other Comprehensive Income</u>			
		30,000	Changes in fair value			47,125
(693,334)	683,679	3,125	Net (Gain) / Loss for the Year	(1,052,332)	(1,078,891)	18,625

Fair Values of Financial Assets and Financial Liabilities

Fair Value is defined as “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 Code sets out the fair value valuation hierarchy local authorities are required to follow to increase consistency and comparability in fair value measurements and disclosures: Level 1 assets are valued based upon ‘quoted prices in active markets for identical assets’ where such assets exist. Level 2 is based upon inputs other than quoted prices within level 1 that are observable. Level 3 represents all other unobservable inputs, which can be used to estimate the fair value of the assets.

The following table shows the Council’s financial assets measured at fair value through profit or loss:

	Input level	As at 31/03/2024 £
<u>Fair Value through Profit or Loss</u>		
Money Market Funds	Level 1	2,134,750
Pooled Investment Funds	Level 1	12,892,097
Call Accounts	Level 1	0
		15,026,847

Fair values for those financial assets deemed to be categorised as Level 1 have been derived from unadjusted quoted prices in active markets. Except for the financial assets carried at fair value (as shown above), all other financial liabilities and financial assets are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

The carrying value and fair values are shown below for comparison purposes. Fair values are not required for current debtors and creditors (trade payables and receivables) since the carrying amount is deemed a reasonable approximation of fair value.

	2022/23		2023/24	
	Carrying Amount £	Fair Value £	Carrying Amount £	Fair Value £
Financial Assets at Amortised Cost				
Investments	0	0	0	0
Non-Current Debtors	10,239,382	10,239,382	9,786,480	9,786,480
Non-Current Finance Leases	1,270,212	1,270,212	1,065,890	1,065,890
	11,509,594	11,509,594	10,852,370	10,852,370
Financial Liabilities at Amortised Cost				
Borrowing	(5,013,260)	(5,013,260)	0	0
	(5,013,260)	(5,013,260)	0	0

Equity Instruments Elected to Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income

The Council has elected to account for the following investment as an equity instrument at fair value through other comprehensive income because it is a long-term strategic investment held by the Council primarily to receive regular dividend income rather than for capital growth or to sell.

Presenting changes in its fair value in the surplus or deficit on provision of services is therefore less likely to present a true and fair view of the Council's financial performance than presenting it in other comprehensive income.

	Fair Value		Dividends	
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £
Fundamentum Social Housing REIT plc	1,000,000	952,875	26,875	28,500
	1,000,000	952,875	26,875	28,500

F3. Nature and extent of risks arising from Financial Instruments

The Council's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks. The key risks are in relation to its financial assets. These are as follows:

- Credit risk – the possibility that other parties may fail to pay amounts due to the Council.
- Liquidity risk – the possibility that the Council might not have funds available to meet its commitments to make payments
- Re-financing risk – the possibility that the Council might be required to renew a financial instrument on maturity at disadvantageous interest rates or terms.
- Market risk – the possibility that financial loss might arise for the Council because of changes in metrics such as interest rates.

Overall procedures for managing risk

The Council's overall risk management procedures focus on the unpredictability of financial markets and implementing procedures to minimise these risks. The duty to manage such risks is set out in the Local Government Act 2003 and the associated regulations. These require the Council to comply with the CIPFA Prudential Code, the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Investment Guidance issued through the Act. These procedures require the Council to manage risk in the following ways:

- By formally adopting the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management Services
- By approving annually in advance prudential indicators for the following three years covering:
 - * Limits on the Council's overall debt [external borrowing]
 - * The maturity structure of any external borrowing
 - * The Council's upper limit for exposure to fixed and variable interest rates
 - * The maximum exposure to investments maturing beyond a period of one year.
- By annually approving a Treasury Management Investment Strategy for the forthcoming year, setting out criteria for investments and specifying the minimum credit worthiness for all counterparties.

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

The Council has adopted CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management (and subsequent amendments) and complies with The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

As part of the adoption of 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 produces Treasury Management Practices specifying the practical arrangements to be followed to manage these risks.

The Treasury Management Strategy includes an Annual Investment Strategy in compliance with the DLUHC's Investment Guidance for local authorities. This Guidance emphasises that priority is to be given to security and liquidity, rather than yield. The Council's Treasury Strategy, together with its Treasury Management Practices are based on seeking the highest rate of return consistent with the proper levels of security and liquidity.

A central treasury team implements these policies. The Council maintains written principles for overall risk management, as well as written policies covering specific areas, such as interest rate risk, credit risk, and the investment of surplus cash through Treasury Management Practices.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Credit Risk

The Council manages credit risk by ensuring that investments are placed with the Debt Management Office, other local authorities, AAA-rated money market funds and Banks and Building Societies of sufficiently high credit quality as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy. A limit of £5m of the total portfolio is placed on the amount of money that can be invested with a single counterparty. The Council also sets a total group investment limit for institutions that are part of the same banking group. No more than £25m in total can be invested for a period longer than one year.

It must also be noted that although credit ratings remain a key source of information, the Council recognises that they have limitations and investment decisions are based on a range of market intelligence. All investments have been made in line with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2023/24, approved by Full Council in February 2023.

The ratings of the financial institutions holding Council investments (and investments classified as cash equivalents) at the Balance Sheet date are as follows:

	Investment Balance (£)
<u>Call accounts and other 'cash equivalent' investments</u>	
Money Market Funds	2,134,750
Call Accounts	0
<u>UK Equities</u>	
Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT)	952,875
<u>Pooled funds</u>	
Non-rating agency rated pooled fund <i>separately approved by the Council's Treasury Management advisors</i>	12,892,097

The table below summaries the nominal value of the Council's investment portfolio at 31st March 2024 and confirms that all investments were made in line with the Council's approved credit rating criteria at the time of placing the investment.

At the balance sheet date the maturity profile for the Council's investments classified as cash equivalents for financial reporting purposes were distributed as follows:

	Investment values - maturing within:			
	0-3 mths	3-6 mths	6-12 mths	1 year +
	£	£	£	£
<u>Internally managed funds</u>				
Money Market Funds	2,134,750			
Call Accounts	0			
UK Equities				952,875
<u>Externally managed funds</u>				
Pooled Funds	77,210			12,814,887

The credit quality of debtors is reflected in the level of impairment allowance for trade debtors shown in note D4.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Liquidity Risk

The Council has a cash flow management system that seeks to ensure that cash is available as needed. If unexpected movements happen, the Authority has access to borrowing facilities via the Public Works Loan Board, commercial banks, bond issues, medium term notes, tax increment financing, the European Investment Bank, and other local authorities. There is no perceived risk that the Council will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments.

The Council also has to manage the risk so that it will not be exposed to replenishing a significant proportion of its borrowing at a time of unfavourable interest rates. The Council would only borrow in advance of the forecast spend in the capital programme where the spend can be reliably committed and the cost of borrowing, such as rising interest rates, make a clear business case for doing so. Although there is currently no external borrowing, there is significant internal borrowing so even if loans were drawn down ahead of a planned capital spend, the Authority would still not be deemed to be borrowing ahead of need. There is no intention to borrow outside of funding spend in the capital programme or to finance future debt maturities.

The Local Government Finance Act 1992 also requires the Council to set a balanced budget which ensures sufficient monies are raised to meet annual expenditure. There is therefore no significant risk that it will be unable to raise finance to meet its financial commitments.

Market Risk – interest rate risk

The Council is exposed to risks arising from movements in interest rates but in a time of large movements in interest rates, the decision on whether to borrow at a fixed rate or a variable rate is taken on a case by case basis, and this is reflected in the Treasury Management Strategy which does not preclude borrowing under either option.

Price Risk

The Council holds some financial instruments, whereby the capital value may fluctuate because of market conditions. However, these instruments are all purchased on a hold to maturity or long term basis and therefore any temporary fluctuations in the market value of such products have no immediate impact on the Council's finances. The losses that have been incurred in these funds would need to be recognised if the investment was withdrawn or at the end of March 2025 when the statutory override on recognising losses in financial instruments is expected to end.

Foreign Exchange Risk

The Council's policy is deal in pounds sterling wherever possible thus mitigating the need to deal in foreign exchange.

F4. Leases

The Council as Lessee [obtaining assets under a leasing arrangement]

Operating Leases

The Council has entered into a number of operating leases in the local area. The minimum lease payments due under non-cancellable leases in future years are as below:

	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £
Not later than one year	224,556	189,095
Later than one year & not later than five years	354,060	237,601
Later than five years	266,199	209,993
	844,816	636,689

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

The Council as Lessor [leasing assets out]

Finance Leases

The Council leases a number of waste and recycling vehicles to Ubico Limited.

The minimum lease payments comprise settlement of the long-term debtor for the interest in the asset and finance income that will be earned by the Council for the period while the debt remains outstanding.

	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £
Present value of principal payments outstanding on non current assets	1,996,896	1,604,703
Unearned finance income	166,280	233,579
	2,163,176	1,838,282

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

	Gross Investment in the Lease		Minimum Lease Payments (excl. int)	
	31 March 2023	31 March 2024	31 March 2023	31 March 2024
	£	£	£	£
Not later than one year	781,833	594,612	726,683	538,813
Later than one year & not later than five years	1,170,032	1,018,917	1,070,342	906,655
Later than five years	211,311	169,604	199,871	159,236
	2,163,176	1,783,133	1,996,896	1,604,704

The Council has not included any allowance for uncollectable debts in the table above. Any outstanding debts would be considered within the Sundry Debtors bad-debt provision calculation.

Operating Leases

The Council leases out a number of premises within the local area. The future minimum lease payments receivable under non – cancellable leases in future years are:

	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £
Not later than one year	4,577,499	3,968,264
Later than one year & not later than five years	12,547,073	10,291,006
Later than five years	29,014,775	27,302,404
	46,139,347	41,561,674

The minimum lease payments receivable does not include rents that are contingent on events taking place after the balance sheet date.

F5. Accounting Policies

i) General principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the financial year and its position at the 31st of March year-end. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, those regulations which require the accounts to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom* supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and statutory guidance.

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

These accounts have been prepared on the basis that the Council is a going concern.

ii) Accruals of income and expenditure

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

- Revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods is recognised when (or as) the goods or services are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the performance obligations in the contract.
- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed. Where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption they are carried as inventories (stock) on the Balance Sheet, where the value is material.
- 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 the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the income that might not be collected (doubtful debts).
- The council has set a de-minimis level for accruals of creditors and debtors that are calculated manually in order to avoid additional time and cost in estimating and recording accruals. This level is set at £500 with the exception of any grant where applying the de-minimis level would affect a grant claim and any accruals included therein.

iii) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents are represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable, without penalty, on notice of not more than 24 hours. This includes bank call-accounts, Money Market Funds (MMF) and any other 'overnight-type' investments.

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.

iv) Prior period adjustments, changes in accounting policies and estimates and errors

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

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Changes in accounting policies are only made when required by proper accounting practices or the change provides more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions, other events and conditions on the Council's financial position or financial performance. Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively (unless not material or stated otherwise) by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period as if the new policy had always been applied.

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

v) Charges to revenue for non-current assets

Services, support services and trading accounts are charged an accounting estimate of the cost of holding non-current assets during the year. This comprises:

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

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

vi) Council tax and non-domestic rates

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

Accounting for council tax and NDR

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

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

Where debtor balances for the above are identified as impaired because of a likelihood arising from a past event that payments due under the statutory arrangements will not be made, the asset is written down and a charge made to the taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure line in the CIES. The impairment loss is measured as the difference between the carrying amount and the revised future cash flows.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

vii) Employee benefits

Benefits payable during employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled wholly within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits (e.g. cars) for current employees and are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Council.

An accrual for the cost of holiday entitlement (or any form of leave, e.g. time off in lieu) earned by employees but not taken before the year-end is not provided for in the accounts. This is because the Council TUPE-transferred the majority of its staff to Publica Group (Support) Limited in 2017/18. Due to the vastly reduced number of staff employed by the Council, a balance is no longer maintained for the cost of untaken annual leave, as the amount involved is not material to the accounts.

Termination benefits

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

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

viii) Post-employment benefits

Employees of the Council are permitted to join the Local Government Pension Scheme, administered by Oxfordshire County Council. This scheme provides defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees who worked for the Council.

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

- The liabilities of the Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method – i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc., and projected earnings for current employees.
- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate based on the gross redemption yield on the Iboxx Sterling Corporate Index, AA over 15 years, at the IAS19 valuation date. This is a high quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liability.
- The assets of the Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the balance sheet at their fair value.
 - quoted securities – current bid price
 - unquoted securities – professional estimate
 - unitised securities – current bid price
 - property – market value

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

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

- Service cost comprising:
 - current service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year – allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked.
 - past service cost- the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years – debited to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
 - net interest on the net defined benefit liability, 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.

- Remeasurements 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 Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund – cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense

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

Discretionary benefits

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

ix) Events after the reporting period

Events after the Balance Sheet reporting period are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the Balance Sheet date 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 such 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.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the statement of accounts.

x) Financial instruments

Financial liabilities are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments over the life of the instrument to the amount at which it was originally recognised.

Any borrowing that the Council may undertake would be presented in the Balance Sheet at the outstanding principal repayable (plus accrued interest); and interest charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

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

Financial assets are classified based on a classification and measurement approach that reflects the business model for holding the financial assets (i.e. Why we are holding the asset) and their cash flow characteristics. There are three main classifications:

- Amortised cost
- Fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI), and
- Fair value through profit or loss (FVPL)

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

Financial assets measured at amortised cost

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

Any gains and losses that arise on the de-recognition of a financial asset are credited or debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Expected credit loss model

The Council recognises material expected credit losses on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost, either on a 12-month or lifetime basis except for those where the counterparty is central government or another local authority, where relevant statutory provisions prevent default. The expected credit loss model also applies to lease receivables and contract assets. Only lifetime losses are recognised for trade receivables (debtors).

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

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

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 other comprehensive income (FVOCI)

Financial assets that are measured at fair value through other comprehensive income are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured and carried at fair value. Fair value gains and losses are recognised as they arise in other comprehensive income.

Financial assets measured at fair value through profit or loss (FVPL)

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

The Council has chosen to apply statutory provisions for mitigating the impact of fair value movements on Pooled Investment Funds as directed in the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (SI 2018/1207) subsequently amended by SI 2023/241. This allows (where relevant criteria are met) for fair value gains and losses on Pooled Investment Funds to be reversed to an account established solely for the purpose of recognising fair value gains and losses – the Pooled Investment Funds Adjustment Account.

This statutory provision ceases on 31 March 2025.

Fair value measurements of financial assets

Fair value of an asset is the price that would be received to sell an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. The fair value measurements of the Council's financial assets are based on the following techniques:

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

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

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

Any gains and losses that arise on the derecognition of the asset are credited or debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

xi) Government grants and contributions

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

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

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

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

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

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

Community infrastructure levy

The Council does not currently charge a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) but may do so in future. When in place, the levy will be charged on new builds (chargeable developments for the Council) with appropriate planning consent. The Council will be responsible for charges and collecting the levy, which is a planning charge. Future income from the levy will be used to fund a number of infrastructure projects (these include transport, flood defences and schools) to support the development of the area.

When charged, the CIL is recognised at the commencement date of the chargeable development in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as a contribution without outstanding conditions. CIL charges, once introduced, will be largely used to fund capital expenditure. However a proportion of the charges may be used to fund revenue expenditure. A share of the charges which are due to be payable to the County, Town or Parish Councils will remain in creditors (receipts in advance) until due.

xii) Heritage assets

Heritage assets are those assets that are held and maintained principally for their contribution to knowledge and culture.

The Council owns several public artworks. These items meet the classification of Heritage Assets adopted by the Code (FRS102).

Where assets have been purchased or recently obtained, information on their cost or value will be available. The Code allows that where this information is not available or cannot be obtained at a value which is commensurate with the benefits to users of the financial statements, that the assets need not be recognised in the Balance Sheet.

When purchased or where a value is available, heritage assets are recognised on the balance sheet at historic cost. Assets within the Council's ownership are deemed to have indeterminate lives; hence the Council does not consider it appropriate to charge depreciation on those heritage assets on the Council's balance sheet. Due to the nature of the type of assets held, the Council's heritage assets are not subject to revaluation and will only be impaired if there is clear reason to suspect the assets have become impaired.

xiii) Intangible assets

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

The depreciable amount of an intangible asset is amortised over its useful life (usually 5 years) to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The Council carries no internally generated intangible assets on its balance sheet.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

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 or (for any sale proceeds greater than £10,000) the capital receipts reserve.

xiv) Inventories and long-term contracts

Inventories (stocks) are included in the Balance Sheet at cost.

Long term contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services with the consideration allocated to the performance obligations satisfied based on the goods or services transferred to the service recipient during the financial year.

xv) Investment property

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

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, being the price that would be received to sell such an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. As a non-financial asset, investment properties are measured at highest and best use. Properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually according to market conditions at the year end. Gains and losses on revaluation are posted to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

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

xvi) Leases

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

Where a lease covers both land and buildings, the land and buildings elements are considered separately for classification.

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

The council as lessee

Finance leases

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

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Lease payments are apportioned between:

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

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

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

Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense to the services benefiting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment. Charges are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a rent-free period at the commencement of the lease).

The council as lessor

Finance leases

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

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property – applied to write down the lease debtor (together with any premiums received), 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. 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.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

Operating leases

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

xvii) Property, plant and equipment

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

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of Property, Plant and Equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Council and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (e.g. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

The Council's capitalisation de minimis is £10,000, except for where the sum of a group of assets is significant, such as waste collection bins and boxes or ICT equipment.

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

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

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

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

- Community assets and assets under construction – depreciated historical cost
- Surplus assets – the current value measurement base is fair value, estimated at highest and best use from a market participant's perspective.
- all other assets – current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV).

Where there is no market-based evidence of current value because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost (DRC) is used as an estimate of current value.

Where non-property assets have short useful lives or low values (or both) depreciated historical cost basis is used as an approximation of current value.

Assets included in the balance sheet at current value are revalued to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their value at year-end. All land and buildings are revalued at least every 5-years as part of a rolling programme. Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains. Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement where they arise from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service.

Where items or property plant and equipment are revalued, and the valuer identifies an asset which has component parts that have significantly different useful lives, where one or more parts represent a significant proportion of the overall asset, then the asset may be componentised. With componentisation, one or more constituent parts may be identified, and the component parts separately valued for the accounts and depreciated over different useful lives to the main asset. Useful economic lives (and therefore depreciation calculations) will be based upon the asset lives recommended by the Council's valuer.

Where decreases in value are identified, they are accounted for as follows:

- where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains)
- 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 in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The Revaluation Reserve contains revaluation gains recognised since 1 April 2007, the date of its formal implementation. Gains arising before that date have been consolidated into the Capital Adjustment Account.

Impairment

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

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

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

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

Depreciation

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

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

- Operational buildings and surplus property – depreciated on a straight-line basis, over a 30 to 60 year period, depending upon the particular asset and an estimate of the asset life from the Council's valuer
- Car Park depreciable components (surface) – 20 years
- Land is not depreciated
- Vehicles and plant - depreciated on a straight-line basis, over a 7-year period
- Furniture and equipment – depreciated on a straight-line basis, over a 5-year period

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

- Investment property is not depreciated

Where an item of Property, Plant and Equipment asset has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately.

Revaluation gains are also depreciated, with an amount equal to the difference between current value depreciation charged on assets and the depreciation that would have been chargeable based on their historical cost being transferred each year from the Revaluation Reserve to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Disposals and non-current assets held for sale

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

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

Assets that are to be abandoned or scrapped are not reclassified as Assets Held for Sale.

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

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

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

xviii) Provisions, contingent liabilities and contingent assets

Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place on or before the balance sheet date:

- that gives the Council a present obligation
- that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and
- where a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

If it is not clear whether an event has taken place on or before the Balance Sheet date, it is deemed to give rise to a present obligation if, taking account of all available evidence, it is more likely than not that a present obligation exists at the Balance Sheet date. The present obligation can be legal or constructive.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

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

Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year. Where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

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

Contingent liabilities

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

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

Contingent assets

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

Contingent assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts where it is probable that there will be an inflow of economic benefits or service potential.

xix) Reserves

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

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

xx) Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute

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

xxi) Value Added Tax

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

xxii) Fair value measurement of non-financial assets

The Council's accounting policy for fair value measurement of financial assets is set out in the 'Financial Instruments' section (above). The Council also measures some of its non-financial assets such as surplus assets and investment properties and some of its financial instruments such as equity shareholdings (other financial instruments as applicable) at fair value at each reporting date. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. The fair value measurement assumes that the transaction to sell the asset takes place either:

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

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

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

The Council uses valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data is available, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs.

Inputs to the valuation techniques in respect of assets for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the Council's financial statements are categorised within the fair value hierarchy, as follows:

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

F6. Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

In applying the accounting policies set out in Note F5 above, the Council has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts are:

- The Council has a one-eighth share in Ubico Limited. The company provides a range of integrated environmental services including, commercial refuse collection and grounds maintenance services on behalf of the Council. The separate operating practices, management structure and the application of majority voting on the Ubico Limited board do not constitute the Council having joint-control or significant influence over the company. The Council's interest has therefore been classified as an investment in Ubico and group accounts have not been prepared.
- The Council jointly owns (with Cotswold District Council, the Forest of Dean District Council and Cheltenham Borough Council) Publica Group (Support) Limited, a wholly owned company, limited by guarantee, operating with Mutual Trading Status to deliver services on behalf of the Council and services to other members Councils under contract. Publica can be considered to be an employment vehicle (in accounting terms only a 'holding account'), employing and paying staff and then recharging these costs to the Councils, via a contract sum. It does not trade and does not make a 'profit' as substantially all surpluses are redistributed back to the councils. While the Council has an interest in the Company, the Council's share of any surplus for the year and net assets at the balance sheet date have not been consolidated into the Council's single entity accounts. It is the view of management that the figures involved are not material and the production of group accounts will not enhance disclosure or provide any additional benefit to the reader of the accounts, and on that basis, Group Accounts have not been prepared.
- No allowance has been made in the Councils' accounts for the transfer out of any Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) pension liability to Publica Group (Support) Limited. The service contract and tripartite

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

agreement between the Council, Oxfordshire Pension Fund and Publica Group (Support) Limited mean that the pension liability and risk relating to the pension fund remains with the Council, following the TUPE transfer of the majority of the Council's staff to Publica on 1st November 2017. Therefore, the Council is reporting the pension liability for both staff transferred to Publica, and the Councils retained staff, in the accounts. Although Publica, as the employer of many of the current staff may be initially responsible for paying any exit contributions (for example), for any of its staff that are members of the LGPS, such cost will be reimbursed by the relevant Council. The accounts have been prepared on the basis that the full pension fund liability for the LGPS sits in the Council's accounts. There are no separate disclosures for Publica as they are not responsible for any LGPS liability.

- Under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), assessments have been made as to the correct accounting treatment for a number of lease agreements, which the Council has entered into. Categorising leases as either operating or finance leases results in different accounting treatment depending upon the categorisation of the lease. In each case, a lease is classified based upon criteria contained within the Code and an assessment of the nature of the leasing arrangement in place.

The Council has entered into a lease-type agreement whereby it provides environmental services vehicles to Ubico Limited. Ubico pay a market-rate for the use of the vehicles and are responsible for insuring and maintaining the vehicles and determining their deployment (including use across other Ubico contracts where necessary). Ubico pay for the vehicles over a period of 7-years for new vehicles, which is deemed to be the useful economic life of the assets. The transaction has been accounted for on the basis that the agreement is a finance lease, because: i) the sum of the lease payments equal the cost of purchasing the asset; ii) the length of the term represents 'substantially all' of the useful life of the asset; and iii) the rights and responsibilities of ownership (maintenance, insurance, deployment) in relation to the vehicle assets sit primarily with Ubico Limited. This agreement has been formalised in a lease agreement between Ubico and the Council.

- The Council leases-in a small number of operational assets on 'peppercorn' or non-commercial terms. For such assets, the assets are not accounted for purely on the financial agreement (lease) in place but include an assessment of the substance of the transaction or underlying arrangement to take account of the view that the purpose of the lease is to provide services or benefit within the district. The terms of the lease and the desire to provide beneficial services are often represented in non-commercial lease-terms being agreed.
- A significant level of risk remains due to the volume of outstanding business rates appeals, which are being processed by the Valuation Office. Where appeals are successful, refunds of business rates are generally repayable back to the latest valuation date, which reduces the business rates yield in the year in which the refund is made. This set of accounts includes a provision for appeal losses. The value has been assessed using information of outstanding appeals supplied by the valuation office, as at 31st March 2024, and using experience of previous appeals rates. The Council's share of the liability stands at £1,780,750.
- Grants are only recognised as income in the CIES, where the Council is acting as a principal. If the Council is acting as an intermediary (agent), then the net balance of monies to either be repaid or due to the council, will be shown on the balance sheet. It is deemed the Council is acting as a principal if they have control of a grant i.e. the ability to direct the use of and obtain substantially all of the remaining benefits from the grant. Following the receipt of a grant the Council had to determine whether in administering the grant it was acting as an agent or principal.

Where the Council was acting as agent, the following conditions applied:

- It was acting as an intermediary between the recipient and the Government Department
- It did not have "control" of the grant conditions and there was no flexibility in determining the level of grant payable.

Where the Council acted as principal, it was able to use its own discretion when allocating the amount of grant payable. The narrative report (page 5) highlights the business grants where the Council is acting as either the principal or agent.

F7. Accounting standards not yet adopted

The Code requires changes in accounting policy to be applied retrospectively unless alternative transitional arrangements are specified in the Code. There is also the requirement for an authority to disclose information relating to the impact of an accounting change that will be required by a new standard that has been issued but not yet adopted.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

The following standards and amendments are not expected to be introduced until 1 April 2024:

IFRS 16 Leases This standard will require lessees to recognise assets subject to leases as right-of-use assets on their balance sheet, along with corresponding lease liabilities (there are exceptions for low value and short leases). Work has commenced to determine the impact of the new standard for the 2024/25 accounts and as yet, no material implications have been identified.

Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current (Amendments to IAS 1)

The amendments:

- specify that an entity's right to defer settlement must exist at the end of the reporting period
- clarify that classification is unaffected by management's intentions or expectations about whether the entity will exercise its right to defer settlement
- clarify how lending conditions affect classification, and
- clarify requirements for classifying liabilities an entity will or may settle by issuing its own equity instruments.

Lease Liability in a Sale and Leaseback (Amendments to IFRS 16)

The amendments to IFRS 16 add subsequent measurement requirements for sale and leaseback transactions.

Non-current Liabilities with Covenants (Amendments to IAS 1)

The amendments improve the information an entity provides when its right to defer settlement of a liability for at least 12 months is subject to compliance with covenants.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

F8. Assumptions Made about the Future and Other Major Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Authority about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates. Significant assumptions affecting the statement of accounts include:

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if actual result differs from assumption
<p>Property, Plant & Equipment – Operational Property</p>	<p>Asset valuations are based on market prices and are periodically reviewed to ensure that the Council does not materially misstate its non-current assets.</p> <p>The Valuer has stated that valuations have been prepared in accordance with RICS Valuation standards and recommendations contained within the RICS Red Book.</p> <p>In context of the Council's Property Portfolio, the Valuer has assessed the impairment risk by sector and individual asset. Due to the material nature of the Council Offices and Leisure Centres it has been considered prudent to revalue all assets within these sectors.</p> <p>The remainder of the portfolio has been assessed and it has been confirmed that there has been no further material changes to the portfolio that is considered sufficient to affect the unvalued portion.</p> <p>Operational assets are depreciated over the best estimate of an assets useful economic life. These asset lives are based upon assumed repairs and maintenance being carried out to maintain an asset. Asset lives are based upon information provided by the Council's valuer.</p> <p>With regards to Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC) method valuations of operational properties and the residual valuations of the surplus properties, the valuers have conducted a high level sensitivity analysis looking at the build cost growth over a period, 12 months prior to valuation and at the current levels. The valuers consider that of all the valuation elements in a DRC the build costings are the most volatile assumption and most susceptible to change through inflation and rising material/labour costings, among other things.</p> <p>Operational assets are depreciated over the best estimate of an asset's useful economic life. These asset lives are based upon assumed repairs and maintenance being carried out to maintain an asset. Asset lives are based upon information provided by the Council's valuer.</p>	<p>A reduction in the estimated valuations would result in reductions to the Revaluation Reserve /and or a loss recorded as appropriate in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. If the value of the Council's operational properties were to reduce by 10%, this would be unlikely to result in a significant charge to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement due to the level of revaluation reserve balance held of approximately £30.18m.</p> <p>An increase in estimated valuations would result in increases to the Revaluation Reserve and/or reversals of previous negative revaluations to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and/or gains being recorded as appropriate in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.</p> <p>If the useful economic life of an asset is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying value of an asset will fall. Depreciation charges for operational buildings will change in direct relation to changes in estimated current value. The net book value of non-current assets subject to potential revaluation is £74m.</p>

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

<p>Fair Value measurement of Investment Property</p>	<p>The valuers base their assumptions on observable data as far as possible, but this is not always available. In that case, the valuers use the best information available.</p> <p>The Council's external valuers use valuation techniques to determine the fair value of investment property. This includes developing estimates and assumptions consistent with how market participants would price the property. The investment properties' main assumptions for change are yield and rent. When valuing the investment properties, the valuers have run a number of valuations adjusting yields typically by 25 basis points each time to encapsulate and understand how current and future risk within the yield affects values. Whether this is further potential for rental growth, unknown covenant strength or letting void.</p> <p>During this accounting period Investment properties have been valued against assumptions of the national economic picture and local conditions that impact rental values.</p>	<p>Estimates for fair values may differ from the actual prices that could be achieved in an arm's length transaction at the reporting date.</p> <p>It is not possible to quantify the level of variance that may arise if assumptions used differ from actual asset values. The Council is confident, however, that the risk of any variance will not affect the Council's financial strategy. A fall of 5% in the overall revaluation would result in a fall in value of £2,662,200 against a current NBV of £53.244m.</p>
<p>Pension Liability</p>	<p>The estimation of the pension liability is based upon a number of factors and judgements applied by the scheme's actuary including discount rate used, rate of salary increases, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected return on Pension Fund investments. Estimates are made upon judgements and conditions as seen by the actuary at a point in time.</p> <p>An asset ceiling calculation has been applied to the pension fund asset value included in the accounts. This is due to an ongoing requirement to pay agreed past service contributions. Relevant accounting standards only set out high level principles, which are open to a wide range of interpretation. The approach adopted was proposed by the Council's consulting actuary following discussions with key LGPS audit practitioners.</p> <p>The Council has engaged Hymans Robertson as its consulting actuary to provide expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.</p>	<p>The effect of changing assumptions will result in changes in the valuation of the pension funds' assets and liabilities.</p> <p>Removing the asset ceiling calculation results in an increase in pension fund asset values of £10.624m. Instead of disclosing a pension liability of £4.970m the Council would instead disclose a pension fund asset of £5.654m</p> <p>For further details of the impact of variations in key assumptions, see note F1.</p>

Where other assumptions have been made these will be disclosed in the appropriate note to the accounts.

F9. Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

The Council has no significant contingent assets or liabilities to report.

F10. Related Parties

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

Central Government

Central government has effective control over the general operations of the Authority – it is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Authority operates, provides a significant element of the Council's funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many transactions that the Authority has with other parties (e.g. council tax bills and housing benefits). Details of any significant grants received in the year are listed under Note B9, *Grant Income*.

Members of the Council

Members of the council have direct control over the council's financial and operating policies. The total of Members' allowances paid in 2023/24 is disclosed in Note B6, *Members' Allowances*.

All elected Members are required to complete a questionnaire detailing any areas where potential conflicts of interest may occur between their private interests and their position as the elected representatives of the Council. Details are recorded in the register of members' interest, open to public inspection at the Council Offices during office hours.

- Fourteen Members declared an interest as a Town, Parish or County Councillor where precepts were awarded during 2023/24.

Officers

By virtue of the Officer Code of Conduct, employees of the Council are required to declare any relationship with individuals, organisations or companies that might prejudice, or could be viewed as influencing, their professional judgement. On an annual basis, senior officers and officers within positions of influence within the Council are required to complete a related party declaration to highlight any potential conflicts of interest.

Declarations are sought even where no conflicts of interest have been reported. There were no declarations that required further disclosure in this statement of accounts.

Cotswold District Council

Up until November 2017 the Council shared a number of senior staff with Cotswold District Council. On the 1st November the majority of the Council's staff TUPE-transferred to Publica Group (Support) Limited. Following the transfer, the Council now only share the legal function and the counter fraud unit.

Publica Group (Support) Limited

Publica Group (Support) Limited (the Company), is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee with no share capital.

ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURES – UNDERSTANDING THE ACCOUNTS

West Oxfordshire District Council, along with Cotswold, and Forest of Dean District Councils and Cheltenham Borough Council have jointly set up Publica Group (Support) Limited, a wholly owned company, limited by guarantee, operating with Mutual Trading Status to deliver services on behalf of the Council and services to other members Councils under contract.

Publica Group (Support) Limited is a Teckal company fulfilling the conditions set out in Regulation 12(4) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The Company is subject to management supervision by the Members. As such, the Company is a body governed by public law as defined in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

While Publica Group (Support) Limited works closely with the Council, the company has its own board of Directors, its own Management team, and operates independently from the Council.

A majority of staff will TUPE back to the partner Councils between 1st November 2024 and March 2025. The impact of this transfer will be reflected in the MTFS.

Ubico Limited

Ubico Limited was established in 2011/12 by Cheltenham Borough Council and Cotswold District Council to deliver a range of integrated environmental services including household and commercial refuse collection, recycling, street cleansing and grounds maintenance. It commenced operations on 1 April 2012.

During 2015/16 West Oxfordshire District Council became a shareholder of Ubico Limited. The Council holds an equal 1/8th shareholding in the Company.

The company provides services to the shareholder councils on a not-for-profit basis and therefore qualifies for the teckal exemption (named after the EU case that established the principle). As a teckal company, Ubico Limited must ensure that the percentage of work undertaken outside of the shareholder contracts is less than 20% of its total activity.

While the Council has a 1/8th shareholding in Ubico Limited, the Council is not deemed to have significant influence over the company. The separate operating practices, management structure and majority voting on the Ubico board do not constitute any means of joint control over the company. The Council's interest is therefore classed as an investment in Ubico.

Other Public Bodies

The Council collects precepts on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner and the Town and Parish Councils within the Council area. Precepts for the County Council and Police Authority are shown in the Collection Fund. Town and Parish precepts are shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account.

The Local Government Pension Scheme (of which West Oxfordshire is a member) is administered by Oxfordshire County Council (see note F1).

The Wychwood Project

The Wychwood Project is a registered charity that aims to inspire people to restore and conserve habitats and landscapes within the Wychwood area, which covers 120 sq miles, mostly in the West Oxfordshire District. The Council provided a Community Revenue Grant of £30,000 to the Wychwood Project in 2023/24 and a West Oxfordshire District Council Councillor is a trustee.

NOTES TO THE COLLECTION FUND

This "Agent's" statement shows the transactions of the Council as a billing authority in relation to the collection from taxpayers and distribution to local authorities and the Government of Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates (Business Rates).

2022/2023					2023/2024		
Business Rates £	Council Tax £	Total £		Note	Business Rates £	Council Tax £	Total £
	(99,702,337)	(99,702,337)	Council Tax receivable	G1		(105,632,719)	(105,632,719)
(36,000,794)		(36,000,794)	Business Rates Receivable	G2	(37,731,543)		(37,731,543)
46,291		46,291	Transitional Protection Payments		(4,245,178)		(4,245,178)
(11,445,577)		(11,445,577)	Contribution to previous year's deficit / (Surplus)		(2,478,743)		(2,478,743)
(47,400,080)	(99,702,337)	(147,102,417)	Total Income		(44,455,464)	(105,632,719)	(150,088,183)
		0	<u>Apportionment of previous year's surplus</u>				
			Central Government				0
	210,394	210,394	West Oxfordshire District Council			199,508	199,508
	1,650,734	1,650,734	Oxfordshire County Council			1,567,537	1,567,537
	242,692	242,692	Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner			228,998	228,998
0	2,103,820	2,103,820			0	1,996,043	1,996,043
			<u>Precepts, Demands and Shares</u>				
18,225,958		18,225,958	Central Government		20,652,808		20,652,808
14,580,766	9,705,853	24,286,619	West Oxfordshire District Council		16,522,247	10,242,533	26,764,780
3,645,192	76,258,830	79,904,022	Oxfordshire County Council		4,130,562	81,636,138	85,766,700
0	11,140,491	11,140,491	Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner			12,065,368	12,065,368
36,451,916	97,105,174	133,557,090			41,305,617	103,944,039	145,249,656
			<u>Charges on the Collection Fund</u>				
74,186	21,800	95,986	Write-offs of uncollectable amounts		263,518	42,939	306,457
1,136,600	966,368	2,102,968	Increase / (decrease) in Bad Debt / Appeals Provisions	G3	997,455	(378,082)	619,373
168,007		168,007	Cost of Collection		172,276		172,276
209,076		209,076	Disregarded Amounts - Renewable Energy Schemes	G4	271,541		271,541
1,587,869	988,168	2,576,037			1,704,790	(335,143)	1,369,647
38,039,785	100,197,162	138,236,947	Total Expenditure		43,010,407	105,604,939	148,615,346
(9,360,295)	494,825	(8,865,470)	(Surplus) / Deficit for the Year		(1,445,057)	(27,780)	(1,472,837)
12,542,848	(2,692,148)	9,850,700	(Surplus) / Deficit brought forward		3,182,553	(2,197,323)	985,230
3,182,553	(2,197,323)	985,230	(Surplus) / Deficit carried forward	G5	1,737,496	(2,225,103)	(487,607)

NOTES TO THE COLLECTION FUND

G1. Council Tax System

Under the council tax system, West Oxfordshire District Council must collect enough money each year from local residents to cover the cost of the services we provide, which are not funded by other sources such as government grants and fees and charges.

Council Tax was introduced on 1 April 1993, and is a property based tax. The District Valuer valued all domestic property in the area and placed them into one of nine bands. In order to set the Council Tax, the Council estimates the number of dwellings in each of the nine valuation bands and convert these estimates into an “equivalent number of Band D dwellings”. The table below shows the calculation for 2023/24.

Band	Total Chargeable Dwellings	Band 'D' Conversion	Band 'D' Equivalent Chargeable Dwellings	New Regulation Adjustments	New Band D Equivalent Chargeable Dwellings
A*	3.00	5/9	1.67	0.00	1.67
A	1,229.75	6/9	819.83	0.00	819.83
B	4,438.10	7/9	3,451.86	0.00	3,451.86
C	15,587.50	8/9	13,855.56	0.00	13,855.56
D	10,537.00	1	10,537.00	-2,112.38	8,424.62
E	7,148.50	11/9	8,737.06	0.00	8,737.06
F	4,212.25	13/9	6,084.36	0.00	6,084.36
G	2,787.50	15/9	4,645.83	0.00	4,645.83
H	361.50	2	723.00	0.00	723.00
Total	46,305.10		48,856.17	-2,112.38	46,743.79
Collection rate %					98.50%
Plus MOD contribution					1,036.22
TAXBASE					47,078.85

The total number of “equivalent Band D dwellings” is divided into net budget requirement to arrive at an “average Band D Tax” per dwelling. Dwellings in bands below “Band D” will pay proportionately less than this average and dwellings in bands above “Band D” will pay proportionately more than this average.

The above calculations resulted in an “average Band D Tax” of £2,207.87 per dwelling for 2023/24 (2022/23 £2,103.10) This included precepts payable to Oxfordshire County Council, the Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley and West Oxfordshire District Council (but excludes amounts payable to the Town & Parish Councils within the district).

G2. National Non Domestic Rates

Under the Business Rates Retention Scheme the Council acts as both principal and agent, in that it is able to retain 40% of the net standard business rates collected within the local area as income within its own budget (net of tariff to central government), as well as 100% of net rates from properties relating to renewable energy schemes (Disregarded Amounts). The Council distributes the remaining net balance of standard business rate income to Central Government, who are allocated 50%, with the final 10% to Oxfordshire County Council

	2022/23	2023/24
Total Non Domestic Rateable Value at 31 March (£)	116,197,248	117,039,457
National Non-domestic Rate Multiplier - Higher	51.2p	51.2p
National Non-domestic Rate Multiplier - Lower [Small Business]	49.9p	49.9p

NOTES TO THE COLLECTION FUND

The Business Rates receivable amount on the face of the Collection Fund Account is lower than the total of Non-domestic Rateable Value multiplied by the Non-domestic Rate Multiplier due to the award of various reliefs including Small Business Rate Relief and other mandatory and discretionary rate reliefs.

G3. Tax Payers' Arrears & Provisions for Uncollectable Amounts

Provision has been made for uncollectable tax payers' debts. At 31 March the provisions on the Collection Fund were as follows:

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Council Tax	(2,356,492)	(1,978,410)
National Non Domestic Rates	(4,889,659)	(4,451,878)
	(7,246,151)	(6,430,288)

G4. Business Rates – Disregarded Amounts

From April 2013 the Council was allowed to retain 100% of the growth from the business rates associated with renewable energy sites. All such growth is transferred to the Council's General Fund.

G5. Collection Fund Balance Sheet Apportionment

The apportionment of the balances on the Collection Fund as at 31 March is as follows:

2023/2024	West Oxon. District Council £	Oxfordshire County Council £	Central Govt. £	Thames Valley P&CC £
Council Tax	9.85%	78.5%	0%	11.61%
Debtors	814,311	6,490,314		959,232
Bad Debt Provision	(194,950)	(1,553,814)		(229,645)
Prepayments and Overpayments	(172,453)	(1,374,508)		(203,144)
(Surplus) / Deficit at 31 March	(219,259)	(1,747,561)		(258,280)
Business Rates	40.0%	10.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Debtors	979,374	244,844	1,224,218	
Bad Debt / Appeals Provision	(1,780,750)	(445,189)	(2,225,939)	
Prepayments and Overpayments	(360,037)	(90,009)	(450,046)	
(Surplus) / Deficit at 31 March	694,999	173,752	868,746	

NOTES TO THE COLLECTION FUND

2022/2023	West Oxon. District Council £	Oxfordshire County Council £	Central Govt. £	Thames Valley P&CC £
Council Tax	10.0%	78.5%	0%	11.5%
Debtors	820,660	6,447,923		941,963
Bad Debt Provision	(235,536)	(1,850,605)		(270,351)
Prepayments and Overpayments	(152,829)	(1,201,329)		(175,500)
(Surplus) / Deficit at 31 March	(219,626)	(1,725,603)		(252,089)
Business Rates	40.0%	10.0%	50.0%	0.0%
Debtors	1,020,138	255,034	1,275,172	
Bad Debt / Appeals Provision	(1,955,863)	(488,966)	(2,444,830)	
Prepayments and Overpayments	(141,867)	(113,494)	(28,374)	
(Surplus) / Deficit at 31 March	1,273,021	318,257	1,591,274	

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I. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council') is responsible for ensuring that:

- Its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards.
- Public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for.
- Public money is used economically, efficiently and effectively; and
- There is a sound system of governance, incorporating the system of internal control

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

In discharging these responsibilities, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and including arrangements for the management of risk.

The Council has developed and approved a Local Code of Corporate Governance ('the Code'), which is consistent with the core principles and sub-principles as set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016)" ('the Framework'). This statement explains how the Council has complied with the Code and also meets the requirements of Regulation 6(1)(a) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (England) which requires the Council to conduct a review at least once a year on the effectiveness of its system of internal control and include a statement reporting on the review with any published Statement of Accounts.

In addition to this, CIPFA issued its 'Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government (2015)'. The Annual Governance Statement ('the AGS') reflects compliance with this statement for reporting purposes.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

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

The system of internal control is a significant part of the governance framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to:

- Identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives.
- Evaluate the likelihood of those risks occurring.
- Assess the impact should those risks occur; and
- Manage the risks efficiently, effectively and economically

The governance framework has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31st March 2024 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Statement of Accounts.

While financial savings have been delivered over the last few years, we have identified some areas where more resources are required, so additional support has been given and further reviews are being undertaken, particularly in areas such as the finance team which has been identified as being significantly under-resourced.

During 2023-24 the residents of West Oxfordshire have continued to face the challenges presented by the cost of living crisis. The council has adapted the delivery of its services to meet the changing needs of the residents whilst coping with the financial challenges faced by all local authorities. Single year settlements restrict our ability to confidently plan for more than one year in advance and there is continued uncertainty over the timing of funding changes, such as Business Rates reset and phasing out of New Homes Bonus.

The general and wage inflation also puts additional pressure on the financial position of the council and the possibility of a new government does nothing to alleviate this challenging financial outlook.

3. THE GOVERNANCE ENVIRONMENT

The key elements of the Council's governance arrangements are outlined in the Code. The governance framework includes arrangements for:

- Identifying and communicating the Council's vision of its purpose and intended outcomes for citizens and service users.
- Reviewing the Council's vision and its implications for the Council's governance arrangements.
- Measuring the quality of services for users, ensuring that they are delivered in accordance with the Council's objectives and ensuring that they represent the best use of resources.
- Defining and documenting the roles and responsibilities of the Executive (Cabinet), Non-Executive, Scrutiny and Officer functions, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication.
- Developing, communicating and embedding codes of conduct, defining the standards of behaviour for Members and staff.
- Establishment of a Constitution Working Group to review and update Financial Rules, Contract Rules, Constitution, Scheme of Delegation and supporting procedure notes / manuals, which clearly define how decisions are taken and the processes and controls required to manage risks.
- Ensuring effective counter-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are developed and maintained.
- Ensuring the Council's financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2015).
- Undertaking the core functions of an Audit Committee, as identified in CIPFA's Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities.
- Ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful.
- Whistleblowing and for receiving and investigating complaints.

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- Risk based Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan.
- Identifying the development needs of Members and Senior Officers in relation to their strategic roles, supported by the appropriate training.
- Establishing clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, ensuring accountability and encouraging open consultation.
- Incorporating good governance arrangements in respect of partnerships, including shared services and other joint working and reflecting these in the Council's overall governance arrangements.
- Reports from external bodies such as the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman, HM Revenue & Customs, Information Commissioner, Investigatory Powers Commissioner and Planning Inspectorate.
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee represents a public forum through which Councillors can monitor the implementation of the Council's policies and the quality of its services; make recommendations on the discharge of the Council's functions and/or matters effecting the district and hold the Executive (Cabinet) to account for their decisions and actions.

The main areas of the Council's governance framework, and the key evidence of delivery, are set out below, under the headings of the core principles and sub-principles from the CIPFA/SOLACE "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (2016)

A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

- Behaving with Integrity
 - Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values
 - Respecting the rule of the law
-
- The roles and responsibilities of Members generally and all office holders are set out in the Council's Constitution, along with the way in which the various elements of the Council interact and complement each other. The Constitution is supported and underpinned by a separate Code of Conduct for Members and a joint Member / Officer Protocol, which sets out guidelines as to behaviour and practical issues. This is further supported by Publica's¹ Business Conduct rules which set out guidelines for staff on behavioural issues and the Council's Employee Code of Conduct.
 - Declarations are made at meetings by Members and Officers, where appropriate, and are recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The Members' Code of Conduct requires Members to make declarations of interest, when necessary, these are also recorded.
 - Registers of interest are completed annually by Members and published on the Council's website. The register of gifts, hospitality and sponsorship has been reviewed and approved at the Audit and Government Committee on March 2024. All declarations received by Members are recorded by the Monitoring Officer.

¹ Publica Group (Support) Limited is a local authority owned company, jointly owned by Cheltenham Borough Council and Cotswold, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire District Councils. Over 95% of staff formerly employed by West Oxfordshire District Council are now employed by Publica which delivers services on behalf of the Council.

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- An employee declaration is completed annually by all staff. A register of gifts and hospitality is maintained by Corporate Responsibility and addressed by the Governance Group every quarter.
- A new Council Employee Code of Conduct has been developed and was approved at the Audit and Governance Committee in March 2024.
- All HR policies, 29 in total, have been reviewed and approved by Council.
- The Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer report directly to the Head of Paid Service and are members of the Corporate Leadership Team.
- Internal audit reviews are designed to ensure services are complying with internal and external policies and procedures / statutory legislation. Where non-compliance is identified, this is reported to Management and to Members via the Council's Audit & Governance Committee (A&G).
- The Whistleblowing Policy was last updated in January 2022 and was agreed by the Audit and Governance Committee in April 2022. A counter-fraud unit working across Gloucestershire and West Oxfordshire helps prevent and detect fraud and corrupt practices, including misuse of power. The service reports to the Audit and Governance Committee and the Publica Board's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee twice a year.
- Training is compulsory for regulatory committees, that is, Development Control, Standards Sub-Committee and Licensing.
- The annual summary of Member Code of Conduct Complaints was considered by A&G Committee in August 2023 and lessons learnt endorsed.
- There are safeguards in the Constitution for handling planning and licensing applications from Members and Officers.
- Meetings are minuted, with decisions and key actions recorded appropriately. The Council continues to publish key decisions, in line with legal best practice. The Council has continued providing regular updates to and conversations with Members and across the organisation. Although all Member decision making meetings have reverted to being face-to-face in line with legislation, we have maintained the option for people to join remotely where possible and appropriate. This facility was be extended in January with the planned alterations in the Council Chamber will enable participants in meetings or events to join remotely where appropriate to do so.
- A webcasting Protocol was approved by the Council in January 2024.
- The Communications Service remains fully mobilised to ensure communications through all our channels to support public health advice / information / messaging and Council service and support information to reach audiences externally and internally. A bespoke Communications Strategy has been put in place to help all stakeholders feel 'informed, reassured, safe and inspired' through the current cost-of-living crisis.

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

- Openness
 - Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders
 - Engaging with individual citizens and service users effectively
-
- Annual accounts are published in a timely manner to help communicate the Council's financial position and performance.
 - The Council's Corporate Plan 2023 - 2027 was reviewed and adopted in January 2023. This is available on the Council website setting out the Council's vision and corporate priorities.
 - A new communications protocol was approved by Council in January 2024 setting out the role of the Team and the way in which it supports the Council including during sensitive periods, such as pre-election periods, was approved by Council in January 2024.
 - All Committee, Executive (Cabinet) and Council reports clearly outline their purpose, so the community can understand what is trying to be achieved. Reports also address financial, legal, equalities, risk and climate change implications to aid understanding of the potential impact of their recommendations.
 - The roles and responsibilities of the Executive (Cabinet), Non-Executive, Scrutiny and Officer functions are defined in the Council's Constitution.
 - A Scheme of Delegation of powers to Officers is included within the Constitution.
 - Communication channels for Publica staff and Council retained staff include one-to-ones and team meetings. A weekly update email from Publica Directors (Keeping you connected) and an online portal (intranet along with regular all staff briefings via Teams take place).
 - A Customer Feedback form is available publicly for handling comments, complaints and compliments and the Council's website includes different ways for customers to give feedback or access services. A customer satisfaction survey was carried out on the telephone service provided, with the Council receiving high satisfaction scores being ranked third in the country.
 - Ensuring clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders.
 - A new protocol for webcasting all Council Committee Meetings was approved in January 2024 at Full Council enabling greater transparency and community engagement in Council Meetings following the refurbishment to the Council Chamber into a multi-functional venue available for hire by the wider community.
 - The ability for members of the public to ask questions at Executive (Cabinet) meetings, Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings and meetings of the Full Council.
 - A report is produced quarterly regarding the performance of the Council's services and the achievement of its aims and objectives. The report is presented to the Executive (Cabinet), discussed at the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committees and published on the Council's website. The format of the report has been enhanced to provide a narrative and clearer information on Council priorities and KPI's.
 - The Council publishes transparency data on its website which includes supplier payments, senior management structure charts and the Annual Pay Policy Statement. Where data is not

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available in the published data sets, instructions are available on how to make a Freedom of Information requests and the procedure that will be followed to answer the requests.

- A Locality Leadership Team, comprising the Head of Paid Service, the S151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Publica's Locality Lead Assistant Directors, meet monthly to discuss projects, performance and risks and reports to be brought forward to Executive (Cabinet).
- Introduction of a new partnership framework in response to External Auditor recommendations in 2023/24 was implemented on the website in March 2024 signposting to our Partnership vision, values and principles and how we monitor our partnership involvement and where this is reported (through the corporate risk register) and a list of the partnerships the Council is involved with.

C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

- Defining outcomes
 - Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
-
- The Council's vision and corporate priorities are contained within the Council Plan 2023 - 2027 which was adopted by Council in January 2023. This sets out the high level areas of focus, and what the Council hopes to achieve on its own or in partnership with others. These priorities are supported by the Code of Corporate Governance as good governance should underpin all the work of the Council.
 - An annual business planning process is also conducted by Publica, which is informed by the corporate priorities, legislation and government guidance. All the areas of focus (corporate priorities) are underpinned by the following principles:
 - Putting Residents First
 - Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All
 - Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife
 - Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency
 - Working together for West Oxfordshire
 - Detailed proposals arising from the corporate priorities are individually assessed and are included within decision making reports.
 - Budget Procedure Rules have been adopted to ensure full engagement in the budget cycle.
 - Contract Procedure Rules have been updated and approved by Council and will be reviewed in light of the Procurement Act 2023.
 - The financial implications of delivering against the Council's priorities are included within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy ('MTFS'), revenue budgets and capital programme. These key financial documents are updated annually during the budget setting process. Variance to budget is reported quarterly.
 - As part of its MTFS the Council assesses its forecast financial position and updates its assumptions about the resources available to, and the investment needs of, the Council.
 - The Council is facing continued financial pressure from general and wage inflation. These are being incorporated into subsequent iterations of the MTFS and mitigations regarding costs are being developed.
 - A Transformation Group has been established to help steer the Council's response to the challenging financial environment, guide the preparation of a sustainable MTFS consistent with the Council Plan, and oversee the delivery of the Council's work programme in terms of service transformation, investment and revenue generation.

D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

- Determining interventions
 - Planning interventions
 - Optimising achievement of intended outcomes
-
- The Council has, with three other councils, created a company, Publica Group (Support) Ltd, to deliver more efficient and improved services. Where appropriate, processes have been or are being aligned to ensure consistency across the partner councils, without compromising local priorities. In recognition that Publica is a significant contractor of the Council, the Council monitors its performance by:
 - Considering Publica’s Annual Report at Council.
 - Considering Publica’s draft Business Plan annually at the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Executive (Cabinet) in February/March each year.
 - Requiring representatives from Publica to attend relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee(s) to support discussion on quarterly performance and other reports.
 - Receiving monthly “Keeping You Connected” updates by email from Publica to all Members.
 - Inviting Publica senior Officers to attend monthly Informal Executive (Cabinet) meetings to discuss progress against the Business Plan and Corporate Plan
 - Creation of quarterly WoDC retained Officers/Publica Executives meetings where performance and progress against Corporate Plan priorities is a key agenda item.
 - Develop informal mechanisms to share best practice, learning and Councillor development.
 - In addition to the creation of Publica, the Council continues to secure savings through improved use of its assets and investments.
 - Given the creation of Publica is five years on, all Shareholder Councils have jointly conducted a robust review of future options to make sure the solutions needed for the council to achieve financial stability can be achieved, given the MTFs shortfall over the years ahead. This review examined the priorities for service delivery, options for reduction or transformation and how the Publica model fits into this. See also the first paragraph in Section E.
 - Development of a monthly Officer Transition Group with retained WODC and Publica Locality Leads and the Interim MD to progress the Publica Transition Review
 - The Council is also a Shareholder in Ubico, who deliver the Council’s environmental services including waste and recycling collection services. The Council is focusing on ensuring effective governance arrangements are in place for this wholly owned company.
 - The Council has processes in place to identify and respond to external changes, for example: changes to legislation and regulation, emerging risks and opportunities. Corporate processes such as risk management, performance management processes, budget monitoring and other management processes are designed to capture and incorporate these external factors and to enable the Council to respond appropriately.

- The Strategic risk register is reviewed regularly by the Local Leadership Team and reported to the Audit & Governance Committee. This has been reviewed to ensure all required risks are escalated and reported.
- Projects and services retain their own risk registers and should elevate any high or strategic risks to the Local Leadership Team and Publica as appropriate for consideration. The Management Team reviews risk registers bi-monthly and escalates any emerging risks to the strategic register which is considered by Informal Executive and A&G Committee on a quarterly basis. Significant progress has been made this year in improving the identification and reporting of risks and improved communication and processes to ensure risks are appropriately escalated to the strategic register and visible to the Local Leadership Team.
- Key performance indicators are measured and reported quarterly. Significant work has been undertaken to develop service performance reports which are present to Executive and Overview & Scrutiny.
- A comprehensive service review has been undertaken of the shared Legal Service with additional resources being allocated to create additional specialised para-legal support and trainee/apprenticeship opportunity to free up fee-earners and grow your own talent along with the introduction of a case management system to assist with allocation, prioritisation and workflow of cases.
- Budgets are prepared annually in accordance with objectives, strategies and the MTFS, following consultation with residents, Members and Officers. The budget procedures rules, contained in the constitution, were reviewed and amended in November 2023.
- The MTFS is a live document and can be reviewed, updated and reported as necessary, to respond to the changing environment.
- As we move forward, we will continue to analyse the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and how that may impact our strategic priorities. The Council will continue to work with residents and local businesses to review and respond to their changing needs.

E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

- Developing the entity's capacity
 - Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals
-
- One of the reasons behind the creation of Publica was to increase service delivery capacity across the four partner councils by sharing common processes and procedures and eliminating (as far as possible) single points of failure. By working in partnership, the Councils are able to share the cost of commissioning bespoke and specialist advice. As part of the review cited at the third paragraph in section D above, the Council will consider how the Publica governance model and Executive arrangements support the Council's Retained Officers' capacity to lead the Council and develop ideas, strategies and political engagement. This work is ongoing.
 - The move to provision of services via wholly owned companies provides the opportunity to engage with a number of Non-Executive Directors that bring a wealth of experience from a range of different economic sectors. Councillors also have a range of experience which is a valuable asset to the Council.
 - There is a Scheme of Delegation at Member level covering the Council, Executive (Cabinet), individual Executive Members and other Committees. Similarly, there is a Scheme of Delegation for Officer decisions at Executive, Non-Executive and Regulatory meetings. These are reviewed and revised as structures change.
 - Financial rules are in place and are reviewed and revised as required.
 - An induction programme is available to new employees and Members. Training is also provided for both Members and Officers on an on-going basis as appropriate and necessary. Members on certain Committees (e.g., Planning, Standards and Licensing) are required to undertake training before attending the Committee meetings, and to attend further training to remain up to date and improve their knowledge. A new induction process has been introduced for staff in 2023/24 and for Members approved by A&G Committee to be rolled out after the local elections in May 2024.
 - Officers undertake regular 121 meetings with their line manager. As part of these 121 meetings, Officers discuss work plans/tasks and any training requirements associated with the successful delivery of the work plan. Officers are encouraged to complete Continuing Professional Development as relevant to their professional qualifications and service areas hold budgets to ensure that training can be undertaken to maintain skills and knowledge.
 - Training is also provided for Officers on an on-going basis as appropriate and necessary with CPD being undertaken by Officers accredited to professional bodies.
 - The Head of Paid Service, the Section 151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer and the Leader of the Council have clear statutory responsibilities. Roles and responsibilities are contained within the Constitution along with the Member/Officer Protocol.

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- The Ihasco online training facility has been further developed to create a suite of mandatory and service specific training.
- Mandatory Officer Cyber Ninja training has been undertaken with a specific tailored on-line module created for and rolled out to Members.
- A Leadership Development Programme has been run for senior managers within Publica and the Council. All Senior Managers have received Carbon Literacy training with Silver accreditation being achieved.

F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal controls and strong public financial management

- Managing risk
 - Managing performance
 - Robust internal control
 - Managing data
 - Strong public financial management
-
- The Council explains and reports regularly on activities, performance and the Council's financial position through reports to its Executive (Cabinet) and Committees. Timely, objective and understandable information about the Council's activities, achievements, performance and financial position is provided. This includes publication of:
 - Quarterly Performance Reports, publicly reported to the Executive (Cabinet)
 - Externally audited accounts including an Annual Governance Statement.
 - The Local Leadership Team reviews the Strategic Risk Register on a quarterly basis and also presents the Strategic Risk Register to informal Executive. The Strategic Risk Register is reported to the Audit & Governance Committee on a regular basis.
 - Risks are identified when undertaking Internal Audit reviews and reported when necessary. The Council, through the S151 Officer, is able to flag any areas of concern to be added to the work of the Internal Audit team in the coming year.
 - The work of the Internal Audit team is reviewed and challenged by both the S151 Officer and the Audit and Governance Committee.
 - Performance Management measures the quality of service for users to ensure services are delivered in accordance with the Council's objectives and represent best use of resources.
 - Performance is measured on a regular basis through the quarterly KPI dashboards and reported to Members and Executive (Cabinet).
 - Minutes of meetings are published and highlight the challenge made by Members to Officers and to Executive (Cabinet) Members.
 - The Internal Audit service is provided by South West Audit Partnership Internal Audit Services ('SWAP') and is run in partnership with other local authorities.
 - A risk-based Audit Plan is drafted annually following consultation with Officers, Members and the S151 Officer. The Audit Plan is approved at the Audit & Governance Committee prior to the financial year.
 - Audit reports, once completed, are discussed with the service manager. Executive summaries, including findings, and progress on the Annual Plan are reported to the Audit & Governance Committee, on a quarterly basis.
 - Recommendations made in audit reports are followed up 6 months after the completion of the audit and priority 1 and 2 findings are reported to the Audit & Governance Committee. Recommendations not implemented within that time scale are reported to the S151 Officer and to the Audit and Governance Committee.

- The Audit & Governance Committee's Terms of Reference are contained within the Constitution. Training is provided where appropriate.
- The CIPFA self-assessment was carried out by the A&G Committee in the last quarter of 2023/24 with the results being assessed at Committee in March 2024 recommending to Council to reduce the numbers on the Committee, not to appoint Executive Members, to recruit up to two IP's and produce a tailored training programme.
- A Counter Fraud Unit supports the Council and other third parties. Where investigations identify possible improvements to the internal control framework the Counter Fraud Unit will liaise with the Internal Audit team to ensure the improvements are followed up and implemented by management.
- An ICT Audit and Compliance Manager has been appointed as the Council's Data Protection Officer and therefore has responsibility for Data Protection policies and ensuring that Officers and Members are informed and appropriately trained.
- The Council has invested in its cyber security capability to increase its resilience against a cyber-attack, by implementing additional security solutions, recruiting additional staff and resourcing an ongoing training programme to maintain the impact of this investment.
- Audit reviews ensure data is held securely whether electronically or hard copy.
- The MTFS is reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the Section 151 Officer to ensure that the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Members are aware of the financial standing of the Council.
- A review was undertaken of Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee Structures, which consolidated the number of committees from three to one and reviewed the meeting timetable, to ensure it was more effective in reviewing the decisions made by the Executive Committee. Now meeting on a monthly basis in advance of Executive to allow decisions to be feed into the Executive decision-making process.
- The Independent Remuneration Panel meet to consider recommending a special responsibility allowance for the Vice Chair of O&S given the enhanced role of the single committee and the workload and number of working groups on moving to a single Committee.

G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

- **Implementing good practice in transparency**
- **Implementing good practices in reporting**
- **Assurance and effective accountability**

- Data in respect of transparency is published on the Council's website.
- The Council's Statement of Accounts is produced and published annually in accordance with statutory legislation. Aligned with this is the production of the Annual Governance Statement which identifies how the Council has met its governance reporting obligations
- External Audit recommendations are reported to Audit & Governance Committee, following the completion of their annual audit process, follow-ups of recommendations are also reported
- Internal Audit processes ensure compliance with Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards. Internal Audit recommendations are followed-up and reported to the Audit & Governance Committee, further follow-up is planned if recommendations have not been actioned in full.
- The Council has a process for the receipt and processing of freedom of information requests made under the Freedom of Information Act and environmental information requests under Environmental Information Regulations.
- There is a presumption that all reports and the associated annexes to be considered in public meetings will be published. The Council's Legal Officer is consulted in circumstances where reports or annexes contain information which is considered to be exempt from publication.

4. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the senior managers, the annual opinion from the Head of Internal Audit, the Officer Corporate Governance Group and comments made by the External Auditors, other review agencies and inspectorates.

The Council's process for maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework has included the following:

Statutory Officers, Executive Directors, Assistant Directors and Business Managers are required to complete an Annual Assurance Statement at the end of the financial year. These governance declarations provide appropriate management assurance that key elements of the system of internal control are in place and are working effectively and help to identify areas for improvement.

The Local Leadership Team (including the Section 151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer and Locality Directors) review the Strategic Risk Register on a quarterly basis and Service/Project Risk Registers are maintained by each Group/Business Manager.

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A Governance Group meets quarterly to discuss and action matters such as staff declarations of interests/gifts and hospitality, audit recommendations, cyber security and GDPR updates/breaches register and counter fraud updates.

The SWAP Assistant Director (Head of Internal Audit) provides the Audit & Governance Committee, as the Committee charged with governance, with an Annual Opinion on the control environment of the Council, which includes its governance arrangements.

Investigation of, and decisions on, allegations of failure to comply with the Members' Code of Conduct are considered and determined by the Monitoring Officer and the Standards Sub-Committee taking into account the views of the Independent Person.

The Council have three Independent Persons ('IP's') as a result of appointing an additional two IP's, under the Localism Act 2011, during 2023/24 to ensure resilience if there was an absence or conflict of interest situation.

Induction processes are carried out for newly elected Members.

Training and awareness sessions are carried out for the Audit & Governance Committee in relation to Informal/External Audit functions, risk, counter fraud and the budget periodically and a training programme has been approved for the next municipal year.

Bishop Fleming have been appointed, by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA), as the External Auditors for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28. A formal handover process has been followed between the incumbent auditors (Grant Thornton) and Bishop Fleming.

The External Auditors present progress reports to the Audit and Governance Committee.

The External Auditor's Annual Audit Letter and follow-up of management responses to issues raised in the Letter or other reports are overseen by the Audit & Governance Committee.

Quarterly performance reports, including the budget position, are presented to the appropriate Member panel and Executive (Cabinet), demonstrating performance management against agreed performance indicators and budgets.

The Audit & Governance Committee reviews the Annual Statement of Accounts, including the final AGS, the Treasury Management Strategy and quarterly progress reports from both Internal Audit (SWAP) and External Audit (Grant Thornton).

Full Council approves the annual budget and reviews and approves the Treasury Management Strategy, following recommendations from the Audit & Governance Committee.

Internal Audit monitors the quality and effectiveness of systems of internal control. Audit reports include an opinion that provides management with an independent judgement on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls. Reports including recommendations for improvement are detailed in an action plan agreed with the relevant Business Manager/Group Manager.

The Annual Internal Audit Opinion for 2023/2024, in respect of the areas reviewed during the year, was one of low "Reasonable" Assurance, that there is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Council's Financial Rules and Contract Rules are kept under review and revised periodically.

Other explicit review/assurance mechanisms, such as the Annual Report from the Local Government & Local Care Ombudsman and reports from SWAP or Grant Thornton are also reviewed.

APPROVAL OF LEADER AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework.

Signed on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council:

**Cllr Andrew Graham
Leader of the Council**

Date:

**Giles Hughes
Chief Executive**

Date:

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion on financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of West Oxfordshire District Council (the 'Authority') for the year ended 31 March 2024, which comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, the Collection Fund, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2024 and of the Authority's expenditure and income for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law, as required by the Code of Audit Practice 2024 ("the Code of Audit Practice") approved by the Comptroller and Auditor General. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements' section of our report.

We are independent of the Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

The Director of Finance has prepared the financial statements on the going concern basis as they have not been informed by the relevant government body of the intention to dissolve the Authority without the transfer of its services to another public sector entity. They have also concluded that there are no material uncertainties that could have cast significant doubt over its ability to continue as a going concern for at least a year from the date of approval of the financial statements.

In auditing the financial statements and having regard to the guidance provided in Practice Note 10 Audit of financial statements and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom (Revised 2022) on the application of ISA (UK) 570 Going Concern to public sector entities, we have concluded that the Director of Finance's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Director of Finance with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Director of Finance is responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Other information we are required to report on by exception under the Code of Audit Practice

Under the Code of Audit Practice published by the National Audit Office in November 2024 on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (the Code of Audit Practice) we are required to consider whether the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition' published by CIPFA and SOLACE, or is misleading or inconsistent with the information of which we are aware from our audit. We are not required to consider whether the Annual Governance Statement addresses all risks and controls or that risks are satisfactorily addressed by internal controls.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters required by the Code of Audit Practice

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit of the financial statements, the other information published together with the financial statements in the Statement of Accounts for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Under the Code of Audit Practice, we are required to report to you if:

- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- we make a written recommendation to the Authority under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- we make an application to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

- we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit.

We have nothing to report in respect of the above matters.

Responsibilities of the Authority and the Director of Finance

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities, the Authority is required to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this authority, that officer is the Director of Finance. The Director of Finance is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24, for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Director of Finance determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Director of Finance is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless they have been informed by the relevant national body of the intention to dissolve the Authority without the transfer of its services to another public sector entity.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- we have considered the nature of the sector, control environment and financial performance;
- we have considered the results of enquiries with management, internal audit and the Audit and Governance Committee in relation to their own identification and assessment of the risk of irregularities within the entity, and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations or whether they had any knowledge of actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- we have reviewed the documentation of key processes and controls and performed walkthroughs of transactions to confirm that the systems are operating in line with documentation;
- any matters identified having obtained and reviewed the Authority's documentation of their policies and procedures relating to:
 - identifying, evaluation and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud;

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

- the internal controls established to mitigate risks of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- we have considered the matters discussed among the audit engagement team regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

In common with all audits under ISAs (UK) we are required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

We have also obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that the Authority operates in, focusing on provisions of those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The key laws and regulations we considered in this context are those related to the reporting frameworks (the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24, the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024), the Local Government Act 2003, Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Government Finance Act 2012)).

In addition, we considered the provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which may be fundamental to the Authority's ability to operate or avoid a material penalty. These include data protection regulations, health and safety regulations, employment legislation, and money laundering legislation.

Our procedures to respond to risks identified included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described as having a direct effect on the financial statements;
- performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud;
- reviewing Committee meeting minutes;
- enquiring of management in relation to actual and potential claims or litigations;
- challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in its significant accounting estimates in respect of valuation of land and buildings, valuations of investment property and defined benefit pensions liability valuations; and
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgments made in accounting estimates are indicative of potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

We also communicated identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all members of the engagement team and remained alert to possible indicators of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

As a result of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that not all irregularities, including material misstatements in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation, will be detected by us, even though the audit is properly planned and performed in accordance with the ISAs (UK). The risk increases the further removed compliance with a law or regulation is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, given we will be less likely to be aware of it, or should the irregularity occur as a result of fraud rather than a one-off error, as this may involve intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Report on other legal and regulatory matters

Matter on which we are required to report by exception – the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

Under the Code of Audit Practice, we are required to report to you if, in our opinion, we have not been able to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2024. We have nothing to report in respect of the above matter.

Responsibilities of the Authority

The Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Auditor's responsibilities for the review of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to be satisfied that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in November 2024 and related statutory guidance. We considered whether the Authority has proper arrangements in place to ensure financial sustainability, proper governance and the use of information about costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.

We document our understanding of the arrangements the Authority has in place for each of these three specified reporting criteria, gathering sufficient evidence to support our risk assessment and commentary in our Auditor's Annual Report. In undertaking our work, we consider whether there is evidence to suggest that there are significant weaknesses in arrangements.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements – Delay in certification of completion of the audit

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate for West Oxfordshire District Council for the year ended 31 March 2024 in accordance with the requirements of Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice until we have:

- confirmation from the NAO that no additional work (beyond submission of the Assurance Statement) will be required in respect of the Whole of Government Accounts exercise.

We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the members of the Authority, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Authority's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and Authority's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Alex Walling, Key Audit Partner
for and on behalf of Bishop Fleming LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditors
Bristol

Date:

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A

Accounting Period

The period of time covered by the accounts, normally a period of 12 months commencing on 1 April. The end of the accounting period is the Balance Sheet date.

Accounting Statements

The Council's Core Financial Statements and Supplementary Financial Statements.

Accruals

Sums included in the final accounts to cover income or expenditure attributable to the accounting period but for which no payment has yet been made or received at the Balance Sheet date.

Actuarial Gains and Losses (Pension Schemes)

Changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not matched assumptions at the last actuarial valuation or because actuarial assumptions have changed.

Amortisation

A term used to refer to the charging of the value of a transaction or asset (usually related to intangible assets or deferred charges) to the Income and Expenditure Account over a period of time, reflecting the value to the authority, similar to the depreciation charge for non-current assets.

Appointed Auditors

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 includes a statutory requirement that a local authority's annual Statement of Accounts be subject to external review by a duly appointed external auditor. From 2018/19, the responsibility for the appointment of said external auditor has been devolved to Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSSA) for Local Government Authorities that have opted into its national scheme. Grant Thornton UK LLP is the Council's appointed auditors for the period 2018/19 to 2022/23.

Approved Institutions

Funds that are not immediately required may be invested but only with third parties meeting the credit rating criteria approved annually as part of the Council's Treasury Management Policies and Practices.

Asset

An item having value in monetary terms. See also Current Assets, Non-Current Assets and Financial Asset.

Audit of Accounts

An independent examination of the Council's financial affairs.

B

Billing Authority

A local authority responsible for collecting Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates.

Budget

The forecast of net revenue and capital expenditure over an accounting period.

C

Capital Expenditure

Expenditure for the acquisition, provision or improvement of non-current assets, which will be of long-term value to the Council, providing services beyond the current accounting period.

Capital Programme

The capital schemes the Council intends to carry out over a specified time period.

Capital Receipts

Money received from the disposal of non-current assets or the repayment of grants and loans, which is available for financing future capital expenditure.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Collection Fund

A statutory fund maintained by a billing authority, which is used to record local taxes and Non-Domestic Rates collected by the authority, along with payments to precepting authorities, the national pool of Non-Domestic Rates and the billing authority's General Fund.

Community Assets

Assets which the Authority intends to hold in perpetuity, that have no determinable finite useful life and that may have restrictions on their disposal, e.g. parks, historical buildings. See also Non-Current Assets.

Consistency

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

Contingency

Money set aside in the budget to meet the cost of unforeseen items of expenditure, or shortfalls in income.

Contingent Asset

A possible asset that arises from past events whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the Council's control.

Contingent Liability

A 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 cannot be measured with sufficient liability.

Council Tax

The main source of local taxation for local authorities. Council Tax is levied on households within its area by the billing authority and the proceeds are paid into the Collection Fund for distribution to precepting authorities and the Authority's General Fund.

Creditors

Amounts owed by the Authority for works completed, goods received, or services rendered before the end of the accounting period but for which payments have not been made.

Current Assets

Assets which can be expected to be consumed or realised during the next accounting period.

Current Liabilities

Amounts which will become due or could be called upon during the next accounting period.

Current Service Cost (Pensions)

The increase in the present value of a defined benefit scheme's liabilities as a result of employee service earned in the current period.

Curtailed (Pensions)

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.

D

Debtors

Amounts due to the Authority for works completed, goods received, or services rendered before the end of the accounting period but for which payments have not been received.

Depreciation

The estimated benefit of an asset consumed during the accounting period, owing to age, wear and tear, deterioration or obsolescence.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Direct Revenue Financing (DRF)

Resources provided from an authority's revenue budget to finance the cost of capital projects.

E

Equity

The Authority's value of total assets less total liabilities.

Equity Instrument

A contract that evidences a residual interest in the assets of an entity after deducting all of its liabilities.

Events After the Reporting Period

Those (non-adjusting) events, both favourable and unfavourable, of such materiality that their disclosure is required for the fair presentation of the Statement of Accounts, which occur between the Balance Sheet date and the date on which the Accounts are signed by the responsible financial officer.

Exceptional Items

Events or transactions that fall within the ordinary activities of the Authority and need to be disclosed separately due to their size to give fair presentation of the accounts.

External Audit

The independent examination of the activities and accounts of local authorities in order to give an opinion as to whether the Statement of Accounts have been prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and proper practices, and to ensure the authority has made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

F

Fair Value (FV)

The price an asset could be exchanged for in an arm's length transaction less any grant.

Fees and Charges

Income raised by charging users of services for facilities, e.g. leisure centres, trade refuse, etc.

Finance Leases

A lease that transfers substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership of an asset to the lessee. Accounting guidance requires that it should be presumed that such transfer of risks and rewards occurs if at the inception of a lease the present value of the minimum lease payments including any initial payment, amounts to substantially all (normally 90% or more) of the fair value of the leased asset. The present value is calculated using the interest rate implicit in the lease.

Financial Asset

A right to future economic benefits controlled by the Authority that is represented by:

- cash
- an equity instrument of another entity
- a contractual right to receive cash (or another financial asset) from another entity.
- a contractual right to exchange financial assets/liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially favourable to the Authority.

Financial Instruments

Any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity.

Financial Liability

An obligation to transfer economic benefits controlled by the Authority that is represented by:

- a contractual obligation to deliver cash (or another financial asset) to another entity.
- a contractual obligation to exchange financial assets/liabilities with another entity under conditions that are potentially unfavourable to the Authority.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

G

General Fund (GF)

The main revenue fund of a billing authority, used to meet day-to-day spending.

Government Grants

Grants made by the Government towards either revenue or capital expenditure to support the cost of providing the Authority's services. These grants may be specifically towards the cost of particular schemes or to support the revenue spend of the Authority.

Gross Expenditure

The total cost of providing the Authority's services before taking into account income from government grants and fees and charges for services.

Growth

Any increase in spending from one year to another which enables the Authority to pay for more services rather than to meet higher costs.

H

Housing Benefit (Rent Allowance)

An allowance to persons on low (or no) income to meet, in whole or part, their rent. Benefit is allowed or paid by local authorities but central government refunds part of the cost of the benefit provided and of the running costs of the service to local authorities.

I

Impairment

A reduction in the carrying value of a fixed asset below its carrying value (due to obsolescence, damage or an adverse change in the statutory environment)

Income

Amounts that the Authority receives or expects to receive from any source, including fees and charges, sales and grants.

Infrastructure Assets

Non-current assets belonging to the Authority which do not necessarily have a resale value e.g. highways, and for which a useful life span cannot be readily determined.

Intangible Assets

Non-financial assets which do not have physical substance but are identified and controlled by the Authority through legal rights e.g. IT Software.

Interest Receivable

The money earned from the investment of surplus cash.

Inventories

Items of raw materials and stores an authority has procured to use on a continuing basis and which it has not yet used.

Investment Property

Land and Buildings non-current assets held only for investment potential.

J

Joint Arrangement

An arrangement under which the participants engage in joint activities but do not create a legal entity because it would not carry on a trade or business of its own.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

L

Liability

A liability is where the Authority owes payment to an individual or another organisation. See also Contingent Liability, Current Liabilities and Financial Liability

Local Council Tax Support Scheme

Assistance provided by billing authorities to adults on low incomes to help pay their Council Tax bill. The cost is borne by the Council.

Long-Term Assets

Non-current and other assets which can be expected to be of use or benefit the Authority in providing its service for more than one accounting period.

Long-Term Liabilities

Amounts which will become due or could be called upon beyond the next accounting period.

M

Materiality

The concept that the Statement of Accounts should include all amounts which, if omitted, or misstated, could be expected to lead to a distortion of the financial statements to a reader.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

The minimum amount which must be charged to an Authority's revenue account each year and set aside as provision for repayment of debt as required by the Local Government Act 2003.

N

National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

A levy on businesses, based on a national rate in the pound set by the Government, multiplied by the rateable value of the premises they occupy.

Net Book Value (NBV)

The amount at which non-current assets are included in the balance sheet.

Net Debt

The Authority's total borrowings less cash investments.

Net Expenditure

Gross expenditure less specific service income.

Net Interest on the Net Defined Benefit Liability (Pensions)

The net interest expense - the change during the period in the net benefit liability that arises from the passage of time.

Non-Current Assets

Property, plant and equipment and other assets that bring longer term benefit or service potential to the Authority.

Non-Operational Assets

Assets held by the Authority but not directly occupied, used or consumed in the direct delivery of services, e.g. assets in the course of construction and surplus land.

O

Operating Leases

A lease other than a Finance Lease (see above). The future obligations relating to operating leases are disclosed to provide the reader with an estimate of the outstanding un-discharged obligations in relation to such leases.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Operational Assets

Non-current assets held and occupied, used or consumed by the Authority in the direct delivery of those services for which it has a statutory or discretionary responsibility.

Outturn

Actual income and expenditure in a financial year (accounting period).

P

Past Service Costs (Pensions)

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

Pension Fund

An employees' pension fund maintained by an authority, or group of authorities, in order to make pension payments on the retirement of its participants; it is financed from contributions from the employing authority, the employee and investment income.

Precept

A levy made by one statutory body (Precepting Authority) on another to meet the net cost of its services.

Precepting Authorities

Those authorities that are not Billing Authorities, i.e. do not collect the Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates. Police authorities are 'major' precepting authorities and town and parish councils are 'local' precepting authorities.

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. This does not include normal recurring corrections or adjustments of accounting estimates made in prior years.

Provisions

Amounts set aside for the purposes of providing for any liability or loss which is likely or certain to be incurred but is uncertain as to the amount or the date on which it will arise, e.g. bad debts.

Prudence

The concept that income should only be anticipated to the extent that it will be received, as cash or other assets, with reasonable certainty and full and proper allowance should be made for all known and foreseeable losses and liabilities.

Prudential Code

The CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities – the guidance applicable from April 2017 for the greater freedom for authorities to borrow to fund capital investment (under the Local Government Act 2003). This Code requires the Authority to set and monitor a suite of Prudential Indicators, including its Affordable Borrowing Limit, and produce a capital strategy to give weight to local circumstances and explain their approach to borrowing and investment.

R

Rateable Value

The annual assumed rental value of a hereditament that is used for NNDR purposes.

Revenue Expenditure Funded by Capital Under Statute (REFCUS)

Expenditure of a capital nature but for which there is no tangible asset, e.g. renovation grants.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Related Parties

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

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

Examples of related parties to an authority include Central Government, Local Authorities and other bodies precepting or levying demands on the Council Tax, its Members, its Chief Officers and its Pension Fund.

For individuals identified as related parties, it is also presumed that members of the close family, or the same household, or any partnerships, companies in which the individual or a member of their close family, or the same household has a controlling interest, are deemed to be related parties.

Related Party Transactions

The transfer of assets or liabilities or the performance of services by, to or for a related party irrespective of whether a charge is made. The materiality of related party transactions is judged not only in terms of their significance to the Authority, but also in relation to its related party.

Reserves

Amounts set aside in the accounts for the purpose of meeting general, future expenditure. Reserves may also be used to smooth the cost of certain activities over a number of years. A distinction is drawn between reserves and provisions (see above), which are set up to meet known liabilities.

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.

Return on Plan Assets (Pensions)

Changes during the period in the net benefit liability that arises from the passage of time excluding amounts included in Net Interest on the Net Defined Benefit Liability.

Revenue Expenditure

Spending on day-to-day items including employees' pay, premises and transport costs and supplies and services.

Revenue Support Grant

A general grant paid by the Government to Council's contributing towards the costs of their services.

S

Specific Grants

The term used to describe all government grants, including supplementary and special grants, to local authorities other than Revenue Support Grant and capital grants.

T

Total Cost

The actual cost of services reflecting all of the direct, indirect and overhead costs that have been incurred in providing the service, even where the expenditure is not under the control of the service's chief officer.

W

Work In Progress

The cost of work carried out on an uncompleted project at the Balance Sheet date, which should be accounted for within the accounting period.

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