

Group Accounting Policies

General Principles

The group accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice for Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom, issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

The accounting policies used in preparing the Group Accounts are generally those used by Cheshire East Council in their single entity financial statements. In order to align group entities accounting policies to those used by the Council and ensure consistency of accounting treatment across the group, the following principles have been adopted:

(a) Consolidation of Subsidiaries

Subsidiaries have been consolidated using the acquisition accounting basis. This is a full, line by line consolidation of the financial transactions and balances of the Council and its subsidiaries. To avoid overstating the figures within the group financial statements, all transactions and balances between members of the group (the Council and its subsidiaries) have been eliminated.

The Group Accounts include Cheshire East Council and wholly owned subsidiaries ANSA Environmental Services Limited, Transport Service Solutions Limited, Orbitas Bereavement Services Limited and Civicance Limited. The wholly owned subsidiary Tatton Park Enterprise Limited and associate company Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Limited are excluded from the Group Accounts on the grounds of materiality.

(b) Alignment of accounting framework and policies

Where group organisations use different accounting policies to the Council, their accounts have been restated to align their accounting policies with those of the Council where the effect of not doing so would be material to the reader's interpretation of the accounts.

(c) Unrealised profits from intra-group transactions

Any unrealised profit reflected in the carrying amount of property, plant and equipment and inventory arising from trading between the Council and its group companies will be eliminated to avoid the double counting of gains.

(d) Company losses Accounting Treatment

The Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement includes the profits / losses arising in each of the wholly owned subsidiary companies.

Cheshire East Council ~ Accounting Policies

General Principles

The Council is required by The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts, and those regulations require it to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The Statement of Accounts has been prepared on a 'going concern' basis. 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.

(a) Accounting for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR)

The collection of council tax and non-domestic rates (NDR) is, as identified in the Code of Practice for Local Authority Accounting, in substance, an agency arrangement for both billing authorities and major preceptors. The Council is the billing authority in this arrangement, while Police and Fire are the preceptors. Therefore, the income included in each body's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year is their proportion of accrued income for the year. The cash collected belongs proportionately to the Council and the preceptors.

There is, therefore, a debtor / creditor position between the billing authority and each major preceptor recognised in the balance sheets. The Council only recognises in its balance sheet the Council's share of any outstanding arrears, receipts in advance, receivables impairment allowance and provision for alteration of lists and appeals allowance.

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 in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The cost of collection allowance received by Cheshire East Council is the billing authority's income and is included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

(b) Accruals of Income and Expenditure

Income and expenditure is included in the accounts on an accruals basis, apart from housing benefit payments and minor cash income, which are shown in the accounts when the expenditure is incurred or the income is received. In particular:

- Sales, fees, charges and rent due from customers are accounted for as income at the date the Council provides the relevant goods and services.

- 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.
- Works are charged as expenditure when they are completed. Prior to this they are carried as work in progress on the balance sheet.
- Interest payable on borrowings and receivable on investments is accounted for on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows determined by the contract.
- Where income or expenditure has 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 it is doubtful that debts will be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected. The Council's policy is to provide in full for the non-payment of all debts over 6 months old unless a payment arrangement is in place or the debt is otherwise secured.
- Where income has been received in the year in relation to activities to be carried out in the following financial year, a receipt in advance is recorded in the balance sheet.
- Where payment has been made in relation to activities to be carried out in the following financial year, a payment in advance is recorded in the balance sheet.
- Severance costs arising from redundancies agreed on or before the balance sheet date are accrued in the accounts.
- Non-exchange transactions are recognised when it is probable that the economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council and the amount of revenue can be measured reliably.
- Revenue is defined as income arising as a result of the Council's normal operating activities and where income arises from contracts with service recipients it is recognised when or as the Council has satisfied a performance obligation by transferring a promised good or service to the service recipient.

(c) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions that are immediately repayable without penalty. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments held at the balance sheet date that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash on the balance sheet date 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 approach to cash management.

(d) Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets

Service Income and Expenditure Accounts, support services and trading accounts are debited with the following amounts to record the real cost of holding non-current assets during the year:

- Depreciation attributable to the assets used by the relevant service.
- Revaluation and impairment losses on assets used by the service where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which 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 amortisations. 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, impairment losses and amortisation are therefore replaced by the contribution in the General Fund balance (Minimum Revenue Provision), by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

(e) 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 salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave for current employees. These are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Council.

An accrual is made for the cost of leave entitlements which were not taken before the year end and which employees can carry forward to the next financial year. The accrual is made at the salary rates applicable in the following accounting year, being the period in which the employee takes the benefit.

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 or, where applicable, to the Central Budgets 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 recognised 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 pensioner 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 Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for pension enhancement termination benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the Pension Fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year end.

Details of Termination Benefits are contained in [Note 21](#).

Post-Employment Benefits

Local authorities are required by the Code to account for post-employment benefits in accordance with IAS19 'Employee Benefits as amended in 2011'. Most employees of the Council participate in one of three pension schemes which meet the needs of employees in particular services (further details are provided in [Note 25](#) and [Note 26](#) to the financial statements). These Schemes provide defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions) based on membership earned during the time that the employee was a member of the Scheme.

There are two types of scheme:

1) Defined Benefit Schemes

A defined benefit scheme is one for which post-employment benefits are determined independently of the investments of the plan, with employers having an obligation to make further contributions where assets are insufficient to meet employee benefits. Employer contributions are accounted for as revenue expenditure in the period to which they relate. Additionally, liabilities are recognised as benefits are earned and, for funded schemes, are matched with the organisation's attributable share of scheme assets. Liabilities are the post-employment benefits that have been promised under the formal terms of a pension scheme, measured on an actuarial basis; assets are the Authority's attributable share of the investments held in the pension scheme to cover the liabilities and are measured at fair value at the balance sheet date.

- **Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)**

The LGPS is a funded scheme, meaning that the Scheme's liabilities are backed by investment assets. It is a statutory defined benefit scheme and all employees of Cheshire East Council (excluding teachers and employees in the NHS Pension Scheme) may participate in the Scheme. The Council and its employees pay contributions into the Cheshire Pension Fund, which is administered by Cheshire West and Chester Council. The Council contributes to the Fund at a rate which is intended to fund the growth in pensions over the longer term, as calculated by the Fund's independent Actuary.

The LGPS Scheme is accounted for as a defined benefit scheme in accordance with International Accounting Standard 19 (IAS19). The liabilities of the Scheme attributable to Cheshire East Council are included in the balance sheet on an actuarial basis, using the projected unit method. The assets of the Fund are included at their fair value. Any changes in the present value of the defined benefit obligation resulting from experience adjustments and / or changes in actuarial assumptions are accounted for in the year in which they arise.

- **Teachers Unfunded Scheme (Discretionary Benefit Scheme)**

The Council is also responsible for any discretionary retirement benefits awarded by the Council to teachers on a discretionary basis. These awards fall outside the scope of the Teachers' Pension Scheme and are referred to in the accounts as the Teachers Unfunded Scheme. This Scheme is accounted for on a defined benefit basis using the same policies that are applied to the

Local Government Pension Scheme. The liabilities of the Scheme attributable to the Council are included in the balance sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method.

2) Defined Contribution Schemes

Defined contribution schemes are pension plans where the level of benefits depends on the value of the contributions paid in respect of each member and the investment performance achieved on those contributions. The rate of contribution is determined by the scheme's rules and the employer's liability is limited by the contributions it has agreed to pay. The employer has no obligation to pay further amounts if the scheme does not have sufficient assets to pay employee benefits. Employer contributions for defined contribution schemes are accounted for as revenue expenditure in the period to which they relate, with the balance sheet reflecting only the extent of any prepaid or outstanding contributions.

The following schemes are technically defined benefit schemes. However, the Council is not able to identify its share of either Scheme's underlying surpluses or deficits with sufficient reliability for accounting purposes. Therefore, for the purposes of this Statement of Accounts, they are accounted for on the same basis as a defined contribution scheme, with the Council's obligation being limited to the contributions payable to the Scheme for the financial year in question. No actuarial assumptions are required to measure the obligation or expense, and there are no remeasurement gains or losses.

- **Teachers' Pensions Scheme (TPS)**

Teachers employed by the Council are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme, a multi-employer defined benefit scheme which is administered by Teachers Pensions on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE). The scheme is unfunded and the DfE uses a notional fund as the basis for calculating the employers' contribution rate paid by local authorities. Valuations of the notional fund are undertaken every four years. The Scheme provides teachers with specified benefits upon their retirement, and the Council contributes towards the costs by making contributions based on a percentage of members' pensionable salaries. The Council is not liable for any other entities' obligations under the plan.

- **NHS Pension Scheme**

A small number of Council employees are members of the NHS Pension Scheme.

(f) Financial Instruments

Financial liabilities are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument. They are initially measured at fair value and are carried at their amortised cost (carrying value). Interest payable on such amounts is charged to the CIES by multiplying the carrying value by the effective interest rate. For most of the borrowings that the Council has, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding

principal repayable (plus accrued interest); and interest charged to the CIES is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

Penalties on the early repayment of existing loans are debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES in the year of early repayment.

Where the early repayment involves the exchange of an existing loan for a new replacement loan (modification), then the cost of any penalty for the early repayment of the loan is added to the carrying value of the new replacement loan and charged to the CIES over the life of the replacement loan as part of the interest charge on the loan. Where penalties for early repayment have been charged to the CIES, regulations allow the impact on the General Fund to be spread over future years. The Council has a policy of spreading such penalties over the remaining term of the replacement loan. The reconciliation of amounts charged to the CIES to the net charge required against the General Fund is managed by a transfer to or from the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Financial Assets

Financial assets are classified and measured according to the reason the Council has for holding the financial assets and the asset's cash flow characteristics.

There are three main classes and measurement bases for financial assets:

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

The Council's business model is to buy and hold investments in order to collect contractual cash flows i.e. payments of interest over the term of the asset and repayment of the principal amount invested at the end. Most of the Councils financial assets are therefore classified as being at amortised cost.

Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost

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). Likewise the amount of interest credited to the CIES is the amount receivable for the year as per the loan agreement. Any profit or loss on the sale of the financial asset is debited / credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES in the year of sale.

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

These assets are initially measured at fair value (market price). At each balance sheet date the asset's fair value is re-measured to the current fair value (market price). Changes in fair value between balance sheet dates are charged or credited to the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services (SDPS).

The fair values of such assets are determined as follows:

- 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 accounting policy set out in section Fair Value Measurement.

When an asset measured at FVPL is sold any profit or loss on sale is credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES.

IFRS 9 Financial Instruments sets out that equity type investments should be classified as fair value through profit and loss unless there is an irrevocable election to recognise changes in Fair Value through other Comprehensive Income. The Council will assess each equity type investment on an individual basis and assign an IFRS 9 category. The assessment will be based on the underlying purpose for holding the financial instrument. Any changes in the fair value of instruments held at fair value through profit or loss will be recognised in the net cost of service in the CIES and will have a General Fund impact.

Financial Assets measured at Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income (FVOCI)

The Council has equity instruments designated at fair value through Other Comprehensive Income (FVOCI) whether this be by election or by reason of statute. The Council has made an irrevocable election to designate certain financial assets as FVOCI on the basis that they are not held for trading but are held for longer term strategic purposes which includes the collection of dividend income.

The asset is initially measured and subsequently re-measured to current fair value at each balance sheet date. Dividend income is credited to Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure in the CIES when it becomes receivable by the Council. Changes in fair value between balance sheet dates are charged / credited to Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure and are matched by an entry in the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve. This matching entry means that there is no impact on the SDPS at that time. When the asset concerned is finally sold the cumulative profits or losses previously recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure (i.e. sale proceeds less original cost) is transferred from the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve and recognised in the SDPS. The same accounting treatment was adopted in the prior year when the assets were classified as Available for Sale. The accumulated gains and losses on the available for sale asset were previously held in an Available-for-Sale Financial Instruments Reserve at 31 March 2018. The balance on this reserve was transferred to the new Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve as at 1 April 2018.

Expected Credit Loss Model

The Council recognises expected credit losses (i.e. non-payment of principal and / or interest) on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost (or where relevant FVOCI). Usually only credit losses arising in the next 12 months are calculated. Lifetime losses are only recognised when the risk of the amount lent out not being made in full, increases significantly over the year. Trade receivables (debtors) and HRA tenant debtors are permitted to use the simplified approach to expected credit losses. 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.

(g) Grants and Contributions

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

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

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

Where a capital grant or contribution has been received, and conditions remain outstanding at the balance sheet date, the grant or contribution is recognised as part of the Capital Grants Receipts in Advance. Once the condition has been met, the grant or contribution is transferred from the Capital Grants Receipts in Advance and recognised as income in the CIES.

(h) Investment Property

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value. 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. 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.

(i) 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 are 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.

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.
- 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 are 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 of 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).
- finance income (credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

The gain credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on disposal is not permitted by statute to increase the General Fund balance and is required to be treated as a capital receipt. Where a premium has been received, this is posted out of the General Fund balance to the Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the amount due in relation to the lease asset is to be settled by the payment of rentals in future financial years, this is posted out of the General Fund balance to the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

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

Operating Leases

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

(j) Pooled Budgets

The Better Care Fund was announced in June 2013 with the intention to drive the transformation of local services and was to be operated through pooled budget arrangements between the Council and local Clinical Commissioning Groups. Specific resources were earmarked for the Better Care Fund by NHS England in its allocation to Clinical Commissioning Groups. The remainder of the fund was made up of the Social Care Capital Grant and the Disabled Facilities Grant which were paid to local authorities.

In accounting for the pooled resources, in agreement with the Clinical Commissioning Groups:

- Activity where funding was received and expended under the control of Clinical Commissioning Groups has been accounted for in their accounts.
- Activity where funding was received and expended under the control of the Council has been accounted for in its accounts.
- Activity where funding was under joint control has been accounted for on the basis of the share for each organisation.

(k) 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 and Measurement

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

The Council applies a capital expenditure de minimis level of £10,000.

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising the purchase price, and any costs attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended.

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

- Infrastructure, community assets and assets under construction – depreciated historical cost.
- Council offices – current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV).
- School buildings – current value, but because of their specialist nature, are measured at depreciated replacement cost using the Modern Equivalent Asset approach.
- Surplus assets – the current value measurement base is fair value, estimated at highest and best use from a market participant's perspective.
- Vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment – depreciated historical cost is used as an estimate for current value.
- All other assets – current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (EUV).

The values of properties used in the accounts are based on certificates issued by the Assets Manager, District Valuation Service, Deloitte Real Estate and the Farms Estate Shared Service manager.

Revaluations

Where assets are revalued (i.e. the carrying amount is based on current value), revaluations are made with sufficient regularity to ensure that the carrying amount does not differ materially from that which would be determined using the fair value at the end of the reporting period. The items within a class of property, plant and equipment are revalued simultaneously to avoid selective revaluation of assets and the reporting of amounts in the financial statements that are a mixture of costs and values as at different dates. However, a class of assets may be revalued on a rolling basis provided revaluation of the class of assets is completed within a short period and provided the revaluations are kept up to date. Valuations shall be carried out at intervals of no more than five years.

Any increases in the valuation of properties since April 2007 arising from general price level movements are matched by corresponding credits to the Revaluation Reserve. Any revaluation increases/decreases that took place prior to 1 April 2007 are recorded in the Capital Adjustment Account.

Gains recognised on revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise an unrealised gain, unless the asset has previously been subject to an impairment loss or revaluation decrease charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services. In this case the gain is credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where a revaluation loss occurs as a result of revaluation to account for downward changes in market value, the decrease is recognised in the Revaluation Reserve to the extent the asset had previously been revalued upwards and thereafter in the surplus or deficit on the Provision of Services.

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 below:

- 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.

Disposals and Non-Current Assets Held for Sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset is recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an Asset Held for Sale.

The following strict criteria have to be met before an asset can be classified as held for sale:

- The asset must be available for immediate sale in its present condition and is being marketed for sale at a price that is reasonable in relation to its fair value.
- The sale must be highly probable, the appropriate level of management must be committed to a plan to sell the asset and an active programme to locate a buyer and complete the plan must have been initiated.
- The sale should be expected to qualify for recognition as a completed sale within one year of the date of classification.

The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and fair value less costs to sell. Where there is a subsequent decrease to fair value less costs to sell, the loss is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any previous losses recognised in the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services. Depreciation is not charged on Assets Held for Sale.

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

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

When an asset is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the balance sheet 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.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of Property, Plant and Equipment 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.

Capital Receipts

Capital receipts are the amounts derived from the sale of capital assets. The Capital Receipts policy is to ensure that capital receipts are used in the most beneficial way to support corporate priorities and strategic objectives of the Council. This will mean that all receipts will be pooled centrally. The policy is intended to separate the use of resources from the means of acquiring resources therefore supporting the strategic approach to capital investment. The Council has implemented a Disposals Policy as part of the Asset Management Plan; where property assets are not meeting the Council's objectives, their retention will be subject to asset challenge and a process of rationalisation and disposal for surplus/under-performing property will be adopted.

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), assets that are not yet available for use (i.e. assets under construction), investment properties carried at fair value and land where it can be demonstrated that the asset has an unlimited useful life (excluding land subject to depletion, i.e. quarries and landfill sites). It is not charged in the year of acquisition, or on revaluations in the year of revaluation. In the year of disposal, depreciation is calculated for the whole year.

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

- dwellings and other buildings (including surplus assets) – straight-line allocation over the useful life of the property, (ranging up to 50 years) as estimated by the valuer.
- vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment – a straight line allocation over the useful life of the asset, (ranging up to 15 years) as advised by a suitably qualified officer.
- infrastructure – straight-line allocation over 40 years.

No depreciation charges are made for land, assets under construction, investment properties and community assets.

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.

Componentisation

IAS16 requires all components of an asset with a significant cost in relation to the total cost of the asset to be depreciated separately. The principal distinction is between Land (no depreciation) and Buildings (depreciable).

Where an item of Property, Plant and Equipment has major components with costs significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately. The main components of buildings are identified as 'main structure',

'temporary buildings and external works', and 'services and specialist equipment'. The requirement for componentisation for depreciation purposes only applies to enhancement and acquisition expenditure incurred, and revaluations carried out, from 1 April 2011.

The Council has determined a de-minimis asset value of £1.9 million as a basis for componentising depreciation charges.

(l) Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and Similar Contracts

PFI and Similar Contracts are agreements to receive services, where the responsibility for making available the Property, Plant and Equipment needed to provide services passes to the PFI contractor. The Council is deemed to control the services that are provided under its PFI scheme and, as ownership of the Property, Plant and Equipment will pass to the Council at the end of the contract for no additional charge, the Council carries the Property, Plant and Equipment used under the contracts on the balance sheet.

The Council is party to one PFI contract in respect of Extra Care Housing. The contract also involves Cheshire West and Chester Council and will terminate in 2039.

The recognition of these assets has been balanced by the recognition of a liability for amounts due to the scheme operator to pay for the assets. The Property, Plant and Equipment recognised on the balance sheet are revalued and depreciated in the same way as property, plant and equipment owned by the Council.

The amounts payable to the PFI operator each year are analysed into five elements:

- fair value of the services received during the year – debited to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- finance cost – an interest charge on the outstanding balance sheet liability, debited to Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- contingent rent – increases in the amount to be paid for the property arising during the contract, debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- payment towards liability – applied to write down the balance sheet liability towards the PFI operator.
- operator lifecycle replacement costs – recognised as Property, Plant and Equipment on the balance sheet.

(m) Provisions

Provisions are made when the Council recognises that it has an obligation as a result of a past event, when it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. Provisions are charged to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year when the Council becomes aware of the obligation, based on the best estimate of the likely settlement.

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 and, if no longer required, are reversed and credited back to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Where some or all of the payment required to settle an obligation is expected to be met by another party (e.g. from an insurance claim), this is only recognised as income in the relevant service if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received if the obligation is settled.

(n) Reserves

The Council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies and are split between usable and non-usable. Usable Reserves are those reserves that the Council may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitation on their use. Unusable reserves cannot be used to provide services; this category includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (e.g. the Revaluation Reserve).

Resources set aside for specific purposes or to meet predicted liabilities are held as 'earmarked reserves'. The Council also sets aside sums as a more general reserve, called the General Fund, to cover the impact of unexpected events or emergencies or provide a working balance to help manage the effect of uneven cash flows. The Council seeks to maintain the General Fund at a level consistent with a detailed assessment of risk as set out in its Reserves Strategy. This assessment is updated annually as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning.

(o) Schools Accounting

In line with accounting standards and the Code on group accounts and consolidation, all maintained schools are now considered to be entities controlled by the Council. Rather than produce group accounts the income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows of each school are recognised in the Council's single entity accounts. The Council has the following types of maintained schools:

- Community
- Voluntary Aided
- Voluntary Controlled
- Foundation

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement within Net Cost of Service, based on amounts due from the Department for Education. The DSG is allocated between central Council Budget and budgets allocated to individual schools (delegated school budgets). Expenditure from central Council budgets and delegated schools budgets is charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement under Education and Children's services.

Individual schools' balances are included in the balance sheet of the Council under the heading Earmarked Reserves and Balances held by Schools.

Schools Non-Current (fixed) Assets are recognised on the balance sheet where the Council directly owns the assets, where the Council holds the balance of control of the assets or where the school or the school Governing Body own the assets or have

had rights to use the assets transferred to them. Where schools transfer to Academies, the value of school buildings are removed from the balance sheet.

(p) Value Added Tax

Income and expenditure excludes any amounts related to Value Added Tax (VAT), as all VAT collected is payable to HM Revenue and Customs and all VAT paid is recoverable from them. At the year end any amounts outstanding are represented by debtor or creditor on the balance sheet.

Source: Statement of Accounts 2018/19, Note 39. (pages 118 – 132)