

## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

### I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2018/19 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2019. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, which those regulations require 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 2018/19* and supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

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

### 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 the sale of goods is recognised when the Council transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership to the purchaser and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council.
- Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the Council can measure reliably the percentage of completion of the transaction and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council.
- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed – where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption, they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet.
- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.
- Interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument, rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where debts may not be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.
- The impact of IFRS15: Revenue from Contracts with Customers has been considered and deemed to have no material impact.

### III. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

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

that mature in 30 days or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

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

#### **IV. CHARGES TO REVENUE FOR NON-CURRENT ASSETS**

Services, support services and trading accounts are debited with the following amounts to record the cost of holding non-current assets during the year.

- Depreciation attributable to the assets used by the relevant service.
- Revaluation and Impairment losses on assets used by the service where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which the loss 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 by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

#### **V. COUNCIL TAX AND NON-DOMESTIC RATES**

Billing authorities act as agents, collecting council tax and non-domestic rates (NDR) on behalf of 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 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 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.

## VI. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

### Benefits Payable during Employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within 12 months of the year end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave, bonuses and non monetary benefits for current employees. These expenses are charged on an accruals basis to the relevant service line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement..

**Commented [GG1]:** We don't do this accrual plus the explanation is overly detailed and not material to the understanding of the Statements.

### 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. They are charged on an accruals basis to the appropriate service, or where applicable, to the Non Distributed Costs line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement at the earlier of when the Council can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the council recognises costs for a restructuring.

### Post-Employment Benefits

Employees of the Council are members of the Local Government Pension Fund, administered by Lincolnshire County Council. The scheme provides defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees worked for the Council.

The Council recognises the cost of retirement benefits in the revenue account when employees earn them, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions.

**Commented [GG2]:** Excessive detail not material to understanding of stmts

### Local Government Pension Scheme

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

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

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 revenue accounts of 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 as part of Non Distributed Costs

- Net interest on the net defined pension liability (asset) i.e. net interest expense for the Council – the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability (asset) that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Remeasurement comprising:
  - The return on plan assets – excluding amounts included in net interest on the defined benefit liability (asset) charged to the Pension 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 assumption – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
  - Contributions paid to the Lincolnshire 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 Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the General Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

### **Discretionary Benefits**

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

## **VII. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS**

### **Financial Liabilities**

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

For all of the borrowing that the Council has, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principle repayable (plus accrued interest) and interest charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account is the amount payable for the year in the loan agreement.

**Commented [GG3]:** Too specific for a policy Note 41  
Borrowing analyses loan by source

## Financial Assets

Financial assets are classified based on a classification and measurement approach that reflects the business model for holding the financial assets and their cashflow characteristics. There are three main classes of financial assets measured at:

- amortised cost
- fair value through profit or loss (FVPL), and
- fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI) [separate accounting policy is required where an authority holds financial instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income].

The Council's business model is to hold investments to collect contractual cash flows. Financial assets are therefore classified as amortised cost, except for those whose contractual payments are not solely payment of principal and interest (ie 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 (CIES) for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for Statements the instrument. For most of the financial assets held by the Council, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable (plus accrued interest) and interest credited to the CIES is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

Interest is credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES at a marginally higher effective rate of interest than the rate receivable from the voluntary organisations, with the difference serving to increase the amortised cost of the loan in the Balance Sheet. Statutory provisions require that the impact of soft loans on the General Fund Balance is the interest receivable for the financial year – the reconciliation of amounts debited and credited to the CIES to the net gain 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.

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

### Expected Credit Loss Model

The Council recognises expected credit losses on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost [or where relevant FVOCI], either on a 12-month or lifetime basis. The

expected credit loss model also applies to lease receivables and contract assets. Only lifetime losses are recognised for trade receivables (debtors) held by the Council.

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

### **Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit of Loss**

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

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

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

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

- Level 1 inputs – quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets that the 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.

## **VIII. GOVERNMENT GRANTS & OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS**

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

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

Amounts recognised as due to the Council are not credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement until conditions attached to the grant or contributions have been satisfied. Conditions are stipulations that specify that the future economic benefits or service potentially 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.

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

Commented [GG4]: Excessive detail

## IX. HERITAGE ASSETS

Heritage assets are held or maintained principally for their contribution to knowledge and culture. They are initially recognised at cost if this is available. If cost is not available, values are only included in the Balance Sheet where the cost of obtaining valuation is not disproportionate to the benefit derived. For most of the Council's heritage assets, insurance valuations are used. Where no market exists or the asset is deemed to be unique, and it is not practicable to obtain a valuation, the asset is not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in the notes to the accounts.

Heritage assets are depreciated over their useful life if this can be established. If an asset is considered to have an indefinite life, no depreciation is charged. Disposals, revaluation gains and losses and impairments of heritage assets are dealt with in accordance with the Council's policies relating to property, plant and equipment.

The cost of maintenance and repair of heritage assets is written off in the year incurred.

## X. INTANGIBLE ASSETS

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

Expenditure on the development of the Council's website is not capitalised.

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

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

The useful life of intangible assets is assessed by the Chief Finance Officer at the time of acquisition. Intangible assets are derecognised when no future economic benefits are expected from them.

#### **XI. INTERESTS IN COMPANIES AND OTHER ENTITIES**

The Council has a material interest in Gravitas Housing Limited. The nature of this relationship has been assessed and it is deemed to be a subsidiary. The Council is not currently required to produce group accounts on the grounds of materiality.

**Commented [DM5]:** What about the other companies?

#### **XII. INVENTORIES AND LONG TERM CONTRACTS**

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

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

#### **XIII. INVESTMENT PROPERTY**

Investment properties are those that are used solely to earn rentals and/or for capital appreciation. The definition is not met if 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 line and result in a gain for the General Fund Balance. However, revaluation and disposal gains and losses are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the General Fund Balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account and (for any sale proceeds greater than £10,000) the Capital Receipts Reserve.

#### **XIV. LEASES**

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to the 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 leases 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 e.g. payments net of financing costs. Initial direct costs of the Council are added to the carrying amount of the asset. Premiums paid on entry into the lease are applied to writing down the lease liability. Contingent rents are charged as expenses in the period in which they are incurred.

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 assets estimated useful life (where ownership of the asset does not transfer to the Council at the end of the lease period).

### **Operating Leases**

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefitting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment. Charges are made on a straight line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the patterns 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 and replaced by a long-term debtor in the Balance Sheet valued on the future income due under the finance lease.

### **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).

**Commented [GG6]:** Operational detail

## **XV. OVERHEADS AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

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

## **XVI. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT**

Assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the production or supply of goods and 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, over more than one year and that the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an assets potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

The Council has a de-minimis of £10,000 for capital expenditure, with the exception of the purchase of motor vehicles. Where the total cost of an asset is higher than £10,000 but only part of the expenditure has occurred within a financial year that expenditure would be included in the balance sheet even if it was below the de minimis level.

### **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 Council does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred while assets are under construction.

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

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

- Dwellings – current value determined using the basis of existing use value for social housing (EUV-SH). The social housing discount applied in 2018/19 is 42%.
- Community assets and assets under construction – historical cost.
- Plant, Vehicles & Equipment – depreciated historical cost
- All other classes of assets – current value, unless there is no market-based evidence of fair value because of the specialist nature of the asset. In this case fair value is estimated using the Depreciated Replacement Cost method.

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at current value are re-valued where there have been material changes in the value, but as a minimum every five years. Valuations of property assets are carried out by the District Valuer, an external, qualified valuer, who is independent

of the Council. The method of valuations is as recommended by CIPFA and in accordance with the principles and guidance notes issued by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. Operational assets constructed or acquired during the year will be re-valued on 31 March of the following year.

Increases as a result of revaluations are debited to the appropriate asset account, with the opposite entry going to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains, except to the extent where it reverses a previous revaluation loss that was charged to a service revenue account within the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement. In this case the revaluation gain will first be used to offset the previous loss and any further gain is then taken to the Revaluation Reserve. Revaluation gains charged to Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account and reported in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Decreases as a result of revaluation, which are not specific to one asset but affect several, are revaluation losses as opposed to impairments. The decrease is recognised in the Revaluation Reserve up to the balance in respect of each asset affected and then in Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services. Any such charge taken to Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services is then transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account and reported in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

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

### **Impairment**

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

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

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

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

### **Depreciation**

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

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

- Land is not depreciated as it will not have a finite life.
- Council Dwellings and Other Buildings are depreciated using the straight line method. The finite useful life is assessed by the District Valuer at the time of revaluation but for Council Dwellings is usually 50 years, and for other buildings is between 1 and 60 years.
- Plant and Equipment are also depreciated by the straight line method. Useful life is assessed by the Chief Finance Officer at the time of acquisition, usually between 3 and 10 years. Some assets have a longer life span, up to 30 years.
- Vehicles are depreciated using the reducing balance method at a rate of 25% per annum.
- Non-current assets held-for sale are 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 historic cost being transferred each year from the Revaluation Reserve to the Capital Adjustment Account.

### **Componentisation:**

Only assets with a carrying amount more than or equal to £500,000 at the beginning of the financial year are considered for componentisation. To be recognised as a component the value of the part of the asset being considered must be more than or equal to 10% of the value of the asset, and have a life less than or equal to half that of the main asset. When a component is replaced, the carrying amount of the old component is derecognised and the new component is recognised. If the carrying amount of the old component is not known, this is estimated by indexing back from the cost of the new component and adjusting for depreciation and impairment over the old component's useful life. The Building Costs Index will be used.

The depreciation calculated is charged to the service revenue accounts, central support service accounts and trading accounts.

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 classified 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 a fair value less costs to sell, the loss is posted in the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure statement. Gains in fair value are recognised

only up to the amount of any previous losses recognised in the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services. Depreciation is not charged on Assets Held for Sale.

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

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

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

Amounts for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. A proportion of receipts related to housing disposals is payable to the Government. The balance of receipts remains within the Capital Receipts Reserve, and can then only be used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the Council's underlying need to borrow (the capital financing requirement).

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing.

## **XVII. PROVISIONS, CONTINGENT ASSETS AND CONTINGENT LIABILITIES**

### **Provisions:**

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Council a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

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

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

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

The council has made a provision for settling the self-insured element of Public Liability insurance claims.

## **Contingent Liabilities**

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

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

## **Contingent Assets**

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

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

## **XVIII. RESERVES**

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

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

## **XIX. REVENUE EXPENDITURE FUNDED FROM CAPITAL UNDER STATUTE**

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but 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.

## **XX. VAT**

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

## **XXI. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT**

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

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

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

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