

Date: Thursday 30 May 2024 at 4.00 pm

Venue: Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library, Church Road,
Stockton on Tees TS18 1TU

Cllr Barry Woodhouse (Chair)
Cllr Stefan Houghton (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Ross Patterson
Cllr Susan Scott
Cllr Emily Tate
Cllr Katie Weston

Cllr Paul Rowling
Cllr Mick Stoker
Cllr Laura Tunney

AGENDA

- 1 Evacuation Procedure**
- 2 Apologies for Absence**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**
- 4 Minutes** (Pages 7 - 10)
- 5 Health & Safety Report** (Pages 11 - 14)
- 6 Risk Register Update and Audit Activity** (Pages 15 - 18)
- 7 Internal Audit Annual Report** (Pages 19 - 28)
- 8 Draft Annual Governance Statement** (Pages 29 - 38)
- 9 External Auditors - Audit Certificate, 2021/22 Audit** (Pages 39 - 40)
- 10 External Auditors - Annual Report, DRAFT, 2022/23 Audit** (Pages 41 - 70)
- 11 External Auditors - Audit Completion Report 2022/23 Audit** (Pages 71 - 108)
- 12 Annual Statement of Accounts 2022/23 - Final** (Pages 109 - 206)

**13 Annual Statement of Accounts 2023/24 - Draft Prior to
Audit (To Follow)**

14 Forward Plan

(Pages 207 - 208)

Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please

Contact: John Devine, Democratic Services Officer on email john.devine@stockton.gov.uk

KEY - Declarable interests are:-

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's)
- Other Registerable Interests (ORI's)
- Non Registerable Interests (NRI's)

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance



Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

A meeting of Audit and Governance Committee was held on Monday 26 February 2024.

Present: Cllr Barry Woodhouse (Chair), Cllr Stefan Houghton (Vice-Chair), Cllr Marc Besford, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Emily Tate and Cllr Laura Tunney.

Officers: Gavin Barker (Mazars), Andy Bryson, Andrew Barber, Martin Skipsey and John Devine.

Also in attendance: Cllr Eileen Johnson (Observer)

Apologies: .

AGC/41/23 Evacuation Procedure

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

AGC/42/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

AGC/43/23 Minutes

Consideration was given to the minutes from the meeting held on the Monday 27th November 2023 for approval and signature.

Resolved that the minutes be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

AGC/44/23 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan Update

Members received an update relating to the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan Update Report. The report updated members on progress made against the action plan which was contained in the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23.

Some of the highlighted sections of the report were the progress made on the Review and Update of the Risk Management Strategy, with a new approach to Risk Management agreed at CMT. A New Risk Register was produced identifying strategic risks and emerging risks.

Another was the review and updating of the hotel company governance arrangements, which a review of the current hotel governance arrangements had been undertaken by Womble Bond Dickinson. The recommendations from that review included:

- The need to produce a comprehensive Shareholder Agreement that defines 'reserved matters' where the Council must provide consent to the Holding Company and Hotel Company for certain matters.

- The Requirement to provide both financial and operating information in respect of the hotel's operation on a regular basis.
- The requirement to provide clarity and training for the Councils officer who is tasked with supporting the Councils role as shareholder – the shareholder representative, and
- Provide a mechanism for the Shareholder Representative to maintain a strategic relationship between Councils Executive and the company.

Members AGREED to note the report.

AGC/45/23 Risk Register Update & Audit Activity

Members were presented with the Corporate Risk Register Update, Assurance and Activity Report.

The Committee is reminded that quarterly reports on the Corporate Risk Register are presented for the purpose of reviewing the key risks that have been identified as having the potential to deflect services from achieving their objectives over the next 12 months and beyond. They also set out the actions being taken to ensure that the risks, and possible adverse outcomes, are minimised.

As a reminder, risks are scored on a scale of one to five for both 'impact' and 'likelihood'.

The main topics discussed were as follows:

That work had been undertaken to make the look of the report changed to make it easier for Members to understand.

There had been two red indicators identified in the last period, which the first related to the Councils achievement of recycling targets, which had been previously identified as red. The second relates to the completion of the Public Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

The National Fraud Initiative had 91% of matches checked, no fraud had been identified and only one error identified. This provided members with another form of assurance that the controls in place were operating effectively.

RESOLVED that the update report and audit activity report be noted.

AGC/46/23 Internal Audit Charter

Members were presented with a report which advised the Committee of the Internal Audit Charter and proposed approach to delivering the audit service for the coming financial year 2023 – 2024.

The Audit & Risk Manager reaffirmed to Members how the Audit Service would be delivered and confirmed the rights of access to Council documents. The Council met all the standards as set out in the statutory guidance.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

AGC/47/23 Annual Report of the Audit Committee (Final)

Members were presented with a report that informed them of the work of the Audit & Governance Committee during the period 1st October 2022 to 30th September 2023.

The Annual Report produced by the Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee had been prepared in accordance with the 'Audit Committees Practical Guidance for Local Authorities' produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) in 2018

The report demonstrated how the Audit & Governance Committee had fulfilled its key functions and how it was fully committed to helping improve the Council's governance and control environments.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

AGC/48/23 External Auditors - Verbal Update

Members were given a verbal update from Mazars on the status of the 2022/23 Audit and the work which had been completed on the 2023/24 Audit.

Mazars had made substantial progress on completed work for the 2022/23 Audit but had to wait for an update from the Pension Fund Assurance which had advised that the update would be available in March 2024. Mazars were hopeful that they would be available for the May meeting.

The 2023/24 Audit still had outstanding issues which prevented the completion of the Audit. One issue was linked to assurances from the National Auditor which were expected to be available in October 2024.

Mazars highlighted that a backstop date for which all Audits from 22/23 and older, must be completed by had been identified as September 2024. And where those Audits could not be completed by the backstop date work would be done to have some form of qualification made. But this would not be the case for Stockton Council due to the work already completed.

The backstop dates for the 2023/24 accounts had also been fixed as the end of May 2025. The completion dates for the next three years Audits had also been identified as the end November of each year. But Mazars were hopeful that they would never be in a position to need the use of the backstop dates.

RESOLVED to note the update.

AGC/49/23 External Auditors - Auditors Annual Report 2021/22

Mazars presented their Annual Report for 2021/22, the purpose of their audit was to provide reasonable assurance to users that the financial statements were free from material error. Mazars do this by expressing an opinion on whether the statements were prepared, in all material respects, in line with the financial reporting framework applicable to the Council and whether they give a true and fair view of the Council's financial position as of 31 March 2022 and of its financial performance for the year then ended. Mazars audit report, issued on 20 December 2023 gave an unqualified opinion on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Draft accounts were received from the Council by 11th July 2022, which was in advance of the revised statutory deadlines and were of a good quality. The accounts were supported by high quality working papers and Mazars received the full cooperation from the Finance team in responding to their queries on a prompt basis.

Mazars noted significant difficulties which arose during the audit, the completion of the audit was delayed for two reasons, neither of which were under the control of Stockton On Tees Council.

- **Pension Fund Assurance Letter** – This was not received from the auditor of the Teesside Pension Fund until 22 March 2023.
- **Infrastructure** – Guidance was issued by CIPFA on 11th January 2023 which set out how authorities should address the technical issues that had arisen in relation to accounting for infrastructure and how the statutory override that had been put in place by the Government in December 2022 should be addressed.

Due to the delay in relation to the above new information was now available to update the pension disclosures in the financial statements in that the triennial revaluation of the Teesside Pension Fund which had been completed in March 2022, which had needed to be reflected in the 2021/22 financial statements.

This required the Council to obtain an updated report from the actuary, and Mazars to carry out some additional procedures, which included requiring the Pension Fund auditor to test the membership data used in the triennial revaluation and report to Mazars on the results of the testing. The Pension Fund auditor reported to Mazars in September 2023, but there were a number of issues which Mazars had to follow up on. Mazars was able to issue their unqualified audit opinion on 20th December 2023, with no further matters to report.

Mazars commentary on the Councils Value for Money Arrangements were split into three categories, Financial sustainability, Governance and Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness. For the categories Mazars asked puts forward whether there had been any identified risk of significant weakness? Actual significant weakness identified, and if there were any other recommendations made.

Members thanked Mazars for their work on the Audit and report.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Agenda Item 5

AGENDA

REPORT TO
AUDIT & GOVERNANCE
COMMITTEE
30 MAY 2024

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF
CORPORATE SERVICES

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the health, safety and wellbeing performance of the Council for the period 1 October 2023 – 30 April 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The current position as identified in the report is noted.

DETAIL

1. The service has always reported based on activity, it is important that H&S risks are understood and as such reports moving forward will be more aligned to understanding how well H&S risks are being managed.
2. There is a project underway within the team to align the work being undertaken by the team to these core H&S risks to facilitate an assessment of the risks faced by the Council. This work will take some time as it includes the introduction of a new system of recording and planning H&S audit work and we will have a revised audit programme in place for April 2024. As the revised programme of H&S audit work is completed, we will gain a better understanding of the current status of risks.
3. Reports during this implementation period will continue to develop to include more information and a robust method of assessing risk. During this period the assessment of risks will have some limitations.

Health & Safety Risks

4. Below is a summary of the main H&S Risks:

Risk	Incidents Recorded	Training Delivered	Other Comments
Asbestos Management		69	
Culture		28	Work is being undertaken to refresh the H&S policy and develop an induction programme specifically for new managers, both tasks will help ensure a H&S culture is embedded.
Construction			
Display Screen Equipment		241	58 Assessments Completed
Electrical Safety	1	1	RIDDOR Reportable Incident burns to face whilst using a breaker to remove a bollard
Equipment, Machinery & Plant	1	See Comments	Training is delivered via on-site monitoring and "toolbox" talks, numbers currently not recorded.
Fire Safety		17	Revised approach to fire risk management has been proposed.
Open Water and Flooding			

Gas Safety			
Hazardous Substances		40	
Violence & Aggression	46	39	Reduction from 160 in the same period in the previous year.
Legionella			
Lone Working		7	
Noise			
Manual Handling	8	15	Minor injuries recorded
Working at Height		34	
Vibration			
H&S Risk Assessment	26	13	4 RIDDOR reportable incident, staff member bit on leg by client's dog, one cut with knife, 2 slips & Trips, no serious injuries.

Current Audit Programme

5. The number of health and safety audits completed within the reporting period was **22**

Individual Overall Audit Opinion

Opinion	Definition	No of Audit opinions	% of total
Full assurance	A robust system of control exists with evidence of a consistent application of the safety management safeguards, but opportunity for continued improvement may exist in some control areas	10	45
Substantial assurance	A robust system of control exists, but improvement is needed to enhance the safety management safeguards.	12	55
Moderate assurance	Safety management safeguards are being applied but there are weaknesses compromising resilience to risk and consequent harm.		
Partial assurance	There is a limited or inconsistent application of the safety management safeguards, substantially compromising resilience to risk and consequent harm.		
No Assurance	The safety management safeguards are failing and require urgent management action.		
Total No of Audits		22	100%

The current agreed audit programme will continue and will be reported in this format for the remainder of the year. Starting from April 2024 the audit programme will be linked to H&S Risk and will be included in the risk update report shown in Para 4.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial - None

Legal - The Health and Safety team enable the Authority to comply with Regulation 7 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, to assist in complying with the requirements and prohibitions imposed under relevant statutory provisions.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The activity of the Health and Safety Team in conjunction with Line Manager's support, contribute to the effective identification and mitigation of a broad range of occupational health and safety risks.

COUNCIL PLAN IMPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATION

N/A

Name of Contact Officer: Andrew Barber,
Assurance Manager
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Background Papers: Health and Safety Policy 2022

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: None
Property Implications: None

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AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 30 MAY 2024

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER UPDATE REPORT AND INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY REPORT

SUMMARY

The Committee is reminded that quarterly reports on the Corporate Risk Register are presented for the purpose of reviewing the key risks that have been identified as having the potential to deflect services from achieving their objectives over the next 12 months and beyond. They also set out the actions being taken to ensure that the risks, and possible adverse outcomes, are minimised.

As a reminder, risks are scored on a scale of one to five for both 'impact' and 'likelihood'.

To inform members of the progress of audit testing to date and present a forward plan of testing and the resources available to meet the plan to support the assessment of risk.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:-

1. The current risk position as identified in the attached update report is noted.
2. The results of audit activity is noted and agree that the work for the next quarter be prioritised using the audit risk assessment methodology as outlined in the Audit Charter.

DETAIL

1. Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. To support this, audit work is aligned to the strategic risk register and activity is structured around the strategic risks of the organisation.
2. The overall summary shows a summary of audit results against each risk area. The audit assurance is an indicator of how well controls to manage risks are operating, however this is an indicator of internal controls and there may be

external factors that remain outside of the council's control which may need to be reflected in a higher risk score.

Risk	Red	Amber	Green	Total	Assurance
A growing economy		1	9	10	93.02
Clean and green spaces			7	7	100.00
Cohesive and safe communities			17	17	100.00
Dedicated and resourceful employees		2	25	27	95.88
Education and skills development			25	25	100.00
Financially sustainable and value for money		6	79	85	97.61
Great places to live and visit	2	5	30	37	88.21
Job creation and increased employment			3	3	100.00
People are supported and protected from harm	1	9	59	69	91.57
People live healthy lives		1	11	12	97.17
Rich cultural experiences			7	7	100.00
Strong leadership and governance	2	15	101	118	90.78
Total	5	39	373	417	93.67

- Audit testing results breaks down work undertaken in the previous period to provide members with an update on where audit resources have been employed and the results of that work. This will highlight any concerns raised in the period. There have been 3 Red controls identified in the period. The first relates to the achievement of recycling targets, this has previously been reported as red, the second relates to the completion of the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan, and the final control relates to management oversight of unregulated placements.

Risk	Red	Amber	Green	Total
		1	3	4
Clean and green spaces			2	2
Cohesive and safe communities			4	4
Dedicated and resourceful employees			5	5
Education and skills development			4	4
Financially sustainable and value for money		3	17	20
Great places to live and visit	2	3	2	7
Job creation and increased employment			3	3
People are supported and protected from harm	1	5	18	24
People live healthy lives			4	4
Strong leadership and governance		5	21	26
Total	3	17	83	103

- The next section is a graph against key governance themes, this is for all testing undertaken not just in the period. With all areas showing as 75% or higher there are no issues to bring to members attention.



5. Planned work identifies the areas to be examined in the next period as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Members are reminded that each control is risk assessed to determine the frequency of testing, audit work is planned and undertaken a rolling programme which prioritises controls with the highest risk rating in accordance with this methodology. I am required to report any concerns I may have that would impact on the independence of the audit service or the adequacy of resources, I can confirm that I have no concerns in either regard.

6. Quality Assurance and Improvement shows a balanced scorecard for the delivery of the audit service. The majority of indicators will be reported annually but the ones shown provide an update on progress against agreed work to date. The level of adequate resources is calculated after staff time is adjusted to allow for Annual Leave, Bank Holidays and a reasonable amount of Admin Time.

Quality, Assurance & Improvement Process

Period Covered	February 2024	to	April 2024
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Stewardship (Coverage)		
Measure	Target	Performance
Adequate Resources (Next 3 Months)	15	19
Portfolio Coverage (Period)	83	103
Presentation of Annual Report (Annual)	June	*
Presentation of Activity Report	Qtrly	*

Stakeholders		
Measure	Target	Performance
Reports Issued	Qtrly	*
Fraud Strategy Review	31/03/2022	*
Client Satisfaction	TBC	*
Recommendation Implementation	TBC	*

Process		
Measure	Target	Performance
Self assessment against standards (Annual)	March	*
External Assessment (Every 5 Years)	March 2023	*
Staff Meetings Held (Period)	8	8
Up to Date Audit Manual	March 2023	*

People		
Measure	Target	Performance
Productivity (Period)	75%	75%
Training (Per Financial Year)	20	*
Code of Conduct (Annual)	100%	*
Appraisals (Annual)	100%	*

* - To be reported as part of annual report

- NFI Progress – 91% of matches have been checked. No fraud and have been identified and only 2 errors identified. This provides another source of assurance that our controls are operating effectively.

REPORT THEME	Sum of MATCHES	Sum of PROCESSED	
Blue Badges	507	444	88%
Concessionary Travel	511	510	
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	356	81	
Creditors	2641	2641	
Housing Benefits	29	4	
Payroll	54	32	
Procurement	59	59	
Residents Parking	6	5	
Grand Total	4163	3776	91%

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None directly

RISK ASSESSMENT

This is a summary of the Council's risk environment.

COUNCIL PLAN IMPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATION

N/A

Name of Contact Officer: Andrew Barber, Audit & Risk Manager

Telephone No: 01642 526176

Email Address: a.barber@stockton.gov.uk

AGENDA NO.

**REPORT TO
AUDIT &
GOVERNANCE
COMMITTEE**

30 MAY 2024

**REPORT OF
ASSURANCE
MANAGER**

INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARY

This is the annual report of the Head of Internal Audit as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). The report includes the Audit & Risk Manager's annual opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control and governance processes. As such it forms an integral part of the formulation of the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

This report encompasses the reporting requirements specified in Standard 2450 of the PSIAS.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:-

1. That the Audit Committee receives the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2023/24 incorporating the Head of Internal Audit's opinion on the Council's control environment and the performance of the Internal Audit Section.

DETAIL

Background

1. Internal Audit is an independent appraisal function established by the Council to objectively examine, evaluate and report on the adequacy of internal controls. This role ensures that there is proper economic, efficient and effective use of resources. It also ensures that the Council has adequate accounting records and control systems.

Current Position

2. The attached report shows the current position in respect of the progress against the 2023/2024 planned work and the results of the work that has been undertaken.
3. The audit opinion has been prepared based on the completed testing to date. A minimum level of coverage has been set for each planning period and for the 12 months May 2023 to April 2024 the minimum level of coverage was 332 controls, at the end of April 2024 testing had been completed on 344 controls therefore, the minimum level of coverage has been achieved to enable an overall opinion to be given.
4. The projected resources required for the next 12 months shows a positive balance and there are sufficient resources available to complete the current planned work.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

RISK ASSESSMENT

The results of the work undertaken by Internal Audit can be used by managers to assess their risk exposure, recommendations are made where there is perceived to be unacceptable risk.

CONSULTATION

This report has been submitted to the Corporate Governance Group

Name of Contact Officer: Andrew Barber, Assurance Manager

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Email Address: andrew.barber@stockton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Internal Audit Charter
Counter Fraud Strategy

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

None

Property Implications:

None



Internal Audit Annual Report

Annual Report and Head of Audit Opinion Statement 2023/2024

Section 1 Executive Summary

Background and Overall Opinion Statement

Introduction

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Council is required to “*undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance*”. For the purposes of the 2023/24 opinion the standards for proper practices for internal audit are laid down in the CIPFA Local Government Application Note for the United Kingdom Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

The relevant body must conduct a review, at least once a year, of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and this is reported in the Annual Governance Statement. The opinions given in this report provides independent and objective assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council’s system of internal control and should be used to inform the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement.

It is management’s responsibility to establish and maintain appropriate risk management processes, internal control systems, accounting records and governance arrangements. Internal Audit plays a vital role in advising management that these arrangements are in place and operating properly.

Overall Opinion Statement

As the Head of Internal Audit, I am required to provide the Council with an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment. In giving this opinion, it should be noted that assurance can never be absolute and, therefore, only reasonable assurance can be provided that there are no major weaknesses in these processes. In assessing the level of assurance to be given, I based my opinion on:

- The findings from all internal audit work and the subsequent ratings;
- Any follow up exercises undertaken;
- The proportion of Stockton on Tees Borough Council’s audit need that has been covered within this period;
- Where weaknesses have been identified through internal audit work, we have worked with management to agree appropriate corrective actions and a timescale for introduction;
- Any limitations which may have been placed on the scope of Internal Audit. (There have been no operational constraints placed upon Internal Audit, apart from agreed budgetary control provisions).

From the testing undertaken by the Internal Audit Section over the course of the year I am satisfied that sufficient assurance work has been undertaken to allow me to form a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council’s control environment to support the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement.

It is my opinion that the Council continues to have an appropriate, and overall, an effective system of internal control, upon which it can place reasonable reliance to deliver the Council’s objectives, and detect fraud and other malpractice within a reasonable period of time.

I can confirm there have been no impairments to independence or objectivity of the service.

Conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAs)

Conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards provides assurance on the adequacy of arrangements for management of the internal audit function and the level of reliance that can be placed on the opinions given in this report.

A review of conformance has been conducted internally, this has confirmed that the service remains compliant with the PSIAs. This view is supported by an external review conducted by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) in December 2022 which concluded that the service conforms with the PSIAs. Such an external review is required to be completed at least once every 5 years.

Section 2 Results

Detailed Results to Support the Opinion Given

Adequate Coverage

In order to be able to provide an opinion sufficient work must have been completed. Frequency of testing is determined by an audit risk assessment, which establishes a minimum frequency of testing. The risk assessment determines that for the period 1 May 2023 to 30 April 2024, 332 controls needed to be tested, for the same period 344 controls were tested. Therefore, sufficient work was completed to be able to provide an opinion. The controls specified in the program are regularly reviewed throughout the year to ensure they remain up to date.

Assurance Levels by Theme

Each control is assigned to a governance theme. The level of assurance against each theme for the same period is shown below. In general, we have a good level of assurance against each of the themes, for information we set a benchmark of 70 to determine the adequacy of controls.



Assurance by Strategic Risk

To support the risk management process controls are assigned to strategic risks in the risk register. The levels of assurance against each risk can be seen below, the results show a good level of assurance.

Risk	Assurance
A growing economy	93.02
Clean and green spaces	100.00
Cohesive and safe communities	100.00
Dedicated and resourceful employees	95.88
Education and skills development	100.00
Financially sustainable and value for money	97.61
Great places to live and visit	88.21
Job creation and increased employment	100.00
People are supported and protected from harm	91.57
People live healthy lives	97.17
Rich cultural experiences	100.00
Strong leadership and governance	90.78

Recommendations

The internal audit service supports continuous improvement by making recommendations to improve the controls in place. The majority of recommendations made have either been implemented or are in the process of being implemented which demonstrates a positive contribution to the improvement of controls within the Authority.

Priority	Agreed	Implemented	Not Implemented	Risk Tolerated	Total
High	2	20	2		24
Low	4	8			12
Medium	8	22	2	3	35
Total	14	50	4	3	71

Counter Fraud

In addition to the review of specific controls designed to prevent/detect fraud (93% Assurance) we also consider fraud risk as part of all of our testing, for example when assessing an application the checks that have been made to validate information, which would be included in the “Accuracy of Decision Making” theme. The results of the NFI exercise completed early 2023 can be summarized as follows:

- 4449 matches returned;
- 3778 matches processed;
- 0 frauds identified, 2 errors identified, resulting in overpayment of £1,539 of which £584 has been recovered to date.

Added Value Work

The internal audit service have supported the Council outside of the normal audit process in the following ways:

- Daily checks to support Xentrall to identify any potential duplicate payments, before the payment is made. Feedback from Xentrall is that there are a number of duplicate payments prevented reducing potential losses to the council.
- Supporting the arrangements put in place to manage the closure of the cash offices.
- Supported an exercise to analyse spend across the council and identify areas where contracts could add value.
- Supported the development of the Adults Social Services quality assurance process

Section 3 Quality, Assurance & Improvement Process (QAIP)

Results of Measures in Place to Continuously Improve the Service

Balanced Scorecard

The service monitors a number of measures designed to demonstrate compliance with the standards and the effectiveness of the service overall. There are no issues to note in any of these measures.

Stewardship (Coverage)		
Measure	Target	Performance
Adequate Resources (Next 3 Months)	15	16
Portfolio Coverage (Period)	332	344
Presentation of Annual Report (Annual)	June	May 2024
Presentation of Activity Report	Qtrly	Qtrly

Stakeholders		
Measure	Target	Performance
Reports Issued	Qtrly	Daily
Fraud Strategy Review	31/03/2024	Sept 2023
Client Satisfaction	TBC	*
Recommendation Implementation	90%	93%

Process		
Measure	Target	Performance
Self assessment against standards (Annual)	March	March 2024
External Assessment (Every 5 Years)	March 2023	January 2023
Staff Meetings Held (Period)	26	38
Up to Date Audit Manual	March 2024	March 2024

People		
Measure	Target	Performance
Productivity (Period)	75%	75%
Training (Per Financial Year)	20	23
Code of Conduct (Annual)	100%	100%
Appraisals (Annual)	100%	100%

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AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

30 MAY 2024

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023/24

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents to Members the Council's draft Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Members note the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 and provide comments if required.

DETAIL

1. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require all authorities in England to conduct a review at least once a year of the effectiveness of its governance framework and produce an Annual Governance Statement to accompany its Statement of Accounts. The deadline for completion of the draft Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 is 30 September 2024 at which point they are subject to the external audit process.
2. The final Annual Governance Statement will be presented for approval by this committee alongside the audited Statement of Accounts.

3. A further requirement of the regulations state that the Statement should be signed by the Managing Director and the leading Member of the Council, following approval by the Committee. A key objective of this signing off process is to secure corporate ownership of the statement's contents.
4. The Annual Governance Statement includes an acknowledgement of responsibility for ensuring that proper arrangements are in place around the governance of its affairs and an indication of the level of assurance that the system provides. The statement also includes a description of the key elements forming the governance framework, a description of the process applied in reviewing the effectiveness of this framework, including the system of internal control, and an outline of the actions taken or, proposed to be taken, to deal with significant governance issues.
5. The Council's Annual Governance Statement for 202/24 is attached at **Appendix A**. At this time the Council has not identified any significant issues that are not being addressed within the Statement. Officers will be present at the meeting to report on the governance framework and control environment in place within the Council that enables the detailed preparation of the statement.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and Statutory Instrument 234/2015 require all English authorities to prepare an Annual Governance Statement and for it to accompany the Statement of Accounts.

RISK ASSESSMENT

7. None directly from this report.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

8. None directly from this report.

CONSULTATION

9. None directly from this report.

Contact Officer: Martin Skipsey

Post Title: Assistant Director – Procurement and Governance

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DRAFT 2023/ 2024 Annual Governance Statement

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Stockton Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. We also have a duty to continually review and improve the way in which functions are exercised.

The Council has approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government”. The Framework constitutes ‘proper practice in relation to internal control’. This statement explains how Stockton Borough Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of regulation 6(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of a Statement on Internal Control.

THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values that direct and control our activities and through which we account to, engage with, and leads the community. The framework enables us to monitor the achievement of strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council’s policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

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

THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

There is a clear vision of our purpose and intended outcomes for citizens and service users that is clearly communicated, both within and outside the organisation. The Council Plan 2023 - 2026 provides the framework for the Council, partner organisations, groups of residents and individuals, to work together to improve the quality of life in Stockton by 2026. It sets out a Vision for the borough and its residents and how everyone will work together to achieve that Vision.

Our Vision for the Borough

A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm

This means the borough will be a place where:

- People live in cohesive and safe communities
- People are supported and protected from harm
- People live healthy lives

A place that is clean, vibrant and attractive

This means we will enjoy:

- Great places to live and visit
- Clean and green spaces
- Rich cultural experiences

A place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed

This means that the borough will have:

- A growing economy
- Improved education and skills development
- Job creation and increased employment

We will play our part in bringing about this vision for the Borough by being...

A Council that is ambitious, effective and proud to serve

This means that we will make sure that we provide:

- Financial sustainability and value for money
- Dedicated and resourceful employees
- Strong leadership and governance

The Council Plan sets out our priorities and the significant actions we will take. These, in turn, shape the activity of our numerous services and how we will focus our resources. We are clear where we need to get to and what we need to do to get there.

Arrangements are in place to review our vision and its implications for the authority's governance arrangements. The annual strategic planning process, engagement and participation with residents, needs analysis and demographic information ensure the authority's vision remains relevant and meets the needs of local communities. There are regular reviews of the local Code of Corporate Governance to ensure that it is up to date and effective.

Arrangements are in place to measure the quality of our services, to ensure they are delivered in line with our objectives and for ensuring that they provide value for money. There are performance management arrangements in place including an annual appraisal scheme for staff. Services are delivered by suitably qualified / trained / experienced staff and all posts have detailed job descriptions/ person specifications.

The roles and responsibilities of Council members and employees are clearly documented. The Council's Constitution sets out how the Council operates. It incorporates a scheme of delegation and sets out how decisions are made. The Council's Constitution is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect organisational changes. Directorates have established schemes of delegation, which are reviewed regularly to ensure they are current and reflect any on-going organisational changes.

The Constitution includes Rules of Procedure and various Codes and Protocols that set out standards of behaviour for members and officers. The Code of Conduct for Members was reviewed in 2021.

During the year a system of scrutiny was in place allowing the scrutiny function to:

- review and/or scrutinise decisions made, or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions.

- make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council and/or the executive and/or any joint or area committee in connection with the discharge of any functions.

- consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants.

- exercise the right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the executive and/or area committees; and

- consider Local Petitions and Councillor Calls for Action for matters within their terms of reference.

Appropriate governance arrangements are in place for commercial ventures operated through company structures, for example the Hampton by Hilton Hotel.

A range of financial and HR policies and procedures are in place, as well as robust and well embedded risk management processes. Appropriate project management standards and Business Continuity Plans are in place, which are subject to on-going review. There are comprehensive budgeting systems in place and a robust system of budgetary control, including formal quarterly and annual financial reports, which indicate financial performance against forecasts. There are clearly defined capital expenditure guidelines in place and procedures are in place to ensure that the Dedicated Schools Grant is properly allocated to and used by schools in line with the terms of grant given by the Secretary of State under section 16 of the Education Act 2002.

The authority's financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016). The Director of Finance and Business Services and Deputy Managing Director is designated Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) and fulfilled this role through the following:

- Attendance at meetings of the Corporate Management Team, helping it to develop and implement strategy and to resource and deliver the Council's strategic objectives sustainably and in the public interest.
- Involvement in all material business decisions to ensure immediate and longer-term implications, opportunities and risks are fully considered.
- Alignment of medium-term business and financial planning processes.
- Leading the promotion and delivery of good financial management by the whole organisation so that public money is safeguarded and used appropriately, economically, efficiently and effectively; and
- Ensuring that the finance function is resourced to be fit for purpose.

The Council has an Audit and Governance Committee which, as well as approving the Authority's Statement of Accounts, undertakes an assurance and advisory role to:

- Reviewing and monitoring the Council's approach to risk management and corporate governance including the approval of the Statement of Internal Control.
- Monitoring the integrity of the Council's financial statements and approving the Statement of Accounts.

- Reviewing any proposed changes to accounting policies and promoting discussion around these.
- Approving the role and responsibilities of the Internal Audit Service.
- Considering the appointment of the External Audit Service and monitoring the effectiveness of auditor's performance.
- Approving the internal and external audit plans.
- Reviewing Internal Audit work on a quarterly basis; internal and external annual reports together with any management response and receiving details of specific significant issues highlighted via audit work and referring to the Executive Scrutiny Committee; the Select Committees, the Standards Panel, Cabinet or Council, as appropriate, any issues arising which are key in nature.
- Maintaining an overview of the Council's Constitution in respect of contract procedure rules, financial regulations and codes of conduct and behaviour, and considering the Council's compliance with its own and other published standards and controls; and
- Considering details of key ethical or wider corporate governance issues submitted by the Standards Panel.

We have arrangements to ensure compliance with relevant laws, regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful. The Director of Corporate Services is the Council's designated Monitoring Officer and a protocol is in place with all directors, to safeguard the legality of all Council activities. All Cabinet Reports are considered for legal issues before submission to members.

Arrangements for whistleblowing and for receiving and investigating complaints from the public are well publicised and subject to periodic review. We are committed to maintaining these arrangements to ensure that, where any individual has concerns regarding the conduct of any aspect of the Council's business, they can easily report their concerns. Monitoring records held by the Director of Corporate Services show that the whistle blowing arrangements are being used by both staff and the public, and that the Council is responding appropriately. The whistle blowing arrangements have assisted with the maintenance of a strong regime of internal control.

We have arrangements to identify the development needs of members and senior officers in relation to their strategic roles. Members have access to a Members Handbook and a Learning & Development Strategy. The Council recognises that managing the performance of all of employees is key to ensuring that the organisation meets the needs of the community. This includes assessing ability against requirements of the role focusing on strengths and highlighting areas of weakness, job related training, and on-going evaluation of the extent to which employees understand and support the values of the Council. In response to the ongoing challenges we face, we have developed a new Health and Wellbeing

Strategy and implemented a new learning Management System to increase resilience and capability in employees.

Channels of communication have been established with all sections of the community to promote accountability and encourage open consultation. We are committed to listening to, and acting upon, the views of the local community and carry out consultation in order to make sure that services meet the needs of local people. We continue to use the 'My Views' consultation portal, which provides an improved online platform to support consultations on service changes and proposals.

We continue to work closely with all our partners including other public bodies, the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector and the private sector. We have established the proportionate governance arrangements for all partnerships.

REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control.

The Assistant Director - Procurement and Governance has directed, co-ordinated and overseen the review and its findings have been reported to Corporate Governance Group and the Audit and Governance Committee for their consideration and approval of the Annual Governance Statement.

The review is informed by several assurances gathered from all available sources and in particular:

- Assurances from external sources such as OFSTED and the Care Quality Commission.
- Assurances from Corporate Governance Group.
- A self-assessment against the CIPFA Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition.
- Assurances from senior officers responsible for relevant specialist areas. For example, the Director of Public Health's Annual Report.
- Internal audit planning processes which include consultation with all directors and assistant directors, and the results of audit activity as summarised in the Annual Internal Audit Report. In the report the Audit and Risk Manager states in his opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance, risk and control framework: "It is my opinion that the Council continues to have an appropriate, and overall, an effective system of internal control, upon which it can place reasonable reliance to deliver the Council's objectives and detect fraud and other malpractice within a reasonable period of time. Where weaknesses have been identified through internal audit work, we have worked with management to agree appropriate corrective actions and a timescale for introduction".
- Best practice across the sector,

- Performance information which is reported to Cabinet and management teams.
- Governance related issues identified during the year,
- Performance information reported to the Audit and Governance Committee,
- The results of the Council's self-assessment of compliance with the CIPFA financial Management Code, and
- Progress made in addressing significant weaknesses and issues requiring improvement identified in previous annual governance statements.

The Financial Management Code

The Council has concluded a full self-assessment against the CIPFA Financial Management Code. The work has not identified any significant weakness in compliance with the code.

Significant Changes

The Council has reviewed and updated its Performance Management Framework, creating a system that provides comprehensive performance information to operational and senior managers and Members. The new system provides data and intelligence to drive future plans/ activity and improve decision making.

The Council has also introduced a new Risk Management Framework to provide senior management and Members with a clearer understanding of key strategic risks.

Local Schemes of Delegation have been updated clarifying decision making responsibilities.

A comprehensive review of the Council Plan has commenced.

A new 'Powering our Future' program has been developed and launched aimed at improving services and meeting future budget challenges. The program is split into five areas; colleagues, transformation, partners, communities and regeneration.

New governance arrangements for the hotel company have been introduced including an annual performance report which will be presented to Cabinet, a new shareholder agreement which clarifies the role of the shareholder representative and company matters to be reserved to the shareholder and a refreshed company board.

AGS Improvement Plan 2024/25

The improvement plan from last year has been reviewed and updated for this year.

The improvement plan includes the ongoing delivery of the Children Services Improvement Plan developed because of the OFSTED Local Authority Children Services Inspection held in February and March 2023.

The improvement plan includes a commitment to review the Officer Code of Conduct as part of the Colleagues Powering Our Futures Program.

The outcome of the review of effectiveness provided us with the necessary assurance that no significant issues were identified. The findings of the review have been

reported to Corporate Governance Group and the Audit and Governance Committee and under their Terms of Reference the Committee have satisfied themselves that the Annual Governance Statement accurately reflects the risk environment and any actions required to improve it. The areas to be addressed with new actions are outlined in the agreed improvement plan.

We propose over the coming year to take steps to implement the improvement plan to further enhance the Council’s governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in the review, and we will monitor their implementation and operation as part of the next annual review

IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Action	Outcome	Responsibility	By When
Continue the implementation of the new Risk Management Framework	Risk Management Framework embedded through all parts of the Council	Assistant Director Procurement and Governance	2024/25
Continue to deliver the Children Services Improvement Plan developed after the OFSTED Inspection	Improved OFSTED Rating	Good and Beyond Board	2024/25
Implement the new hotel company governance arrangements	Updated arrangements	Monitoring Officer	2024/25
Review the Officer Code of Conduct	New Officer Code of Conduct	Monitoring Officer	2024/25

By order of the authority

Signed:

Signed:

M Greene

R Cook

Chief Executive

Leader of the Council

Date:

Date:

Audit Completion Certificate issued to the Members of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2022

In our auditor's report dated 20 December 2023 we explained that the audit could not be formally concluded until we had completed the work necessary to issue our assurance statement in respect of the Council's Whole of Government Accounts consolidation pack.

This work has now been completed.

No matters have come to our attention since 20 December 2023 that would have a material impact on the financial statements on which we gave our unqualified opinion.

The Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

We are required to report to you if, in our opinion, we are not satisfied that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2022.

On the basis of our work, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in January 2023, we have nothing to report in this respect.

Certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and Group for the year ended 31 March 2022 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office.



Gavin Barker
Key Audit Partner
For and on behalf of Mazars LLP

The Corner
Bank Chambers
26 Mosley Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 1DF

6 May 2024

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Auditor's Annual Report - **DRAFT**

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
– year ended 31 March 2023

May 2024



- 01** [Introduction](#)
- 02** [Audit of the financial statements](#)
- 03** [Commentary on VFM arrangements](#)
- 04** [Other reporting responsibilities](#)

[Appendix A: Further information on our audit of the financial statements](#)

Our reports are prepared in the context of the 'Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies' issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd. Reports and letters prepared by appointed auditors and addressed to members or officers are prepared for the sole use of the Council. No responsibility is accepted to any member or officer in their individual capacity or to any third party.

Mazars LLP is the UK firm of Mazars, an international advisory and accountancy group. Mazars LLP is registered by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

01

Section 01: **Introduction**

Purpose of the Auditor’s Annual Report

Our Auditor’s Annual Report (AAR) summarises the work we have undertaken as the auditor for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (‘the Council’) for the year ended 31 March 2023. Although this report is addressed to the Council, it is designed to be read by a wider audience including members of the public and other external stakeholders. **This is a DRAFT report, as we have not yet issued our audit opinion. The report will be finalised when we issue our audit opinion, anticipated in late May 2024.**

Our responsibilities are defined by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice (‘the Code’) issued by the National Audit Office (‘the NAO’). The remaining sections of the AAR outline how we have discharged these responsibilities and the findings from our work. These are summarised below.



Opinion on the financial statements

We issued our audit report on [insert date]. Our opinion on the financial statements was unqualified. **[At this stage, we anticipate being able to issue an unqualified opinion, subject to finalisation of remaining issues.]**



Wider reporting responsibilities

The NAO, as group auditor, requires us to complete the WGA Assurance Statement in respect of its consolidation data. **We are unable to respond to NAO until we have issued our audit opinion [not yet issued].** As in previous years, we anticipate a significant delay before we will be able to issue our 2022/23 audit certificate, as we await NAO clearance on whether we will be required to undertake additional procedures as a sampled component.



Value for Money arrangements

In our audit completion report we reported that we had completed our work on the Council’s arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and had not issued recommendations in relation to identified significant weaknesses in those arrangements. Section 3 provides our commentary on the Council’s arrangements.

02

Section 02:

Audit of the financial statements

2 Page 46 Audit of the financial statements

The scope of our audit and the results of our opinion

Our audit was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code, and International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). The purpose of our audit is to provide reasonable assurance to users that the financial statements are free from material error. We do this by expressing an opinion on whether the statements are prepared, in all material respects, in line with the financial reporting framework applicable to the Council and whether they give a true and fair view of the Council's financial position as at 31 March 2023 and of its financial performance for the year then ended. Our audit report, issued on [insert date] gave an unqualified opinion on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023. [At this stage, we anticipate being able to issue an unqualified opinion, subject to finalisation of remaining issues.]

A summary of the significant risks we identified when undertaking our audit of the financial statements and the conclusions we reached on each of these is outlined in Appendix A. In this appendix we also outline the uncorrected misstatements we identified and any internal control recommendations we made.

Significant matters discussed with management

During our audit we communicated the following significant matters to management:

Pension fund liability and asset

The opening net pensions liability as of 1 April 2022 was amended in the 2021/22 accounts because of the revised pensions report the Council obtained due to the triennial revaluation exercise. This resulted in a decrease of £38.3m to the Council's net pensions liability from £282.2m to £243.9m.

As of 31 March 2023, the Council's net pensions liability had further changed and the actuary notified a surplus. Overall, there has been a move from a £243.9m deficit to £101.7m surplus; a similar significant change has been noted for the other Teesside local authorities where we are the auditor. This significant change arises from gross pension assets exceeding liabilities due to movements in markets for assets and changes in actuarial assumptions impacting on liabilities.

We considered the accounting treatment in respect of the reporting of a net asset position on the LGPS for 2022/23. This included evaluating whether the pension asset needed to be capped at a lower level. Based on our review and the receipt of an asset ceiling calculation from the actuary, no adjustment was required to the net pension asset included in the draft accounts.

We received the letter of assurance from the pension fund auditor on 22 April 2024 and have now completed

our work. The Pension Fund auditor reported to us that the asset values submitted to the actuary were overstated by £25.009m. In addition, there was significant doubt about a further £11.85m which may also be overstated. Given the Council's share of the PF assets at the year-end is 19% of the scheme investment assets, this difference would amount to a £7m overstatement of pension assets in the financial statements which is not material to our opinion on your accounts.

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

We made enquiries of officers in respect of RAAC being present in any Council-owned buildings and obtained assurance that government department procedures were being followed and there was no indication of any material issues impacting on the Council's assets.

Reporting responsibility	Outcome
Annual Report	We did not identify any significant inconsistencies between the content of the annual report and our knowledge of the Council.
Annual Governance Statement	We did not identify any matters where, in our opinion, the governance statement did not comply with the guidance issued by CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

03

Section 03:

Commentary on VFM arrangements

3 Commentary on VFM arrangements

Page 48

Overall summary



3 VFM arrangements – Overall summary

Approach to Value for Money arrangements work

We are required to consider whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The NAO issues guidance to auditors that underpins the work we are required to carry out and sets out the reporting criteria that we are required to consider. The reporting criteria are:



Financial sustainability - How the Council plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services



Governance - How the Council ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness - How the Council uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services

Our work is carried out in three main phases.

Phase 1 - Planning and risk assessment

At the planning stage of the audit, we undertake work so we can understand the arrangements that the Council has in place under each of the reporting criteria; as part of this work we may identify risks of significant weaknesses in those arrangements.

We obtain our understanding of arrangements for each of the specified reporting criteria using a variety of information sources which may include:

- NAO guidance and supporting information
- Information from internal and external sources including regulators
- Knowledge from previous audits and other audit work undertaken in the year
- Interviews and discussions with staff and directors

Although we describe this work as planning work, we keep our understanding of arrangements under review and update our risk assessment throughout the audit to reflect emerging issues that may suggest there are further risks of significant weaknesses.

Phase 2 - Additional risk-based procedures and evaluation

Where we identify risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements, we design a programme of work to enable us to decide whether there are actual significant weaknesses in arrangements. We use our professional judgement and have regard to guidance issued by the NAO in determining the extent to which an identified weakness is significant.

Phase 3 - Reporting the outcomes of our work and our recommendations

We are required to provide a summary of the work we have undertaken and the judgments we have reached against each of the specified reporting criteria in this Auditor's Annual Report. We do this as part of our Commentary on VFM arrangements which we set out for each criteria later in this section.

We also make recommendations where we identify weaknesses in arrangements or other matters that require attention from the Council. We refer to two distinct types of recommendation through the remainder of this report:

- **Recommendations arising from significant weaknesses in arrangements**
We make these recommendations for improvement where we have identified a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Where such significant weaknesses in arrangements are identified, we report these (and our associated recommendations) at any point during the course of the audit.
- **Other recommendations**
We make other recommendations when we identify areas for potential improvement or weaknesses in arrangements which we do not consider to be significant but which still require action to be taken

The table on the following page summarises the outcomes of our work against each reporting criteria, including whether we have identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements or made other recommendations.

3 VFM arrangements – Overall summary

Overall summary by reporting criteria

Reporting criteria	Commentary page reference	Identified risks of significant weakness?	Actual significant weaknesses identified?	Other recommendations made?
 Financial sustainability	11	No	No	No
 Governance	14	No	No	No
 Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness	17	No	No	No

3 Commentary on VFM arrangements

Page 51

Financial Sustainability

How the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services



3 VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Overall commentary on the Financial Sustainability reporting criteria

How the Council identifies significant financial pressures that are relevant to its short and medium-term plans

The Council has an established process for developing its Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The Council's arrangements have delivered significant levels of savings in recent years. We considered the timetable for the MTFP and confirmed that it allows for early engagement with stakeholders. We confirmed the MTFP is revisited on a regular basis and adjusted to reflect any changes impacting on the Council's financial position such as changes in economic outlook and changes in central government funding. During 2022/23 the rising costs of inflation has put pressure on the council's budget. They directed finance officer time to undertake more scrutiny around some of the key pressure areas. An example of this is the rising cost of energy where finance officers have worked closely with facilities management colleagues to understand the impact of information provided by the regional commissioning body, the North East Purchasing Organisation (NEPO).

Additional money was built into the budget for 2022/23 for energy, pay award and growth in children's and adults services.

We confirmed that there is regular budget monitoring including quarterly reports to the Council's Cabinet. The outturn report for 2022/23 was presented to the July 2023 Cabinet meeting and the overall reported position was not significantly different to that reported during the financial year and records departmental overspends of £0.9 million compared with the budget before pay offer pressures of £2.8 million. This position is associated with inflationary cost pressures and continued issues in Children's Services which are mainly the result of increased costs of external residential care placements for children in the Council's care. Other pressures included a continued national pressure in respect of special educational needs but despite these factors the report notes that:

'Overall, there is an improvement in the draft outturn 2022/23 financial position compared to that projected at December of around £200,000.'

This is evidence of the effectiveness of financial management arrangements despite the continued pressures created by the economic climate.

How the Council plans to bridge funding gaps and identifies achievable savings

The MTFP arrangements include the identification of pressures and savings. The February 2023 MTFP details estimated pressures over the life of the MTFP totalling £16 million in 2023/24 rising to £21.5m in 2025/26. After adoption of the social care levy for 2023/24 the Council set a balanced budget for the year and pressures

reduced to £7.1 million for 2023/24 rising to £10 million for 2025/26. The Council has a good track record of identifying and delivering savings.

The MTFP recognises the increasing difficulty of identifying savings and managing the impact on front line services especially given the uncertainty about future funding levels. Our review of the MTFP and associated assumptions identified no evidence of a significant weakness in arrangements.

How the Council plans finances to support the sustainable delivery of services in accordance with strategic and statutory priorities

The Council developed a refreshed three-year Council Plan which was agreed by Cabinet in February 2023. This sets out the Council's contribution to delivering the vision of a place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm, a place that is clean, vibrant and attractive and a place with a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed.

We confirmed that the MTFP was developed on reasonable assumptions including forecast funding streams, identification of budget pressures and savings targets required and ability to draw from the budget support reserves if required. The MTFP recognises the ongoing pressure the Council faces and the potential impact on service delivery. In-year monitoring reports detail the pressures faced by the Council, whether savings are being achieved, and if resources need to be redirected to areas in need.

Our review of the MTFP did not identify a reliance on 'one-off' measures to balance the budget. The assumptions in the MTFP and recent outturn against budget confirms the Council has a track record of prudent assumptions in the MTFP.

In addition to this a programme of transformation has begun, which is aimed at securing the financial stability of the Council as well as ensuring they provide efficient and appropriate services for residents. Key services within the council have been identified to form part of the transformation programme. One of the biggest areas is Children's Services which is an area that is causing huge financial pressures. The transformation reviews will undertake a wholesale review of appropriate areas to see where the Council can improve outcomes whilst also ensuring efficient use of resources.

Our work did not identify any evidence to indicate a significant weakness in arrangements

3 VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Overall commentary on the Financial Sustainability reporting criteria - continued

How the Council ensures that its financial plan is consistent with other plans

The MTFP and Capital Programme are considered and reviewed in the context of other plans such as the Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies and the Annual Pay Statement. These plans and strategies are considered and approved by Council alongside the MTFP and budget decisions each year.

Other operational planning and its impact on the MTFP is also considered, together with the impact of working with other public bodies.

In line with the Prudential Code and the Council's Capital Strategy, revenue implications of capital investment decisions are fully considered and form part of the MTFP planning and budget setting process to ensure such investments are fully funded. A detailed Capital plan is included in the MTFP.

The Cabinet and Council consider the updated financial position at various stages throughout the year which allows for Member scrutiny and challenge. The latest MTFP update was considered by the Cabinet and Council at their February 2023 budget setting meetings.

Savings plans are risk assessed to advise Members of the potential impact with initial proposals being risk assessed for impact on communities and service delivery. Each saving proposal includes an equality impact assessment. We have considered this in current and prior year savings process with no significant changes in the process noted.

The annual MTFP process includes reviewing the Council's earmarked reserves. We confirmed a review was completed in 2022/23 to ensure funding set aside remains in line with strategic and statutory priorities of the Council. This is evidenced in the outturn reports presented to Cabinet during the financial year.

Our work did not identify any evidence to indicate a significant weakness in arrangements.

How the Council identifies and manages risks to financial resilience

The MTFP outlines uncertainties, challenges, and risks facing the Council over the life of the Plan. The 2023/24 MTFP details risks associated with future funding and the ongoing economic uncertainty created by the economic climate. We confirmed that areas of pressure faced in the 2022/23 financial year are reflected in the

2023/24 MTFP. These include the demand pressures faced in some services provided by the Council, such as looked after children. Despite these uncertainties the 2023/24 MTFP still includes continued investments across a number of key front line service areas, including continued town centre investment in Thornaby, Stockton and Billingham.

During 2022/23 the rising costs of inflation has put pressure on the council's budget. They have directed finance officer time to undertake more scrutiny around some of these key pressure areas. An example of this is the rising cost of energy where finance officers have worked closely with facilities management colleagues to understand the impact of information provided by the regional commissioning body NEPO. Additional money was built into the budget for 2022/23 for energy, pay award and growth in children's and adults services.

The Council has an established risk management framework, and the Audit and Governance Committee receives regular risk management updates.

We confirmed that management reported to Cabinet on the Council's commercial activities, including the hotel as part of the updated MTFP in February 2023.

There was regular reporting of the Council's 2022/23 financial position to Cabinet throughout the year. The outturn report presented to the July 2023 Cabinet meeting was consistent with the financial position reported during the year and did not indicate a weakness in the Council's budget monitoring and reporting arrangements.

Our work did not identify any evidence to indicate a significant weakness in arrangements.

Conclusion

Given the above, our work did not identify any evidence to indicate a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements in relation to the financial sustainability reporting criteria.

3 Commentary on VFM arrangements

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Governance

How the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks



3 VFM arrangements – Governance

Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria

How the Council monitors and assesses risk and how the Council gains assurance over the effective operation of internal controls, including arrangements to prevent and detect fraud

The Council has an active internal audit team, and the Internal Audit Plan and Head of Internal Audit Report is reviewed by the Council's Audit and Governance Committee. As detailed in the plan the Council uses a risk-based approach to determine the priorities of the internal audit activity, consistent with the Council's goals. The plan is discussed with service leads ahead of being finalised.

We confirmed that the Audit and Governance Committee received regular updates on the Audit Plan. Internal Audit reviews highlight weaknesses and recommend actions, when required, to strengthen processes or procedures. These are regularly reported to Audit and Governance Committee which holds management to account where weaknesses are identified. The Audit and Governance Committee monitors management actions in response to recommendations and this is reported on a regular basis. The Audit and Governance Committee challenges management if recommendations are not implemented within the agreed timeframe.

The Head of Internal Audit Opinion was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee meeting in May 2023. This provides the opinion that 'the Council continues to have an appropriate, and overall, an effective system of internal control, upon which it can place reasonable reliance to deliver the Council's objectives and detect fraud and other malpractice within a reasonable period of time'. We have reviewed the Internal Audit Plan and matters arising. We have identified no evidence of a significant weakness in arrangements.

An anti-fraud and corruption strategy is in place and was updated and reported to the September 2023 Committee, we confirmed there is also regular reporting to the Audit and Governance Committee on counter fraud activities, including fraud investigations.

As part of our audit procedures, we considered the Council's Annual Governance Statement. This included consideration of the Statement and our cumulative audit knowledge. We identified no matters indicating a significant weakness in arrangements.

How the Council approaches and carries out its annual budget setting process

The Council's MTFP arrangements include the identification and evaluation of risks to the Council's finances. We have reviewed the budget setting arrangements through observation and discussions with officers. No matters have been identified indicating a significant weakness in arrangements. Overall, the Council is aware of the financial pressure it faces. We confirmed that scenario plans are in place to identify the potential financial impact of risks occurring.

How the Council ensures effective processes and systems are in place to ensure budgetary control; to communicate relevant, accurate and timely management information (including non-financial information where appropriate); supports its statutory financial reporting requirements; and ensures corrective action is taken where needed

We have reviewed Council minutes and confirmed there was regular reporting of the financial position during 2022/23 financial year. This included detail of movements in the budget and forecast outturn between quarters. The reports detailed the in-year pressures as well as planned mitigations. The outturn position was not significantly different to that reported to Members during the year and did not indicate a significant weakness in arrangements. As well as being reported to Senior Management Team and Cabinet, reports are also presented to Executive Scrutiny Committee.

The Council has a good record of delivering against its budgets and this is evidence of effective arrangements for budgetary control.

The financial statements timetable is approved by the Audit and Governance Committee and was delivered in 2022/23. Our audit of the financial statements did not identify any matters to indicate a significant weakness in the accuracy of the financial information reported or the process for preparing the accounts. It is our experience that management takes action to address audit matters in a timely and appropriate manner.

3 VFM arrangements – Governance

Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria - continued

How the Council ensures it makes properly informed decisions, supported by appropriate evidence and allowing for challenge and transparency

Decisions are made in accordance with the Constitution and Scheme of Delegation.

We have reviewed Council minutes in the year and have not identified any evidence of a significant weakness in arrangements. The reports we reviewed support informed decision-making and were clear in the decision or recommendation Members were asked to make.

The Council publishes on its website a notice of key decisions. This includes officer decisions under the Officer Scheme of Delegations.

Service Select Committee meetings provide an opportunity to challenge decisions. An Executive Scrutiny Committee is in place to oversee and coordinate the work and our review identified no matters that indicate a significant weakness in arrangements.

How the Council monitors and ensures appropriate standards are maintained

The Council's Constitution is reviewed at least annually and sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the rules and procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient and transparent to local people. Supporting the Constitution are codes of conduct for Members and officers. Registers of gifts and hospitality and registers of interest are maintained for Members and officers and are available on the Council website. The Statement of Accounts also records material related party transactions and details of senior officer pay and Member allowances. We considered these disclosures and compared them with the interests declared. Our work did not indicate a significant weakness in arrangements.

We confirmed that contract procedure rules are in place and require procurement decisions to comply with appropriate standards. Contract registers are available on the Council website.

The Standards Panel is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members. It is responsible for advising and arranging relevant training relating to the requirements of the Code of Conduct. The Standards Panel has not met recently which indicates there has not been any member misconduct identified for investigation.

A system of scrutiny is in place as set out and documented in the Annual Governance Statement. We reviewed the Scrutiny Annual Report for 2022/23 and identified no evidence of a significant weakness in arrangements. The Council also published an Overview and Scrutiny end-of-term report summarising all activity from 2019 to 2023 detailing the role of the Committees and topics covered each year.

There is regular reporting of treasury management activity that details the Council's investments, cash and borrowing positions. The Treasury Management Strategy was approved ahead of the 2022/23 financial year and sets out the Council's measures against which treasury management can be assessed. The measures include those designed to mitigate risk to the Council's finances and we identified no evidence to indicate a significant weakness in arrangements.

Conclusion

Given the above, our work did not identify any evidence to indicate a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements in relation to the governance reporting criteria.

3 Commentary on VFM arrangements

Page 57

Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

How the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services



3 VFM arrangements – Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness

Overall commentary on the Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness reporting criteria

How financial and performance information has been used to assess performance to identify areas for improvement

Directorates have well established and effective processes for reviewing financial and performance information and using this to inform areas for improvement.

The Council has a performance management framework, reporting against a series of indicators. Corporate performance against key performance indicators is presented to Cabinet on a six-monthly basis. Our review of those reports identified no evidence of a significant weakness in arrangements.

Service reviews have also been used to identify areas for improvement and to deliver agreed changes. For example, Children's Services was identified as an area for improvement following an Ofsted inspection report published in July 2019 (requires improvement to be good). A reinspection report published in May 2023 confirmed that, although the leadership team has made significant improvements in response to kinship care, progress has been too slow and there is still work to do to improve the experiences of children and their families and care leavers.

The Council Plan includes priorities in relation to children's care and helping families to stay together and monitors the rate of children in care as a specific performance measure. More detailed monitoring of the number of contacts and care plans with families is carried out by the service (including initial enquiries, rate of referrals, rate of assessments complete, etc). Detailed evidence of monitoring and actions is available from the monthly tactical operational performance (TOP) meetings.

Finance and Performance clinics are being introduced across directorates to visibly demonstrate the link between the two measures. This is also being linked to the council plan and individual service plans.

Transformation reviews require an assessment of performance which pull in both performance and finance measures. This is used to identify areas for improvement. Benchmarking is also being used to identify successes elsewhere to inform future service improvements.

How the Council evaluates the services it provides to assess performance and identify areas for improvement

The Cabinet has monitored performance during the year. Performance is measured against the Council Plan and the format of reports is aligned to the vision and hopes for the Borough. In 2022/23 the six-monthly report tracked performance against the Council Plan priority actions and included a detailed commentary on progress.

The Council has arrangements for responding to the most recent Ofsted inspection of Children's Services, as detailed above.

How the Council ensures it delivers its role within significant partnerships, engages with stakeholders it has identified, monitors performance against expectations, and ensures action is taken where necessary to improve

The Council ensures that it is represented at a senior level in its key partnerships, such as partnerships with health. For example, the Council has a well-established and successful partnership with Health via the Better Care Fund. The Council is represented from a service perspective by the relevant Director and from a financial perspective by the Director of Finance, Transformation and Performance. The Strategic Finance lead for Adults and Health provides regular support and input. Where necessary key required actions will be incorporated into Council planning, priorities and plans.

In addition, the Council is working in partnership with Keepmoat Homes Limited to deliver the redevelopment on the Victoria Estate in Stockton. The scheme runs under a collaborative agreement and is overseen by a Project Board. The Board comprises two officers of the Council and two representatives from Keepmoat, the Board is now well established and is operating successfully.

The Council uses various channels of communication and feedback mechanisms, including social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube) to reach out to and meet the needs of its communities. The impact of the pandemic saw an increase in the use of Council on-line services.

3 VFM arrangements – Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness

Overall commentary on the Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness reporting criteria - continued

How the Council commissions or procures services, how the Council ensures this is done in accordance with relevant legislation, professional standards and internal policies, and how the Council assesses whether it is realising the expected benefits

Key commissioning and procurement decisions are taken by suitably skilled and trained staff to ensure compliance with legislation, professional standards and internal policies. Access is readily available to professional legal and procurement advice.

The Council operate a Strategic Procurement function across two teams, each supporting a specific range of Council services and functions.

The Council has established a brokerage function for Adult Social Care packages, which has now been extended to Children's care packages.

There is evidence that the Council has arrangements in place to ensure procurement is done in accordance with relevant legislation, professional standards and internal policies, no issues identified that suggest a significant weakness.

Conclusion

Given the above, our work did not identify any evidence to indicate a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements in relation to the improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness reporting criteria.

04

Section 04:

**Other reporting responsibilities and
our fees**

4 Other reporting responsibilities and our fees

Matters we report by exception

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 provides auditors with specific powers where matters come to our attention that, in their judgement, require specific reporting action to be taken. Auditors have the power to:

- issue a report in the public interest;
- make statutory recommendations that must be considered and responded to publicly;
- apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to the law; and
- issue an advisory notice.

We have not exercised any of these statutory reporting powers.

The 2014 Act also gives rights to local electors and other parties, such as the right to ask questions of the auditor and the right to make an objection to an item of account. We did not receive any such objections or questions.

Reporting to the NAO in respect of Whole of Government Accounts consolidation data

The NAO, as group auditor, requires us to complete the WGA Assurance Statement in respect of its consolidation data. **We are unable to respond to NAO until we have issued our audit opinion [not yet issued]**. As in previous years, we anticipate a significant delay before we will be able to issue our 2022/23 audit certificate, as we await NAO clearance on whether we will be required to undertake additional procedures as a sampled component.

The NAO timetable for 2022/23 WGA is for completion by the end of November 2024, so we anticipate receiving the clearance which will enable us to issue our audit certificate by this date.

4 Other reporting responsibilities and our fees

Fees for work as the Council's auditor

We reported our proposed fees for the delivery of our work under the Code of Audit Practice in our Audit Strategy Memorandum presented to the Audit and Governance Committee in July 2023. Having completed our work for the 2022/23 financial year, we can confirm that our fees are as follows:

Area of work	2021/22 fees	2022/23 fees *
Planned fee in respect of our work under the Code of Audit Practice – PSAA scale audit fee	£100,824	£115,960
Recurring increases in the base audit fee arising from regulatory pressures (as reported in the 2019/20 audit, from 2021/22 we increased this fee by 25% to reflect a 25% increase in the PSAA fee rates for this work, most of this is now included in the scale fee)	£18,910	£3,774
Additional fees in respect of the new VFM approach (recurring, as agreed from the 2020/21 audit)	£10,000	£10,000
Additional fees in respect of new ISA540 requirements in relation to Accounting estimates and related disclosures (recurring, as agreed from the 2020/21 audit)	£4,400	£4,400
Additional fees in respect of the Council's infrastructure (additional work required in relation to the national issue in this 2021/22 audit only – not recurring)	£10,000	£nil
Additional fees in respect of the issues with Pension Fund auditor assurance, the updating of accounts for triennial pensions, and follow up of the PF auditor's letter – not recurring.	£7,000	£nil
Additional fees in respect of the issues with the disclosure of a Pension fund asset for 2022/23 – not recurring	£Nil	£4,000
ISA 315 revised – additional work in relation to understanding the entity, including documenting risks, risk assessments, and an additional focus on IT general controls (new standard applied from 2022/23 for the first time) – not recurring	£Nil	£7,500
Total fees	£151,134	£145,634

* The 2022/23 fee is subject to a 5.2% inflationary increase, not included in the table above. As set out in the PSAA's 'Consultation on 2022/23 audit fee scale' published in August 2022, PSAA will fund the inflationary increase using "surplus funds not required for PSAA's operations, which would otherwise be distributed to opted-in bodies" (p8 of the consultation).

4 Other reporting responsibilities and our fees

Fees for work as the Council's auditor (continued)

Fees for other work

In 2022/23 the Council has engaged Mazars LLP for the following audit related assurance services:

- Housing Benefit assurance - £13,515 plus VAT (£12,287 in 2021/22); and
- Teachers' Pensions assurance - £5,385 plus VAT (£4,895 in 2021/22).



Appendix

Further information on our audit of the financial statements

Significant risks and audit findings

As part of our audit, we identified significant risks to our audit opinion during our risk assessment. The table below summarises these risks, how we responded and our findings.

Risk	Our audit response and findings
<p>Management override of controls</p> <p>Management at various levels within an organisation are in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur there is a risk of material misstatement due to fraud on all audits.</p>	<p>We addressed the management override of controls risk through performing audit work over accounting estimates, review of a sample of journals that meet our risk criteria and significant transactions outside the normal course of business or otherwise unusual.</p> <p>Overall findings</p> <p>Our audit work has provided the assurance we sought and has not identified any material issues to bring to your attention. There is no indication of management override of controls.</p>
<p>Net defined benefit liability valuation</p> <p>The 2022/23 financial statements are expected to contain material pension entries in respect of the retirement benefits. The calculation of these pension figures, both assets and liabilities, can be subject to significant volatility and includes estimates based upon a complex interaction of actuarial assumptions. This results in an increased risk of material misstatement.</p> <p>For 2022/23, a net asset position is being reported for the LGPS for the first time.</p> <p>The 2022/23 position reflects the triennial revaluation of the pension fund at 31 March 2022, rolled forward to 31 March 2023.</p>	<p>We discussed with our key contacts any significant changes to the pension estimates. In addition to our standard programme of work in this area, we evaluated the management controls you have in place to assess the reasonableness of the figures provided by the Actuary and considered the reasonableness of the Actuary's output, referring to an expert's report on all actuaries nationally which is commissioned annually by the NAO.</p> <p>We considered the accounting treatment in respect of the reporting of a net asset position on the LGPS for 2022/23. This included evaluating whether the pension asset needed to be capped at a lower level. Based on our review and the receipt of an asset ceiling calculation from the actuary, no adjustment was required to the net pension asset included in the draft accounts.</p> <p>We sought assurance from the Pension Fund auditor in relation to the pension disclosures.</p> <p>Overall findings</p> <p>Subject to the misstatements reported, our work has provided the assurance we sought, and we have not identified any other matters to report in relation to the net defined benefit liability valuation.</p>

Further information on our audit of the financial statements

Significant risks and audit findings

As part of our audit, we identified significant risks to our audit opinion during our risk assessment. The table below summarises these risks, how we responded and our findings.

Risk	Our audit response and findings
<p>Valuation of land and buildings</p> <p>The 2022/23 financial statements are expected to contain material entries on the Balance Sheet as well as material disclosure notes in relation to the Council's holding of property, plant and equipment (PPE). Although the Council employs a valuation expert to provide information on valuations, there remains a high degree of estimation uncertainty associated with the revaluation of PPE due to the significant judgements and number of variables involved in providing revaluations. We have therefore identified the revaluation of PPE to be an area of significant risk.</p>	<p>We addressed this risk by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considering the Council's arrangements for ensuring that PPE values are reasonable; • challenging the reasonableness of the valuations provided by the Council's valuers, and assessing the competence, skills and experience of the valuers; • discussing methods used with the valuers and examining supporting information; • using market data to assess whether the assets not revalued are likely to have materially changed in value; and • testing a sample of revaluations in year to valuation reports and supporting information, and undertaking procedures to gain assurance over the source data used in the valuations <p>Overall findings</p> <p>Subject to the misstatements reported, our work has provided the assurance we sought, and we have not identified any other matters to report in relation to property, plant and equipment.</p>

Further information on our audit of the financial statements

Summary of uncorrected misstatements

		Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Balance Sheet	
		Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)	Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)
1	Dr: Debtors			1,055	
	Cr: Gross income		1,055		
	Being the extrapolated error arising from our expenditure cut-off testing; an item was selected for testing from April 2023 which related to March 2023. Testing confirmed that the income had been incorrectly included in 2023/24 when it should have been included in 2022/23 (debtor accrual). Actual error £0.211m, extrapolated error £1.055m.				
2	Dr: Revaluation reserve			438	
	Cr: Capital adjustment account				438
	Being revaluation gain which should have been offset against a previous loss, to be corrected in 2023/24.				
	Total unadjusted misstatements		1,055	1,493	438

6 Summary of misstatements

Summary of uncorrected misstatements (continued)

	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Balance Sheet	
	Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)	Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)
3 Cr: Other Long-Term Assets – Pension Fund				-7,003
Dr: Unusable Reserves			7,003	
Cr: Movement in Reserves Statement		-7,003		
Dr: Actuarial (gains)/losses on pension assets	7,003			
Overstatement of assets in the financial statements due to misstatements identified by the pension fund auditor. Management has determined not to amend the financial statements because this adjustment is not material.				
Total unadjusted misstatements	7,003	-8,058	8,496	-7,441

Unadjusted disclosure

During our audit we identified the following disclosure misstatement which has not been adjusted by management:

- Note 18 long-term liabilities, includes total additions, some of which should be classified as short-term.

Gavin Barker, Director

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Audit Completion Report

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
– Year ended 31 March 2023

May 2024



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Our reports are prepared in the context of the 'Statement of Responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies' and the 'Appointing Person Terms of Appointment' issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Reports and letters prepared by appointed auditors and addressed to the Council are prepared for the sole use of the Council and we take no responsibility to any member or officer in their individual capacity or to any third party. Mazars LLP is the UK firm of Mazars, an international advisory and accountancy group. Mazars LLP is registered by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

Audit and Governance Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
Church Road
Stockton-on-Tees
TS18 1LD

May 2024

Dear Committee Members

Audit Completion Report – Year ended 31 March 2023

We are pleased to present our Audit Completion Report for the year ended 31 March 2023. The purpose of this document is to summarise our audit conclusions.

The scope of our work, including identified significant audit risks and other areas of management judgement, was outlined in our Audit Strategy Memorandum which we presented on 25 September 2023. We have reviewed our Audit Strategy Memorandum and concluded that the original significant audit risks and other areas of management judgement remain appropriate.

We would like to express our thanks for the assistance of your team during our audit.

If you would like to discuss any matters in more detail, then please do not hesitate to contact me on 0191 383 6300.

Yours faithfully



Gavin Barker

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01

Section 01:

Executive summary

1 Executive summary

Principal conclusions and significant findings

The detailed scope of our work as your appointed auditor for 2022/23 is set out in the National Audit Office's (NAO) Code of Audit Practice. Our responsibilities and powers are derived from the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as outlined in our Audit Strategy Memorandum, our audit has been conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and means we focus on audit risks that we have assessed as resulting in a higher risk of material misstatement.

In section 4 of this report, we have set out our conclusions and significant findings from our audit. This section includes our conclusions on the audit risks and areas of management judgement in our Audit Strategy Memorandum, which include:

- Management override of controls.
- Valuation of the net defined benefit liability.
- Valuation of property, plant and equipment.

Misstatements and internal control recommendations

Section 5 sets out internal control recommendations and section 6 sets out audit misstatements; unadjusted misstatements total £1,055,000. Section 7 outlines our work on the Council's arrangements to achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Status and audit opinion

We have substantially completed our audit in respect of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023. At the time of preparing this report, there are no significant matters remaining outstanding as outlined in section 2.

Subject to the satisfactory conclusion of the remaining audit work, we have the following conclusions:



Audit opinion

We anticipate issuing an unqualified opinion, without modification, on the financial statements. Our proposed audit opinion is included in the draft auditor's report in Appendix B.



Value for Money

We anticipate having no significant weaknesses in arrangements to report in relation to the arrangements that the Council has in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Further detail on our Value for Money work is provided in section 7 of this report.



Whole of Government Accounts (WGA)

We received group instructions from the National Audit Office in respect of our work on the Council's WGA submission in September 2023. We will report on this when we have issued our audit opinion.



Wider powers

The 2014 Act requires us to give an elector, or any representative of the elector, the opportunity to question us about the accounting records of the Council and to consider any objection made to the accounts. No questions or objections were received.



02


Section 02:


Status of the audit


2 Page 77 Status of the audit

Our work is substantially complete and there are currently no matters of which we are aware that would require modification of our audit opinion, subject to the outstanding matters detailed below.

Audit area	Status	Description of the outstanding matters
Post balance sheet events		Our review is ongoing up until the date of signing the auditor's report (the opinion).
Audit closure		Review and closure processes, including checking the amended version of the financial statements, and final review by the engagement lead and EQR (Engagement Quality Reviewer). We also need to receive a letter of representation from management at the point that we are ready to issue our audit opinion.

 Likely to result in material adjustment or significant change to disclosures within the financial statements.

 Potential to result in material adjustment or significant change to disclosures within the financial statements.

 Not considered likely to result in material adjustment or change to disclosures within the financial statements.

03

Section 03: **Audit approach**

3 Audit approach

Page 79

Changes to our audit approach

We provided details of our intended audit approach in our Audit Strategy Memorandum in September 2023. We have not made any changes to our audit approach since we presented our Audit Strategy Memorandum.

Materiality

Our provisional materiality at the planning stage of the audit was set at £11m for the Council and Group using a benchmark of 2% of gross operating expenditure. Our final assessment of materiality, based on the final financial statements and qualitative factors, resulted in no changes to the materiality level set at the planning stage being made.

Use of experts

There were no changes to our planned use of experts set out in the Audit Strategy Memorandum.

3 Audit approach

Group audit approach

Group component	Approach adopted	Key points or other matters to report
Stockton Borough Holding Company Limited	●	No key points or other matters to mention.
Stockton Hotels Company Limited	●	No key points or other matters to mention.

- Full audit**
Performance of an audit of the component's financial information prepared for group reporting purposes using component materiality
- Audit of balances and/or disclosures**
Performance of an audit of specific balances and/or disclosures included in the component's financial information prepared for group reporting purposes, using component materiality
- Specific audit procedures**
Performance of specific audit procedures on the component's financial information
- Review procedures**
Review of the component's financial information prepared for group reporting purposes using the component materiality assigned

04

Section 04: **Significant findings**

4 Significant findings

In this section we outline the significant findings from our audit. These findings include:

- our audit conclusions regarding other significant risks and key areas of management judgement outlined in the Audit Strategy Memorandum;
- our comments in respect of the accounting policies and disclosures that you have adopted in the financial statements. On page 14 we have concluded whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the financial reporting framework and commented on any significant accounting policy changes that have been made during the year;
- any further significant matters discussed with management; and
- any significant difficulties we experienced during the audit.

Significant risks

Management	Description of the risk
override of controls]	Management at various levels within an organisation are in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of their ability to manipulate accounting records and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur there is a risk of material misstatement due to fraud on all audits.
	How we addressed this risk
	We addressed the management override of controls risk through performing audit work over accounting estimates, review of a sample of journals that meet our risk criteria and significant transactions outside the normal course of business or otherwise unusual.
	Audit conclusion
	Our audit work has provided the assurance we sought and has not identified any material issues to bring to your attention. There is no indication of management override of controls.

4 Significant findings

Net defined benefit liability valuation	Description of the risk
	<p>The 2022/23 financial statements are expected to contain material pension entries in respect of the retirement benefits. The calculation of these pension figures, both assets and liabilities, can be subject to significant volatility and includes estimates based upon a complex interaction of actuarial assumptions. This results in an increased risk of material misstatement.</p> <p>For 2022/23, a net asset position is being reported for the LGPS for the first time.</p> <p>The 2022/23 position reflects the triennial revaluation of the pension fund at 31 March 2022, rolled forward to 31 March 2023.</p>
	How we addressed this risk
	<p>We discussed with our key contacts any significant changes to the pension estimates. In addition to our standard programme of work in this area, we evaluated the management controls you have in place to assess the reasonableness of the figures provided by the Actuary and considered the reasonableness of the Actuary's output, referring to an expert's report on all actuaries nationally which is commissioned annually by the NAO.</p> <p>We considered the accounting treatment in respect of the reporting of a net asset position on the LGPS for 2022/23. This included evaluating whether the pension asset needed to be capped at a lower level. Based on our review and the receipt of an asset ceiling calculation from the actuary, no adjustment was required to the net pension asset included in the draft accounts.</p> <p>We sought assurance from the Pension Fund auditor in relation to the pension disclosures.</p>
Audit conclusion	
<p>Subject to the misstatements reported in section 6, our work has provided the assurance we sought, and we have not identified any other matters to report in relation to the net defined benefit liability valuation.</p>	

Valuation of property, plant and equipment	Description of the risk
	<p>The 2022/23 financial statements are expected to contain material entries on the Balance Sheet as well as material disclosure notes in relation to the Council's holding of property, plant and equipment (PPE). Although the Council employs a valuation expert to provide information on valuations, there remains a high degree of estimation uncertainty associated with the revaluation of PPE due to the significant judgements and number of variables involved in providing revaluations. We have therefore identified the revaluation of PPE to be an area of significant risk.</p>
	How we addressed this risk
	<p>We addressed this risk by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• considering the Council's arrangements for ensuring that PPE values are reasonable;• challenging the reasonableness of the valuations provided by the Council's valuers, and assessing the competence, skills and experience of the valuers;• discussing methods used with the valuers and examining supporting information;• using market data to assess whether the assets not revalued are likely to have materially changed in value; and• testing a sample of revaluations in year to valuation reports and supporting information, and undertaking procedures to gain assurance over the source data used in the valuations
Audit conclusion	
<p>Subject to the misstatements reported in section 6, our work has provided the assurance we sought, and we have not identified any other matters to report in relation to property, plant and equipment.</p>	

4 Significant findings

Qualitative aspects of the Council's accounting practices

We have reviewed the Council's accounting policies and disclosures and concluded they comply with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23, as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets, published in November 2022, appropriately tailored to the Council's circumstances.

Draft accounts were received from the Council on 24 July 2023 and were of a good quality. Working papers and supporting evidence was of a high standard.

Significant matters discussed with management

During our audit we communicated the following significant matters to management:

Pension fund liability and asset

The opening net pensions liability as of 1 April 2022 was amended in the 2021/22 accounts because of the revised pensions report the Council obtained due to the triennial revaluation exercise. This resulted in a decrease of £38.3m to the Council's net pensions liability from £282.2m to £243.9m.

As of 31 March 2023, the Council's net pensions liability had further changed and the actuary notified a surplus. Overall, there has been a move from a £243.9m deficit to £101.7m surplus; a similar significant change has been noted for the other Teesside local authorities where we are the auditor. This significant change arises from gross pension assets exceeding liabilities due to movements in markets for assets and changes in actuarial assumptions impacting on liabilities.

We considered the accounting treatment in respect of the reporting of a net asset position on the LGPS for 2022/23. This included evaluating whether the pension asset needed to be capped at a lower level. Based on our review and the receipt of an asset ceiling calculation from the actuary, no adjustment was required to the net pension asset included in the draft accounts.

We received the letter of assurance from the pension fund auditor on 22 April 2024 and have now completed our work. The Pension Fund auditor reported to us that the asset values submitted to the actuary were overstated by £25.009m. In addition, there was significant doubt about a further £11.85m which may also be overstated. Given the Council's share of the PF assets at the year-end is 19% of the scheme investment assets, this difference would amount to a £7m overstatement of pension assets in the financial statements which is not material to our opinion on your accounts. This is set out as an unadjusted misstatement in section 6 below.

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

We made enquiries of officers in respect of RAAC being present in any Council-owned buildings and obtained assurance that government department procedures were being followed and there was no indication of any material issues impacting on the Council's assets.

Significant difficulties during the audit

During the course of the audit, we did not encounter any significant difficulties and we have had the full co-operation of management.

Wider responsibilities

Our powers and responsibilities under the 2014 Act are broad and include the ability to:

- issue a report in the public interest;
- make statutory recommendations that must be considered and responded to publicly;
- apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law;
- make an application for judicial review; and
- issue an advisory notice under schedule 8 of the 2014 Act.

We have not exercised any of these powers as part of our 2022/23 audit.

The 2014 Act also gives rights to local electors and other parties, such as the right to ask questions of the auditor and the right to make an objection to an item of account. No such objections have been raised.

05

Section 05: **Internal control recommendations**

5 Internal control recommendations

As part of our audit of the financial statements, we obtained an understanding of internal controls sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed. Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, we are required to communicate to the Audit and Governance Committee any significant deficiencies identified during the course of our work.

The purpose of our audit was to express an opinion on the financial statements. As part of our audit, we have considered the internal controls in place relevant to the preparation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures to allow us to express an opinion on the financial statements but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control or to identify any significant deficiencies in their design or operation.

The matters reported are limited to those deficiencies and other control recommendations that we have identified during our normal audit procedures and that we consider to be of sufficient importance to merit being reported. If we had performed more extensive procedures on internal control, we might have identified more deficiencies to be reported or concluded that some of the reported deficiencies need not in fact have been reported. Our comments should not be regarded as a comprehensive record of all deficiencies that may exist or improvements that could be made.

No significant findings or recommendations in relation to internal controls have been noted as at the date of this memorandum.

Priority ranking	Description	Number of issues
1 (high)	In our view, there is potential for financial loss, damage to reputation or loss of information. This may have implications for the achievement of business strategic objectives. The recommendation should be taken into consideration by management immediately.	0
2 (medium)	In our view, there is a need to strengthen internal control or enhance business efficiency. The recommendations should be actioned in the near future.	0
3 (low)	In our view, internal control should be strengthened in these additional areas when practicable.	0

06

Section 06:

Summary of misstatements

6 Summary of misstatements

This section outlines the misstatements identified during the course of the audit, above the trivial threshold for adjustment of £331,000. The first table outlines the misstatements that were identified during the course of our audit which management has assessed as not being material either individually or in aggregate to the financial statements and does not currently plan to adjust.

The second table outlines the misstatements that have been adjusted by management during the course of the audit.

Unadjusted misstatements

		Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Balance Sheet	
		Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)	Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)
1	Dr: Debtors			1,055	
	Cr: Gross income		-1,055		
Being the extrapolated error arising from our expenditure cut-off testing; an item was selected for testing from April 2023 which related to March 2023. Testing confirmed that the income had been incorrectly included in 2023/24 when it should have been included in 2022/23 (debtor accrual). Actual error £0.211m, extrapolated error £1.055m.					
2	Dr: Revaluation reserve			438	
	Cr: Capital adjustment account				-438
Being revaluation gain which should have been offset against a previous loss, to be corrected in 2023/24.					

6 Summary of misstatements

Unadjusted misstatements (continued)

		Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Balance Sheet	
		Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)	Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)
3	Cr: Other Long-Term Assets – Pension Fund				-7,003
	Dr: Unusable Reserves			7,003	
	Cr: Movement in Reserves Statement		-7,003		
	Dr: Actuarial (gains)/losses on pension assets	7,003			
Overstatement of assets in the financial statements due to misstatements identified by the pension fund auditor. Management has determined not to amend the financial statements because this adjustment is not material.					
Total unadjusted misstatements		7,003	-8,058	8,496	-7,441

Unadjusted disclosure

During our audit we identified the following disclosure misstatement which has not been adjusted by management:

- Note 18 long-term liabilities, includes total additions, some of which should be classified as short-term.

6 Summary of misstatements

Adjusted misstatements

		Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Balance Sheet	
		Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)	Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)
1	Dr: Brought forward corporate management and services expenditure and income	4,635			
	Cr: Brought forward adults and health expenditure and income		4,635		
Misclassification of Covid codes in restated brought forward income and expenditure between adults and health and corporate management and services. No impact in current year.					
Total adjusted misstatements prior year		4,635	4,635		

		Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Balance Sheet	
		Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)	Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)
1	Dr: Debtors due within one year			601	
	Cr: Debtors due after one year				601
Suez debtor due within one year shown as long-term debtor					

6 Summary of misstatements

Adjusted misstatements

		Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Balance Sheet	
		Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)	Dr (£'000)	Cr (£'000)
2	Dr: PPE infrastructure			1,144	
	Dr: Movement in reserves statement	1,144			
	Cr: CIES cost of services expenditure		1,144		
	Cr: Capital adjustment account				1,144
	Correction of highways infrastructure depreciation				
3	Dr: CIES surplus on revaluation	1,195			
	Dr: PPE land and buildings			6,695	
	Dr: Revaluation reserve			1,195	
	Cr: CIES cost of services expenditure		7,890		
	Cr: Capital adjustment account				7,890
	Cr: Movement in reserves statement	6,695			
	Impact of errors in revaluations				
4	Dr: Cost of services loss on disposal	1,130			
	Dr: Capital adjustment account			1,130	
	Cr: PPE land and buildings				1,130
	Cr: Movement in reserves statement		1,130		
	Impact of errors in the treatment of academy school disposals				
	Total adjusted misstatements	10,164	10,164	10,765	10,765

6 Summary of misstatements

Disclosure amendments

We identified the following adjustments during our audit that have been corrected by management:

- Note 10 employers' remuneration, amended for one error in the bandings and one in the amounts disclosed and to include termination payments to a former director.
- Note 11 property, plant and equipment, various classification errors and valuation table amended to correct errors and reflect the valuation changes made within the note correctly.
- Note 15 debtors, classification error between other liabilities and collection fund corrected.
- Note 15a debtors, additional note added with details of class of debtor for assets that are either past due or impaired in relation to non-financial assets.
- Note 26 operating leases, amended to include additional properties.
- Note 29 financial instruments, amended to correct classification between long- and short-term debtors.
- Various other minor presentational and typographical adjustments.

07

Section 07: **Value for Money**

Approach to Value for Money

We are required to consider whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The NAO issues guidance to auditors that underpins the work we are required to carry out and sets out the reporting criteria that we are required to consider. The reporting criteria are:

- **Financial sustainability** - How the Council plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services
- **Governance** - How the Council ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks
- **Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness** - How the Council uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services

At the planning stage of the audit, we undertake work to understand the arrangements that the Council has in place under each of the reporting criteria and we identify risks of significant weaknesses in those arrangements. Although we describe this work as planning work, we keep our understanding of arrangements under review and update our risk assessment throughout the audit to reflect emerging issues that may suggest significant weaknesses in arrangements exist.

Our initial and ongoing planning work did not identify any risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements.

Where our risk-based procedures identify actual significant weaknesses in arrangements we are required to report these and make recommendations for improvement. Where such significant weaknesses are identified, we report these in the audit report.

The primary output of our work on the Council's arrangements is the commentary on those arrangements that forms part of the Auditor's Annual Report. We intend to issue the Auditor's Annual Report as soon as possible after issuing our audit opinion on the financial statements.

Status of our work

We have completed our work in respect of the Council's arrangements for the year ended 31 March 2023. We have not identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements that require us to make a recommendation.

Our draft audit report at Appendix B outlines that we have completed our work in relation to the Council's arrangements. As noted above, our commentary on the Council's arrangements will be provided in the Auditor's Annual Report, which we will issue as soon as possible after we have issued our audit opinion on the financial statements.

Appendices

A: Draft management representation letter

B: Draft audit report

C: Independence

D: Other communications

Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

To: provided to us on client headed note paper

To:

Mr Gavin Barker
Director
Mazars LLP
The Corner
Bank Chambers
26 Mosley Street
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE1 1DF

Date: TBC

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (and Group) - audit for year ended 31 March 2023

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (the Council) and Group for the year ended 31 March 2023 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the statement of accounts give a true and fair view in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 (the Code).

I confirm that the following representations are made on the basis of enquiries of management and staff with relevant knowledge and experience (and, where appropriate, inspection of supporting documentation) sufficient to satisfy myself that I can properly make each of the following representations to you.

My responsibility for the statement of accounts and accounting information

I believe that I have fulfilled my responsibilities for the true and fair presentation and preparation of the statement of accounts in accordance with the Code.

My responsibility to provide and disclose relevant information

I have provided you with:

- access to all information of which I am aware that is relevant to the preparation of the statement of accounts such as records, documentation and other material;
- additional information that you have requested from me for the purpose of the audit; and
- unrestricted access to individuals within the Council and Group you determined it was necessary to contact in order to obtain audit evidence.

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Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

I confirm as Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance that I have taken all the necessary steps to make me aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that you, as auditors, are aware of this information. As far as I am aware there is no relevant audit information of which you, as auditors, are unaware.

Accounting records

I confirm that all transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements. All other records and related information, including minutes of all Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings, have been made available to you.

Accounting policies

I confirm that I have reviewed the accounting policies applied during the year in accordance with the Code and International Accounting Standard 8 and consider them appropriate for the year.

Accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value

I confirm that any significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.

Contingencies

There are no material contingent losses including pending or potential litigation that should be accrued where:

- information presently available indicates that it is probable that an asset has been impaired, or a liability had been incurred at the balance sheet date; and
- the amount of the loss can be reasonably estimated..

There are no material contingent losses that should be disclosed where, although either or both the conditions specified above are not met, there is a reasonable possibility that a loss, or a loss greater than that accrued, may have been incurred at the balance sheet date. There are no contingent gains which should be disclosed.

All material matters, including unasserted claims, that may result in litigation against the Council and Group have been brought to your attention. All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to you and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with Code.

Laws and regulations

I confirm that I have disclosed to you all those events of which I am aware which involve known or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations, together with the actual or contingent consequences which may arise therefrom.

The Council and Group has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that would have a material effect on the accounts in the event of non-compliance.



Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

Fraud and error

I acknowledge my responsibility as Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

I have disclosed to you:

- all the results of my assessment of the risk that the statement of accounts may be materially misstated as a result of fraud;
- all knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the Council and Group involving:
 - management and those charged with governance;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; and
 - others where fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.

I have disclosed to you all information in relation to any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the Council and Group's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

Related party transactions

I confirm that all related party relationships, transactions and balances (including sales, purchases, loans, transfers, leasing arrangements and guarantees) have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of the Code. I have disclosed to you the identity of the Authority's related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which I am aware.

Impairment review

To the best of my knowledge, there is nothing to indicate that there is a permanent reduction in the recoverable amount of the property, plant and equipment below their carrying value at the balance sheet date. An impairment review is therefore not considered necessary.

Charges on assets

All the Council and Group's assets are free from any charges exercisable by third parties except as disclosed within the financial statements.

Future commitments

We have no plans, intentions or commitments that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities or give rise to additional liabilities.

Service Concession Arrangements

I am not aware of any material contract variations, payment deductions or additional service charges in 2022/23 in relation to the Council's PFI schemes that you have not been made aware of.

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Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

Subsequent events

I confirm all events subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which the Code require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.

Should further material events occur after the date of this letter which may necessitate revision of the figures included in the financial statements or inclusion of a note thereto, I will advise you accordingly.

Going concern

I confirm that I have carried out an assessment of the potential impact of the war in Ukraine on the Council and Group, including the impact on inflation and I am satisfied that the going concern assumption remains appropriate and that no material uncertainty has been identified.

To the best of my knowledge there is nothing to indicate that the Council and Group will cease to continue as a going concern in the foreseeable future. The period to which I have paid particular attention in assessing the appropriateness of the going concern basis is not less than twelve months from the date of approval of the accounts.

Global Banking Challenges

We confirm that we have assessed the impact on the Council and Group of the on-going Global Banking challenges, in particular whether there is any impact on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, and on the post balance sheet events disclosures.

We confirm that our exposure (either direct cash exposure or direct / indirect through investments) with Silicon Valley Bank, Credit Suisse, Signature Bank or any other bank in a distress situation, is not material.

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete

I can confirm we have carried out an assessment of the potential impact of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) on the Council and Group. There is no indication of a need for a material impairment of PPE buildings or investment properties as a result of our investigation of the existence of RAAC.

Unadjusted misstatements

I confirm that the effects of the uncorrected misstatements are immaterial both individually and in aggregate to the financial statements as a whole. **Please make sure the appendix is attached to the letter and not cross-referenced to the appendix in the ACR. Unadjusted should be numerical AND disclosure.**

Yours sincerely

Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance

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Appendix B: Draft audit report

Independent auditor's report to the members of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on the financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council ('the Council') and its subsidiaries ('the Group') for the year ended 31 March 2023, which comprise the Council and Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statements, the Council and Group Movement in Reserves Statements, the Council and Group Balance Sheets, the Council and Group Cash Flow Statements, the Collection Fund and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23, as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets ("the Code Update"), published in November 2022.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council and the Group as at 31st March 2023 and of the Council's and the Group's expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 as amended by the Code Update.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities section of our report. We are independent of the Council and Group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, and taking into account the requirements of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 as amended by the Code Update, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Council's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

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

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance's Responsibilities, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 as amended by the Code Update, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance is also responsible for such internal control as the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance is required to comply with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 as amended by the Code Update and prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, on the assumption that the functions of the Council will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance is responsible for assessing each year whether or not it is appropriate for the Council and Group to prepare its accounts on the going concern basis and disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

Appendix B: Draft audit report

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

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. Based on our understanding of the Council, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to the Local Government Act 2003 (and associated regulations made under section 21), the Local Government Finance Acts of 1988, 1992 and 2012, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements.

To help us identify instances of non-compliance with these laws and regulations, and in identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect to non-compliance, our procedures included, but were not limited to:

- inquiring with management and the Audit and Governance Committee, as to whether the Council is in compliance with laws and regulations, and discussing their policies and procedures regarding compliance with laws and regulations;
- communicating identified laws and regulations throughout our engagement team and remaining alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout our audit; and
- considering the risk of acts by the Council and the Group which were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

We evaluated the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls) and determined that the principal risks were related to posting manual journal entries to manipulate financial performance, management bias through judgements and assumptions in significant accounting estimates, and significant one-off or unusual transactions.

Our audit procedures in relation to fraud included but were not limited to:

- making enquiries of management and the Audit and Governance Committee on whether they had knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- gaining an understanding of the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud;
- discussing amongst the engagement team the risks of fraud; and
- addressing the risks of fraud through management override of controls by performing journal entry testing.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of irregularities including fraud rests with management and the Audit and Governance Committee. As with any audit, there remained a risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls.

We are also required to conclude on whether the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate. We performed our work in accordance with Practice Note 10: Audit of financial statement and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom, and Supplementary Guidance Note 01, issued by the National Audit Office in February 2023.

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

Report on the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources

Matter on which we are required to report by exception

We are required to report to you if, in our view, we are not satisfied that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2023.

We have nothing to report in this respect.

Responsibilities of the Council

The Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

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

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

We have undertaken our work in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in January 2023.

Appendix B: Draft audit report

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Matters on which we are required to report by exception under the Code of Audit Practice

We are required by the Code of Audit Practice to report to you if:

- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we make a recommendation under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; or
- we exercise any other special powers of the auditor under sections 28, 29 or 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

We have nothing to report in these respects.

Use of the audit report

This report is made solely to the members of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, as a body, in accordance with part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as set out in paragraph 44 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the members of the Council those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the members of the Council, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Delay in certification of completion of the audit

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate until we have completed the work necessary to issue our assurance statement in respect of the Council's Whole of Government Accounts consolidation pack.

Gavin Barker
Key Audit Partner
For and on behalf of Mazars LLP

The Corner, Bank Chambers,
26 Mosley Street
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE1 1DF





[Insert date]

Appendix C: Independence



As part of our ongoing risk assessment we monitor our relationships with you to identify any new actual or perceived threats to our independence within the regulatory or professional requirements governing us as your auditors.

We can confirm that no new threats to independence have been identified since issuing the Audit Strategy Memorandum and therefore we remain independent.

Appendix D: Other communications

Other communication	Response
 <p>Compliance with Laws and Regulations</p>	<p>We have not identified any significant matters involving actual or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations.</p> <p>We will obtain written representations from management that all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing financial statements have been disclosed.</p>
 <p>External confirmations</p>	<p>We did not experience any issues with respect to obtaining external confirmations.</p>
 <p>Related parties</p>	<p>We did not identify any significant matters relating to the audit of related parties.</p> <p>We will obtain written representations from management confirming that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> they have disclosed to us the identity of related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which they are aware; and they have appropriately accounted for and disclosed such relationships and transactions in accordance with the requirements of the applicable financial reporting framework.
 <p>Going concern</p>	<p>We have not identified any evidence to cause us to disagree with the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council will be a going concern, and therefore we consider that the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation of the financial statements.</p> <p>We will obtain written representations from management, confirming that all relevant information covering a period of at least 12 months from the date of approval of the financial statements has been taken into account in assessing the appropriateness of the going concern basis of preparation of the financial statements.</p>

Appendix D: Other communications

Other communication	Response
 <p>Subsequent events</p>	<p>We are required to obtain evidence about whether events occurring between the date of the financial statements and the date of the auditor's report that require adjustment of, or disclosure in, the financial statements are appropriately reflected in those financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.</p> <p>We will obtain written representations from management that all events occurring subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which the applicable financial reporting framework requires adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.</p>
 <p>Matters related to fraud</p>	<p>We have designed our audit approach to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement due to fraud. In addition to the work performed by us, we will obtain written representations from management, and Audit and Governance Committee, confirming that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. they acknowledge their responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud; b. they have disclosed to the auditor the results of management's assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud; c. they have disclosed to the auditor their knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the entity involving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Management; ii. Employees who have significant roles in internal control; or iii. Others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements; and d. they have disclosed to the auditor their knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the entity's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

Gavin Barker, Director

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AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

30 MAY 2024

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE & DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, TRANSFORMATION & PERFORMANCE

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2022/2023

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents to Members the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts for 2022/2023.

RECOMMENDATION

The Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance, Transformation and Performance and Chair of the Committee sign the Statement of Responsibilities confirming the approval of the accounts and the authorisation to issue these as a public document.

SUMMARY

It was a statutory requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended) that the audited 2022/23 Statement of Accounts were approved by Members of the Committee and published on the Council's website on or before 30th September 2023. In order to comply with the regulations, the Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance, Transformation and Performance and Chair of the Committee are required to sign the Statement of Responsibilities confirming the approval of the accounts and the authorisation to issue these as a public document.

Unfortunately, the conclusion of the audit was delayed due to a number of reasons including;

- Delays in the issuing of the Teesside Pension fund assurance letter;
- Accounting for the net pension asset (the first time there has been a net pension asset). This involved obtaining an actuarial report on the calculation of the asset ceiling to see whether the net asset disclosed needed to be capped at a lower level. The actuarial report has in fact confirmed that the net asset disclosed is less than the asset ceiling and consequently a further adjustment to the 2022/23 financial statements has not been required.
- General backlog in the audit environment and prioritising the completion of the 2021/22 audit.

DETAIL

1. The accounts have been completed in accordance with the "Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/2023" which is prepared under

International Financial Reporting Standards.

2. The Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015 came into effect on 1st April 2015. The regulations changed the arrangements for the approval and publication of the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement. The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 - Regulation 15, as amended by The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021 require the council to publish the unaudited Statement of Accounts for the financial year ending 31 March 2023 by 31 May 2023.
3. For the Publication of the unaudited statement of accounts, the requirement in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended) is for the public inspection period to be commenced by 1 June. However, this commencement can only happen at the earliest the first working day after the unaudited accounts (and other specified documents) are published.
4. The Accounts and Audit Regulations (Amendment 2022) were laid before Parliament on the 28th June 2022. These amendments change the deadline for Authorities to publish their statement of accounts and supporting documents (together with any certificate or opinion of the local auditor) from 31st July to 30th September for the financial years beginning in 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027.
5. For the 2022/23 accounts the period in which electors had the right to examine the accounts, question the auditor and to make objections covered a period of 30 working days which, commenced on the 1st August 2023 and ended on 11th September 2023. The council did not receive any requests to examine the accounts during this period.
6. During 2022/23 the Government continued to provide a range of Covid 19 financial support packages and also funds in relation to the energy crisis. These included additional funding to support service pressures (both income and expenditure) caused by the pandemic, funding for specific measures and initiatives, and grants paid to local businesses and households. In accordance with the Code of Practice, where the authority has the ability to determine/influence the grant scheme criteria it is said to be acting as a Principal. Where the authority has acted as principal, transactions are included in the financial statements and on this basis, the majority of Covid grants are recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES).
7. However, there are some instances where the Council has acted as an agent i.e., the Council has simply acted as an intermediary and passed the funds onto recipients following government criteria. Where the Council has acted as an agent, transactions are not reflected in the authority's financial statements.

KEY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

8. The following key financial figures (non-group) are included in the accounts:
 - A deficit of £1.413 million is reported against directorate revenue budgets for 2022/23 (see revenue year end table page 15). This reflects the planned use of available surplus general fund balances, following outturn 2021-22. A further £2.327m in usable reserves was applied in 2022/23. This use of reserves was approved by Council on 22nd February 2023. Further details of the outturn position can be found in the MTFP report presented to Cabinet on 13th July 2023.
 - Total capital spending was £47.8 million during 2022/23 (see page 16).
 - Due to the significant reduction in the re-measurement of the defined benefit pension liability the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement shows a

surplus of £346.253 million in year. This is covered in page 22 of the accounts. Also see paragraphs 9-12 below.

- Current long-term investments and cash and cash equivalents amount to £24.341 million. This is a reduction of £6.631 million from the previous year.
 - The Council's current long and short-term borrowings total £94.240 million which is an increase of £9.777 million over the previous year. This increase reflects an increase in short term borrowings undertaken at the year-end for cash flow purposes. This is in line with our Treasury Management Strategy, approved by Council on 23rd February 2022, and the total borrowing amount is lower than estimated. The Treasury Management Outturn Report 2022/23 was presented to the Audit & Governance Committee in September 2023, which provided full details of Treasury Management activities during 2022/23.
 - The Council's earmarked reserves (excluding schools) stand at £52.706 million and school related reserves are £5.679 million. Note 7 provides further details on earmarked reserves.
 - The level of General Fund Balances at the 31st March stands at £8.0 million a decrease of £1.413 million over the previous year, in line with the MTFP report to Council in February 2023. General Fund Balances are intended to provide some overall flexibility and protection against adverse variances in budget assumptions and unforeseen events.
9. Following the pensions valuation by the Councils actuary, Hymans Robertson LLP, the Council determined that the fair value of its pension plan assets outweighed the present value of the plan obligations at 31 March 2023 resulting in a pension plan asset for the first time. The pension fund liability of £243.939 as at 31st March 2022 has shifted markedly to become a net pension asset (in other words the value of pension fund assets are in excess of the value of pension fund liabilities) and stands at a net value of £101.742 million.
10. This significant change relates to a change in the assumptions used by the Pension Fund Actuary, Hymans Robertson LLP, as part of the Council's actuarial valuation. The assumptions are determined by the Actuary and represent market conditions at the reporting date.
11. There is a limit of the value of Pension Asset that can be recognised on the Councils balance sheet which is set by International Accounting Standards. IAS 19 Employee Benefits requires that, where a pension plan asset exists, it is measured at the lower of:
- The surplus in the defined benefit plan; and
 - The asset ceiling, the asset ceiling is the present value of any economic benefits available in the form of refunds from the plan or reductions in future contributions to the plan.
12. The Council considered the accounting treatment in respect of the reporting of a net asset position on the Local Government Pension Scheme for 2022/23. This included evaluating whether the pension asset needed to be capped at a lower level. Based on asset ceiling calculation provided by the actuary, no adjustment was required to the net pension asset included within the accounts.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Regulation 9(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the Council's

Responsible Financial Officer (Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance, Transformation and Performance) to sign and date the statement of accounts and certify that it presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council. Regulation 9(2) requires the Statement of Accounts to be approved by members prior to publication. Regulation 10(1) requires the publication of the approved, audited Statement of Accounts.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has put in place revised regulations that came into force on 31 March 2023. The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2022 extend the statutory audit deadlines 2022/23 for all local authorities. The publication date for audited accounts moved to 30 September 2023 for all local authority bodies.

RISK ASSESSMENT

None directly from this report.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

None directly from this report.

CONSULTATION

None directly from this report.

Garry Cummings

Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance, Transformation and Performance.

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Statement of Accounts

2022-23

Garry Cummings CPFA
Deputy Chief Executive and Director of
Finance, Transformation & Performance

INGLEBY BARWICK

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The Borough

The Borough of Stockton-on-Tees has something for everyone. It's no wonder our population is growing, business is booming, and you tell us you're happy to be here. Here are some things you might like to know about our Borough.

A place people are proud to live

200,000 people call the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees home. They live in our thriving towns - Billingham, Ingleby Barwick, Norton, Stockton, Thornaby and Yarm - and our rural villages. Our population is increasing, with a 2.8% rise over the last seven years, and we're committed to serving this growing community, supported by a thriving and active voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. We're delighted to know people are proud of living here.

Going places and getting further

Business is booming in Stockton-on-Tees, where 5,000 businesses generate £4 billion for the local economy. We account for a third of the Tees Valley economy overall and our towns provide work for people from across the Borough. Our excellent road and rail connections with London and key northern cities make Stockton a great place to do business. Whilst Teesside International Airport, on the Borough's boundary, provides international connections for our globally ambitious businesses.

Alive with events, leisure and culture

There's always something to do in Stockton-on-Tees. Whether that is enjoying our beautiful parks and open spaces, or visiting our beautiful towns. Although of course impacted by COVID-19, we hope to be able to return to our year-round events programme, and to ensure we can all continue to enjoy the wide range of activities, events and facilities that put our Borough on the map. Our Plan will maintain the Borough's reputation as a thriving and vibrant place to be.

Fighting inequality

Inequality is a challenge in the Borough. We have affluent areas alongside areas of deprivation. Nine of our 26 wards are in the 10% most deprived wards in the country and there is a gap of 21 years in average life expectancy amongst men between the most and least deprived wards. We're committed to fighting this discrepancy and making sure more people enjoy a healthy and happy life here.

The climate change challenge

The effects of climate change are becoming ever more apparent. We know that the changes required to our transport, homes, industry and lifestyle are challenging and must be long term. The Council is working with a sense of urgency to develop plans in partnership with businesses and other agencies to drive down carbon production and reduce consumption of energy and raw materials. Everyone in the Borough can make a difference.

The Council

We are a unitary authority elected to serve the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees. We are the largest of the five local unitary Councils that make up the Tees Valley region. We have 26 wards, represented by 56 councillors. Following the May 2019 local elections, no political party has overall control of the Council. We have a Leader and Cabinet style administration. That means the Council appoints the Leader, and the Leader appoints the Cabinet.

Planning our financial future

Our medium-term financial planning approach has allowed us to continually balance our budget through delivering savings and efficiencies but also to plan ahead and deliver invest-to-save schemes and innovative changes to service delivery models. The current financial climate is extremely challenging and there will be a need to deliver budget savings in the future. Our approach will allow time to embark on a series of reviews, which will not only deliver savings but also improve outcomes for our residents.

Our people, our services, our commitment

Our teams continue to rise to the many challenges we face, continuing to deliver high quality, value for money services, and by working with key partners in the public, business and voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

Our adult and children's social care services, support teams and education support teams work all year round to protect our residents from abuse and exploitation, working alongside the teams in public health, community safety, licensing, trading standards, welfare support, housing, catering, registrars, bereavement service, community engagement and environmental health work to make sure that the Borough is a place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm.

Our refuse and recycling, street cleaning, groundworks, parks and maintenance teams all work alongside the teams in heritage, libraries,

museums, events and countryside and green space to make sure that the Borough is clean, vibrant and attractive. Whilst the Planning, Building Control and Housing Development teams make sure that the Borough has great places to live.

Our Business Support, Inward Investment, Learning and Skills and Town Centre Development teams are working hard to support businesses in the Borough to ensure we have a thriving economy where everyone has opportunities to succeed and our Transport teams continue to manage and improve our highways networks to ensure that residents and businesses can move freely around the borough.

And all of our teams, whether on the front line or working in the vital support functions that are needed to make it all happen, are all ambitious, effective and proud to serve.

During the year...

For our Council Plan we have had to adapt the priorities we planned to work on during the last year. The following is just a flavour of what the Council has achieved during the year.

OUR PEOPLE

The Council continues to support as many people to live independently at home as possible.

Proposals for a new Alternative Provision Free School submitted in partnership with Delta Academies Trust.

Strategic partnership launched 1 April with a focus on support for reunification of children with birth families where appropriate and increased family support offer.

Following the additional investment made by the Council within our Community Safety related services we appointed an additional 12 Civic Enforcement Officers.

Supported families during the school holidays, we commission a holiday enrichment programme working closely with Catalyst, the VCSE and communities. The programme supported children and their families across the Borough during the Summer holidays, through the provision of healthy food and free activities.

The Council continues to work closely with primary care colleagues to promote the NHS health check which identifies and supports people at risk from diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, stroke and dementia. This includes working across NHS partners to address inequality in uptake of the checks across our local communities.

The local Health Protection Collaborative (established based on learning from the pandemic) continues to meet, reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Collaborative provides assurance to the Board on local Health Protection matters and helps ensure a robust and resilient local health protection system.

A new Violence Reduction Unit (CURV) has been introduced following additional funding from the Home Office, in Cleveland. Stockton BC is represented on this group and part of the decision-making process for funding allocation and the introduction of new initiatives to tackle serious violence.

Continue to work with adult residential care and care at home providers to improve quality of care and to continue to support them as they respond to the challenges arising from COVID-19.

Engaged with individuals, families, carers and communities when developing adult social care support and continue to collaborate with the NHS to ensure health and care services work effectively together.

OUR PLACES

Continue the redevelopment of Stockton Town Centre including demolition of Castlegate and development of the Urban Park.

Continued to finalise the plans for improvements in Yarm, Preston Hall Museum and Grounds and cycleway infrastructure in line with the Levelling Up fund allocation.

Finalised the arrangements for the Town Deal in Thornaby.

Continued the redevelopment of the Sycamores and Elm House estates in Stockton.

Specialist/supported housing needs assessment completed which will inform future service provision.

Continued the programme of road and pavement maintenance and repairs.

Implemented the first stage objectives of the Carbon Reduction and Environmental Sustainability Strategy and develop the partnership and community work as a basis for future activity.

Developed and adapted our borough-wide events programme to respond to the pandemic, incorporating celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and preparations for the Stockton & Darlington Railway Bicentenary.

OUR ECONOMY

Continue to develop the Invest Stockton-on-Tees branding campaign and attract inward investment into the Borough.

Continued to develop options for increasing the availability of employment land across the Borough, such as Belasis Business Park and Durham Lane Business Park.

Finalised and implement the Inclusive Growth Strategy to support residents to benefit from growth.

Developed the Employment and Training Hub model to develop skills and support residents into employment.

The Council's Social Value Policy has been reviewed and updated ahead of any working with partners.

Continued to deliver the major transport-related projects at the Portrack Relief Road, Billingham and Eaglescliffe Station improvements, Elton Interchange, and improvements along the A689 corridor.

OUR COUNCIL

Developed proposals for the redevelopment of Dunedin House to support flexible working arrangements and the re-location of staff from current buildings.

Launched a new Council Volunteering Strategy to support our employees to volunteer in the community and to provide additional volunteering opportunities at the Council.

Added new features and functions to the Council website and improve online services for customers.

Continued to review surplus land and assets and develop plans for disposal or development.

Continued to develop the Bright Minds Big Futures initiative to ensure that the voice of young people is heard and valued in the development and delivery of Council policies and services.

Develop and implement the Fairer Stockton-on-Tees Framework. Work during 2022/23 focused on supported the Borough's residents in the current Cost of Living Crisis (for example Cost of Living Information HUB / and a borough wide roll out of Warm Spaces in partnership with the VCSE sector).

Reviewed the Medium Term Financial Plan, to reflect changes in Government funding arrangements and legislative changes.

Our vision for the Borough

When we look at the situation in the Borough in 2023/24 and weigh up all of the challenges and opportunities that we face right now, we have identified the following key priorities for the coming year.

We want the borough of Stockton-on-Tees to be...



Governance

The Council continues to review and update its governance arrangements to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose, which is overseen by the Corporate Governance Group and Audit and Governance Committee. The committee continues to monitor implementation of actions identified in last year's Annual Governance Statement. The Council has had to change and adapt operations including governance processes during the year. More detail is included in the Annual Governance Statement which is published on the Council's website.

Risks and Opportunities

The Council maintains a Strategic Risk Register which highlights all major risk areas and includes details about the risk, existing controls and required actions. The risk register is regularly reviewed and updated and reported to the Audit and Governance Committee.

There are a number of principal risks the Council is currently managing.

These include:

The availability and uncertainty of medium term financial resources needed to meet key objectives. The main controls in place include careful financial planning through the medium term financial plan, access to additional Covid-19 grant funding, the delivery and monitoring of savings programmes, timely monitoring and reporting of financial performance, maximising income generation and taxation collection and a good understanding and interpretation of changes to funding regimes.

The availability of human resources with the appropriate skills, capacity and competencies. The main controls in place include regular reviews and updates of HR policies to ensure they are in line with the Council's strategic aims particularly in relation to absence management during the Covid-19 pandemic, a refreshed apprenticeship programme, provision of high quality training including the development of a new learning management system and the launch of the Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy. A flexible working policy has been piloted and using lessons learnt and employee and Elected Member feedback, has been revised, updated and re-launched.

Providing an information governance framework to effectively manage information security and protect personal data. Main controls include regular reviews of information governance policies and procedures, robust information security systems to protect ICT systems, employee training, roll out of further Office 365 functionality and a revised approach to records management.

The growth in demand for services such as adult social care and children's services caused by an aging population with more complex needs and an increase in the number of looked after children with complex needs. Main controls include an investment in new children's residential services, preventative services to slow the demand and a better understanding of demand drivers.

The Council has identified a number of opportunities to reduce costs and improve services. These include:

Using technology more effectively and efficiently and to improve access channels for residents particularly building upon the positive changes to working arrangements and the way communities accessed services during the pandemic. The planned consolidation of Council administrative buildings to reduce costs and create fit for purpose office space.

Opportunity to redevelop, re-invigorate and re-shape Town Centres.

The ongoing operation and development of various partnerships including the Integrated Care Partnership, various shared services and collaborative procurement arrangements such as those through the North East Procurement Organisation (NEPO).

Approach to Financial Management

The Council has recognised for a number of years the financial challenges and the need to prepare well in advance. Our approach to financial planning over the long-term has allowed us to plan ahead and has meant that we have been able to operate a managed approach to delivering savings. This includes opportunities for Invest to Save and exploring alternative models of service delivery and this continues.

The Council has a long history of providing value for money and delivering strong financial management which has again been reinforced by the External Auditor in their Auditors Annual Report which was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee in February 2022. In this report it is stated that, 'there is a strong track record of delivering savings and efficiencies and the Council remains well prepared for the challenges ahead'.

Funding Position

On 17 November 2022 the Government announced the Budget and Spending Review (2022/23), setting out headline funding levels for government departments across the next two financial years to March 2025.

The key announcements which have an impact on local government funding (some subject to ratification or further detail in the forthcoming Local Government Finance Settlement) were:

- Council Tax Referendum Limits – The referendum limit for core council tax will increase from 2% to 3% from 2023/24. In addition, the limit for the Adult Social Care precept will rise from 1% to 2%. In Government funding announcements relating to resources available to Councils and additional funding for Social Care, there was an assumption that Councils increased Council Tax by these amounts.

Significant announcements were made in relation to social care funding:

- £1bn of new grant funding in 2023/24 and £1.7bn in 2024/25 will be allocated to support adult social care and discharges from hospital. Of this, £600m in 2023/24 (£1bn in 2024/25) will be distributed through the Better Care Fund, with the intention of getting people out of hospital on time and into care settings, freeing up NHS beds. £400m in 2023/24 and £680m in 2024/25 will be distributed through a grant ring-fenced to adult social care, which is also intended to support discharge.
- £1.3bn in 2023/24 and £1.9bn in 2024/25 will be distributed to local authorities through the Social Care grant for adults and children's social care. This funding has been re-directed from funding allocated to support the introduction of adult social care reforms. The Autumn Statement indicated that those reforms have been delayed for two years, however we are awaiting further clarity.

From 1 April 2023 business rates bills in England will be updated to reflect changes in property valuation since the last revaluation in 2018. A package of targeted support worth £13.6bn over the next 5 years is intended to support businesses as they transition to the new bills. It was stated that local authorities will be fully compensated for the loss of income as a result of these business rates measures.

On 19 December 2022 the DLUHC announced the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2023/24. The settlement was for a one-year period only. This confirmed a number of the key aspects from the Autumn Statement highlighted above and presented information at a local authority level.

The key announcements from the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement were:

- Referendum limits are set at 3% for core council tax and 2% for the Adult Social Care levy.
- The Revenue Support Grant, which now is a small proportion of Government funding has increased in line with CPI
- Of the £600m of new discharge funding announced at the Autumn Statement, £300m will be allocated to local authorities as part of the Better Care Fund. (SBC allocation £1m)
- The £400m ASC grant announced in the Autumn Statement has been added to £162m Fair Cost of Care funding to create the Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Funding (SBC allocation £2m).
- Social Care Grant increased by £1.3bn (SBC allocation increased by £4.6m). This funding was redirected from delaying the adult social care charging reform until October 2025.
- Services Grant has been reduced by £358m and New Homes Bonus legacy payments have ended.

On 12 December 2022, the government published a policy statement covering their intentions for the local government finance settlement in 2023/24. These were confirmed when the provisional settlement was announced on 19 December and are summarised above. The policy statement also included government's intentions for parts of the 2024/25 local government finance settlement.

The key points for 2024/25 intentions are

- For 2024/25 the referendum principles will continue the same as 2023/24; 3% per year increase to core council tax and 2% increase per year to the adult social care precept.
- Social care grants will increase as set out in the Autumn Statement, described at paragraph 1 above.
- Introduction of a new funding stream, the Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging. The details of this funding stream, and the impact it will have upon the wider local government funding settlement are yet to be understood.

The government has previously committed to carry out a Review of Relative Needs and Resources and a reset of the accumulated business rates growth. Government have confirmed these will not be implemented in this Spending Review period, which ends in March 2025. Government state they are committed to improving the local government finance landscape in the next Parliament.

The one-year spending review and financial settlement, and only limited information for 2024/25, leaves significant uncertainty regarding the position from 2024 onwards. This makes financial planning across the duration of the MTFP challenging and the delay to local government funding reforms add to future uncertainty.

The final settlement was announced on 6th February 2023 which confirmed the funding allocations as set out above.

COVID-19 - A Financial Perspective

During 2022/23 the Government provided a range of Covid financial support packages. These included additional funding to support service pressures (both income and expenditure) caused by the pandemic, funding for specific measures and initiatives, and grants paid to local businesses.

In accordance with the Code of Practice, where the authority has the ability to determine/influence the grant scheme criteria it is said to

be acting as a Principal. Where the authority has acted as Principal, transactions are included in the financial statements and on this basis, the majority of Covid grants are recognised in the CIES. However there are some instances where the Council has acted as an agent i.e. the Council has simply acted as an intermediary and passed the funds onto recipients following government criteria. Where the Council has acted as an agent, transactions are not reflected in the authority's financial statements.

Revenue Expenditure 2022/23

Performance against revenue budgets for 2022/23 by Directorate is shown in the table below.

Service Departments	Approved Budget	Actual	Variance
Expenditure	£m	£m	£m
Adults & Health	81.294	78.704	(2.589)
Children's Services	44.682	51.594	6.911
Community Services, Env & Culture	51.564	50.963	(0.601)
Corporate Management & Services	4.623	3.867	(0.756)
Corporate Services	11.790	10.897	(0.892)
Finance, Development & Regen	14.784	14.125	(0.660)
Net Expenditure on Services	208.738	210.150	1.413

Capital Medium Term Financial Plan

To achieve the Councils vision for the future it has an ambitious 3 year capital programme totalling £214m which will deliver on a range of objectives, including the following:

- Substantial investment within schools
- Indigenous Growth Investment
- Substantial investment Reshaping Town Centres
- Yarm & Eaglescliffe Levelling Up Fund
- Redevelopment of the Castlegate Site
- Significant investment in Transport infrastructure.

Expenditure	Outturn	Three Year Plan			Total
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Schools Capital	13.895	14.191	1.669	8.573	38.328
Childrens Services	0.344	7.804	0.097	0.266	8.511
Housing Regeneration	0.133	0.164	0.000	1.302	1.599
Inclusive Growth & Development	0.249	1.335	5.300	0.000	6.884
Private Sector Housing	2.321	0.221	0.000	0.000	2.542
Office Accomodation	0.193	14.652	12.000	0.000	26.845
Stockton Town Centre	0.491	0.813	1.366	0.000	2.670
Reshaping Town Centres	0.372	11.348	0.000	8.716	20.436
Thornaby Town Centre	0.493	12.056	11.348	4.865	28.762
Yarm & Eaglescliffe LUF	1.054	14.516	4.312	0.000	19.882
Redevelopment Castlegate Site	7.544	18.098	13.337	0.000	38.979
Other Town Centre Regeneration Schemes	0.103	0.292	0.000	1.182	1.577
Local Transport Plans	4.706	5.865	4.437	8.873	23.881
Other Transport Schemes	8.213	9.387	0.000	0.000	17.600
Developer Agreements	1.570	1.147	0.000	0.000	2.717
Energy Management Schemes	0.905	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.907
Environment & Green Infrastructure	0.539	1.687	1.110	0.000	3.336
Building Management & Asset Review	0.794	1.111	0.000	0.699	2.604
Other	3.863	4.325	3.447	2.097	13.732
Total Expenditure	47.782	119.014	58.423	36.573	261.792

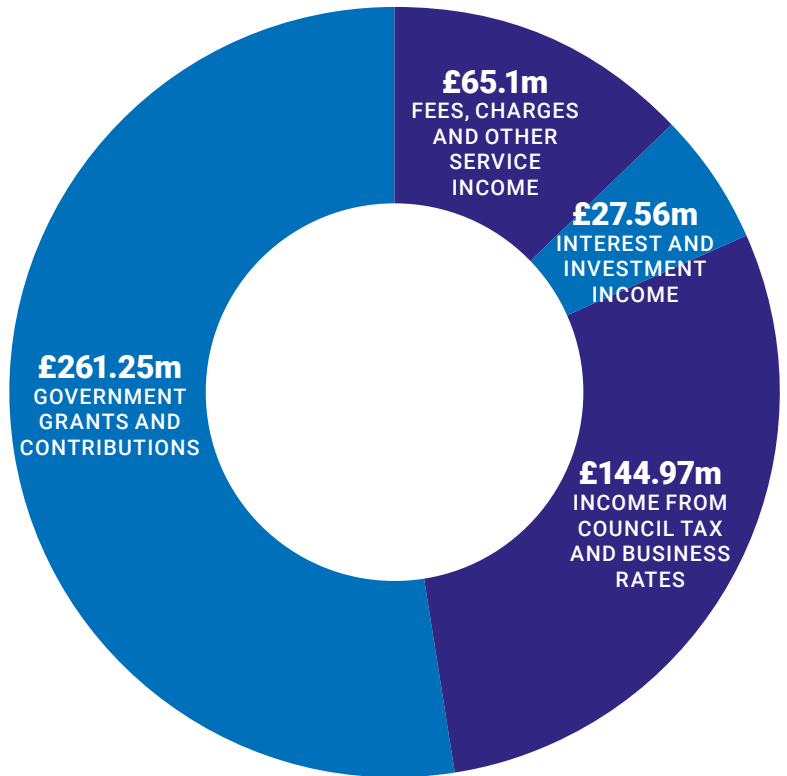
Funding	Outturn	Three Year Plan			Total
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Grants and Other Contributions	43.377	82.099	38.619	20.072	184.167
Capital Receipts & Reserves	2.412	5.870	2.804	3.972	15.058
Borrowing	1.993	31.045	17.000	12.529	62.567
Total Funding	47.782	119.014	58.423	36.573	261.792

Income Sources

Core Funding

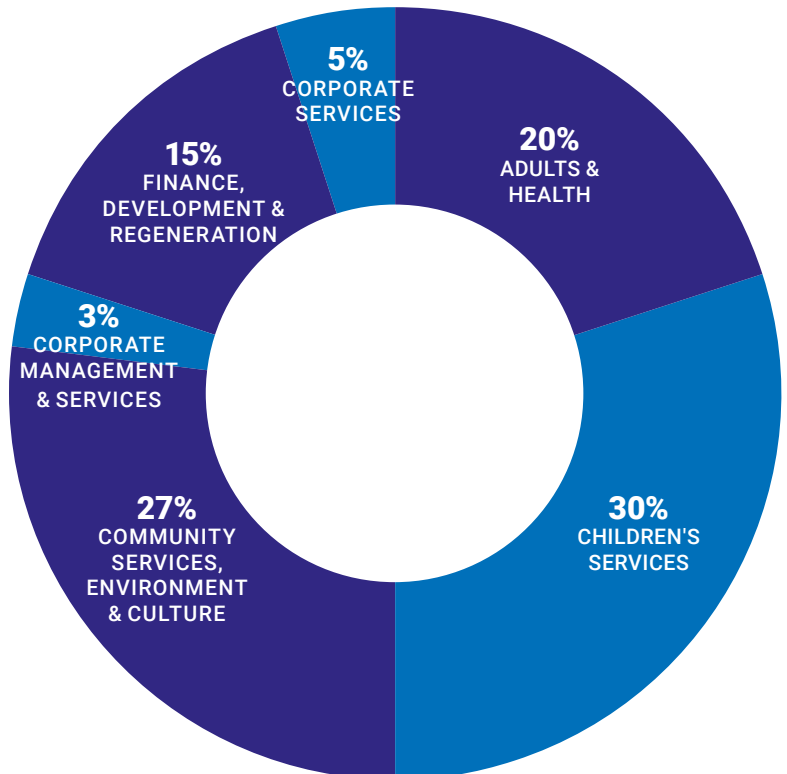
In common with the rest of local government, the Council has seen a reduction in its core government funding in recent years. The Government’s aim is to phase out non-specific grant funding altogether, instead allowing local authorities to retain a higher proportion of business rates collected locally. Significant grants have been received during the year due to additional funding provided by the Government in relation to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Income by source during 2022/23 is presented in the table below.



Net Expenditure

Net Expenditure included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement shows the economic cost in year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. In 2022/23 this totalled £216m. As a percentage, net expenditure for the year is demonstrated in the chart below.



Core Financial Statements

The Statement of Accounts sets out the Council's income and expenditure for the year, and its financial position at 31 March 2023. It comprises core and supplementary statements, together with disclosure notes.

The format and content of the financial statements is prescribed by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23, as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets, which in turn is underpinned by International Financial Reporting Standards.

The Core Financial Statements are;

Movement in Reserves Statement (MIRS)

This statement is a summary of the changes to the Council's reserves over the course of the year. Reserves are divided into "useable", which can be invested in capital projects or service improvements, and "unusable" which must be set aside for specific purposes.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES)

This records all of the Council's income and expenditure for the year. The top half of the statement provides an analysis by service area. The bottom half of the statement deals with corporate transactions and funding.

Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet is a "snapshot" of the Council's assets, liabilities, cash balances and reserves at the year-end date.

Cash Flow Statement

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

Notes to the Financial Statements

The Notes to these financial statements provide more detail about the Council's accounting policies and individual transactions.

The Group Accounts

Report the full extent of the assets and liabilities of the Council and the companies and similar entities, which the Council either controls or significantly influences. The Council has consolidated not only the interests, which are financially material to the Council, but also the non-material interests, to provide a full picture of the Council's arrangements for good governance.

The following entities are 100% controlled by Stockton Council by virtue of 100% shareholding and consolidated to form the group accounts.

Stockton Borough Holding Company Limited - Registration Number 10523559

Stockton Hotels Company Limited - Registration Number 10525068

Financial Statements and Explanatory Notes

Prior Period Adjustments - Restatement of Income and Expenditure Comparators due to Change in Reporting Structure

The Expenditure & Funding Analysis (EFA), the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement (CIES) and their supporting notes, are compiled based on the Council's reporting structure at the 31st March. This structure reflects the Directorate structure in place at that point in time.

During 2022/23 the Council's reporting structure was changed, however this restructure had no change to the overall net cost of services, Surplus/Deficit on Provision of Services, general fund balances, or the balance sheet. The financial statements and disclosures impacted by the restructuring are as follows:

- Expenditure & Funding Analysis
- Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement
- Notes to the Expenditure and Funding Analysis



Movement in Reserves Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023

The Movement in Reserves Statement shows the movement from the start of the year to the end on the different reserves held by the Council, analysed into 'usable reserves' (ie those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other 'unusable reserves'. The Statement shows how the movements in year of the Council's reserves are broken down between gains and losses incurred in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and the statutory adjustments required to return to the amounts chargeable to council tax for the year. The Net Increase/Decrease line shows the statutory General Fund Balance movements in the year following those adjustments.

Movement in Reserves Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023	Unearmarked General Fund Balance	Earmarked Schools Budget Reserve	Other Earmarked Reserves	General Fund Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Council Reserves
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance at 1st April 2021	12,879	-	79,060	91,939	2,244	45,957	140,140	(177,552)	(37,412)
Movement in reserves during 2021-22									
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(30,167)	-	-	(30,167)	-	-	(30,167)	157,066	126,899
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations (Note 6)	-	-	25,442	25,442	193	1,670	27,305	(27,305)	-
Increase/Decrease before transfer to earmarked reserves	(30,167)	-	25,442	(4,725)	193	1,670	(2,862)	129,761	126,899
Transfers to / from earmarked reserves	26,701	-	(26,701)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Increase/Decrease in Year	(3,466)	-	(1,259)	(4,725)	193	1,670	(2,862)	129,761	126,899
Balance at 31 March 2022 carried forward	9,413	-	77,801	87,214	2,437	47,627	137,278	(47,791)	89,487
Opening Balance 01 April 2022	9,413	-	77,801	87,214	2,437	47,627	137,278	(47,791)	89,487
Movement in Reserve in 2022-23									
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(44,661)	-	-	(44,661)	-	-	(44,661)	390,914	346,253
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations (Note 6)	-	-	23,832	23,832	616	(1,354)	23,094	(23,094)	-
Increase/Decrease before transfer to earmarked reserves	(44,661)	-	23,832	(20,829)	616	(1,354)	(21,567)	367,820	346,253
Transfers to / from earmarked reserves	43,248	-	(43,248)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Increase / Decrease in the year	(1,413)	-	(19,416)	(20,829)	616	(1,354)	(21,567)	367,820	346,253
Balance at 31 March 2023 carried forward	8,000	-	58,385	66,385	3,053	46,273	115,711	320,029	435,740
General Fund analysed over:									
Amounts earmarked (Note 7)	58,385	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Amounts uncommitted	8,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total General Fund Balance at 31 March 2023	66,385	-	-	66,385	-	-	-	-	-

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Authorities raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with statutory requirements; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in both the Expenditure and Funding analysis and the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Restated 2021-22			2022-23		
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure
Adults & Health	126,760	(86,548)	40,212	121,789	(78,315)	43,474
Children's Services	159,016	(103,062)	55,954	174,343	(117,371)	56,972
Community Services, Environment & Culture	61,748	(9,696)	52,052	67,717	(10,132)	57,585
Corporate Management & Services	1,827	4,133	5,960	10,082	(2,624)	7,458
Finance, Development & Regeneration	96,395	(58,959)	37,436	88,953	(57,150)	31,803
Corporate Services	8,834	(1,653)	7,181	10,407	(738)	9,669
Cost of Services	454,580	(255,785)	198,795	473,291	(266,330)	206,961
Other Operating Expenditure:						
Parish council precepts	873	-	873	926	-	926
(Gain) or loss on the disposal of Investment Properties	-	(31)	(31)	-	-	-
(Gain) or loss on the disposal of non-current assets	587	-	587	4,493	(816)	3,677
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure:						
Interest payable and similar charges	4,183	-	4,183	4,271	-	4,271
Net (gains) / losses on financial assets at fair value through profit and loss	-	(2,424)	(2,424)	2,676	(18)	2,658
Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset	26,028	(17,927)	8,101	33,013	(26,073)	6,940
Interest receivable and similar income	-	(600)	(600)	-	(1,483)	(1,483)
(Gain) or loss on trading accounts (not applicable to service)	17,861	(9,078)	8,783	18,490	(8,666)	9,824
Income & expenditure in relation to investment properties and changes in their fair value	567	(2,630)	(2,063)	1,506	(1,711)	(205)
Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income:						
Council tax income	-	(99,064)	(99,064)	-	(102,576)	(102,576)
Non-domestic rates income and expenditure	-	(34,455)	(34,455)	-	(42,395)	(42,395)
Non-ringfenced government grants	7,547	(33,986)	(26,439)	4,874	(24,985)	(20,111)
Capital grants and contributions	-	(26,079)	(26,079)	-	(23,826)	(23,826)
(Surplus) or Deficit on Provision of Services	512,226	(482,059)	30,167	543,540	(498,879)	44,661
(Surplus) or deficit on revaluation of non current assets			(4,524)			(11,180)
Re-measurements of the defined benefit liability			(152,540)			(379,740)
Other (gains) and losses			(2)			6
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			(157,066)			(390,914)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			(126,899)			(346,253)

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Council. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Council. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the Council may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the capital receipts reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt). The second category of reserves are those that the Council is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the revaluation reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line "Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations".

Balance Sheet	Note	31 March 2023 £000s	31 March 2022 £000s
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	11	383,380	367,562
Investment property	13	16,558	17,407
Intangible assets		555	520
Heritage Assets	12	10,728	10,728
Pension Fund Net Assets	31	101,742	-
Long term investments	29	13,557	16,610
Long Term Debtors	29	1,329	2,554
Total non-current assets		527,849	415,381
Current assets			
Inventories		431	477
Debtors	15 & 29	55,874	49,293
Cash and Cash Equivalents	16	15,304	30,751
Assets held for sale		136	136
Total current assets		71,745	80,657
Current liabilities			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	16	(4,520)	(16,389)
Short Term Borrowing	29	(16,813)	(5,925)
Short Term Creditors	17 & 29	(49,560)	(43,713)
Provisions	33	(6,321)	(8,477)
Total current liabilities		(77,214)	(74,504)
Long term liabilities			
Long Term Creditors	29	(272)	(198)
Long Term Borrowing	29	(77,427)	(78,538)
Other Long Term Liabilities	18 & 29	(6,793)	(251,995)
Grants Receipts in Advance	28	(2,148)	(1,316)
Total long term liabilities		(86,640)	(332,047)
Net Assets:		435,740	89,487
Reserves			
Usable reserves:			
General Fund Balance		8,000	9,413
Earmarked General Fund Reserves	7	58,385	77,801
Capital Receipts Reserve		3,053	2,437
Capital Grants Unapplied		46,273	47,627
Total Usable Reserves		115,711	137,278
Unusable Reserves:			
Revaluation Reserve	20	68,435	59,482
Capital Adjustment Account	19	158,761	151,575
Financial Instruments Adjustment Account		(116)	(213)
Pooled Fund Adjustment Account		(1,443)	1,233
Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve		-	377
Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve		154	154
Pensions Reserve	31	101,742	(243,939)
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	21	(184)	(9,747)
Accumulated Absences Account		(1,268)	(1,233)
Dedicated Schools Grant Adjustment Account		(6,052)	(5,480)
Total Unusable Reserves		320,029	(47,791)
Total Reserves:		435,740	89,487

Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Council are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Council. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Council's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e. borrowing) to the Council.

Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023	Note	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
		£000s	£000s
Net (surplus) or deficit on the provision of services		44,661	30,167
Adjustments to net surplus or deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements:			
Depreciation, impairment and amortisation of non current assets		(31,198)	(22,494)
Revaluation (gains)/losses		8,629	(11,346)
Pension Fund adjustments		(34,059)	(32,530)
Carrying amount of Non-Current Assets Sold		(6,235)	(2,348)
Other non-cash movement		11,105	14,329
Increase/(Decrease) in Inventories (Stock)		(46)	(62)
Increase/(Decrease) in Debtors		7,703	1,773
(Increase)/Decrease in Creditors		(3,190)	(8,273)
(Increase)/Decrease in Provisions		2,156	490
Increase/(Decrease) in Long Term Debtors		(624)	(1,501)
		(46,361)	(61,962)
Adjustments for items included in the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities:			
Capital Grants credited to surplus or deficit on the provision of services		38,782	30,298
Proceeds from the disposal of non current assets		1,616	1,134
		40,398	31,432
Net cashflow from operating activities		38,698	(363)
Investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets		28,185	33,537
Derease in short term and long term investments		(3,053)	2,424
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangibles		(1,616)	(1,134)
Proceeds from short term and long term investments		377	-
Other receipts from investing activities		(39,614)	(24,723)
Net cashflow from investing activities		(15,721)	10,104
Financing activities			
Other receipts from financing activities		(11,175)	(14,314)
Cash payments for liabilities relating to finance leases and PFI Contracts		1,553	1,839
Increase in short and long term borrowings		(9,777)	(4,437)
Net cashflow from financing activities		(19,399)	(16,912)
Net (increase) or decrease in cash and cash equivalents		3,578	(7,171)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		(14,362)	(7,191)
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	16	(10,784)	(14,362)
The cashflow for operating activities includes the following items:			
Interest received		(863)	(66)
Dividends received		(587)	(536)
Interest paid		3,342	2,927

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Note 1: Expenditure & Funding Analysis

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, rents, council tax and business rates) by local authorities in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by authorities in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the council's directorates/services/departments. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Expenditure & Funding Analysis	Restated 2021-22			2022-23		
	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Adults & Health	57,722	(17,510)	40,212	58,518	(15,044)	43,474
Children's Services	43,490	12,464	55,954	50,557	6,415	56,972
Community Services, Environment & Culture	33,122	18,930	52,052	36,653	20,932	57,585
Corporate Management & Services	13,517	(7,557)	5,960	6,286	1,172	7,458
Finance, Development & Regeneration	15,448	21,988	37,436	15,675	16,128	31,803
Corporate Services	8,031	(850)	7,181	8,669	1,000	9,669
Net Cost of Services	171,330	27,465	198,795	176,358	30,603	206,961
Other Income and Expenditure	(167,864)	(764)	(168,628)	(174,945)	12,645	(162,300)
Surplus or Deficit	3,466	26,701	30,167	1,413	43,248	44,661
Opening General Fund Balance	(12,879)			(9,413)		
Less/Plus (Surplus) or Deficit	3,466			1,413		
Closing General Fund Balance at 31 March	(9,413)			(8,000)		

Note 2: Notes to the Expenditure & Funding Analysis

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis 2022-23

Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Amounts	Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments	Other Differences	Total Adjustments
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Adults & Health	754	5,355	(21,153)	(15,044)
Childrens Services	(5,273)	10,502	1,186	6,415
Community Services, Environment & Culture	12,591	3,606	4,736	20,932
Corporate Management & Services	(1,538)	1,594	1,116	1,172
Finance, Development & Regeneration	10,243	4,915	970	16,128
Corporate Services	(3)	1,145	(142)	1,000
Net Cost of Services	16,774	27,117	(13,287)	30,603
Other Income and Expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	(17,948)	6,940	23,651	12,645
Difference between General Fund Surplus or Deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(1,174)	34,057	10,364	43,248

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis Restated 2021-22

Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Amounts	Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments	Other Differences	Total Adjustments
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Adults & Health	656	4,830	(22,996)	(17,510)
Childrens Services	2,710	9,069	685	12,464
Community Services, Environment & Culture	12,272	3,296	3,362	18,930
Corporate Management & Services	(1,632)	1,478	(7,403)	(7,557)
Finance, Development & Regeneration	17,428	4,876	(316)	21,988
Corporate Services	-	880	(1,730)	(850)
Net Cost of Services	31,434	24,429	(28,398)	27,465
Other Income and Expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	(29,084)	8,101	20,219	(764)
Difference between General Fund Surplus or Deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	2,350	32,530	(8,179)	26,701

Adjustments for capital purposes: this column adds in depreciation and impairment and revaluation gains and losses in the services line, and for:

Other operating expenditure - adjusts for capital disposals with a transfer of income on disposal of assets and the amounts written off for those assets.

Financing and investment income and expenditure - the statutory charges for capital financing ie Minimum Revenue Provision and other revenue contributions are deducted from other income and expenditure as these are not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices.

Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure - capital grants are adjusted for income not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices. Revenue grants are adjusted from those receivable in the year to those receivable without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied throughout the year. The Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income and Expenditure line is credited with capital grants receivable in the year without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied in the year.

Net Change for the Pensions Adjustments: this is the net change for the removal of pension contributions and the addition of IAS 19 Employee Benefits pension related expenditure and income:

For services this represents the removal of the employer pension contributions made by the authority as allowed by statute and the replacement with current service costs and past service costs.

For Financing and investment income and expenditure - the net interest on the defined benefit liability is charged to the CIES.

Other Differences between amounts debited/credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and amounts payable/receivable to be recognised under statute:

For **Financing and investment income and expenditure** the other differences column recognises adjustments to the General Fund for the timing differences for premiums and discounts. The other differences column also recognises adjustments between the General Fund and Earmarked Reserves.

The charge under **Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure** represents the difference between what is chargeable under statutory regulations for council tax and NDR that was projected to be received at the start of the year and the income recognised under generally accepted accounting practices in the Code. This is a timing difference as any difference will be brought forward in future Surpluses or Deficits on the Collection Fund.

Note 3: Accounting Standards that have been issued but have not yet been adopted

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23, as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets (the Code) requires the disclosure of information relating to the expected impact of an accounting change that will be required by a new standard, which has been issued but is yet to be adopted by the 2022/23 Code.

The Code also requires that changes in accounting policy are to be applied retrospectively unless transitional arrangements are specified, this would, therefore result in an impact on disclosures spanning two financial years.

The standards introduced by the 2023/24 Code where disclosures are required in the 2022/23 financial statements, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 3.3.4.3 of the Code, are:

- Definition of Accounting Estimates Amendments to IAS8.
- Disclosure of Accounting Policies, Amendments to IAS 1 and IFRS Practice Statement 2 Making Materiality Judgements.
- IFRS 16 Leases (but only for those local authorities that have decided to adopt IFRS 16 in the 2022/23 year). SBC has not yet adopted IFRS16.
- Deferred Tax related to Assets and Liabilities arising from a Single Transaction (Amendments to IAS 12) issued in May 2021.
- Updating a Reference to the Conceptual Framework (Amendments to IFRS 3) issued in May 2020.

These changes are not expected to have a material impact on the Authority's Accounts but it will be dependent on arrangements in place at that time and further details of the potential impact will be disclosed when more information becomes available.

Note 4: Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

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

Lease Accounting - Judgement is required in the initial classification of leases as either operating leases or finance leases. The Council has a number of vehicles held on leases, some of these are for substantially all of the life of the asset, and the amounts paid are in excess of what would be paid if the asset were to be purchased. These vehicles have been treated in accordance with the Council's policies in respect of finance leases, and feature on the balance sheet. The Council's other leases have been assessed and are being treated as operating leases, with the costs charged in full to the net cost of services.

PFI Schemes - The Council is involved with a PFI contract to provide schools and a library in Ingleby Barwick. After an assessment under the requirements of IFRIC 12, it has been determined that these are effectively under the control of the Council. The accounting policies relating to PFI schemes have therefore been applied to this arrangement and the associated assets have

been recognised on the Council's balance sheet with the exception of All Saints School which has attained academy status.

The Council has applied its judgement in the classification of investment properties. Investment properties are held to earn rentals, for capital appreciation or both. Some properties earn rentals but are held for regeneration purposes or wider socio-economic reasons. Where this is the case, these properties have been classed as Property, Plant and Equipment.

The Council has brought voluntary controlled schools on-balance sheet because they meet the requirements for recognition under IAS 16, the Council acts as the admissions authority and employs the school staff. Voluntary aided schools remain off-balance sheet as they do not meet the same tests as those for voluntary controlled schools.

The Council received significant amounts of funding for distribution or use to support the Covid-19 lockdown and energy crisis. The terms of such grants meant some could be considered service or general funding with wider judgement required on whether the Authority was acting as agent or principal.

Note 5: Assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Council about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made by taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

The items in the Council's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2023 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if Actual Results Differ from Assumptions
Pension Assets	<p>"Estimation of the net pension assets and liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and the expected returns on pension fund assets.</p> <p>A firm of consulting actuaries is engaged to provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied."</p>	<p>The effects on the net pension liability of changes in individual assessments can be measured. For instance, a 0.1% decrease in the discount rate assumption would result in an increase in the pension liability of £14.988 million. Note 31 provides further details.</p>
Property Plant and Equipment	<p>Assets are depreciated over their estimated useful lives and are based on assumptions about the level of repairs and maintenance that will be incurred and useful economic lives.</p>	<p>If the useful life of assets is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying amount of the asset falls. It is estimated that the annual depreciation charge for Property Plant and equipment would increase by £0.010 million for every year that useful lives had to be reduced.</p>
Revaluations	<p>Valuations are carried out on a rolling programme of up to three years, meaning that there is a possibility of material changes in value between valuations.</p> <p>The risk is minimised by annual valuations of all significant assets and annual reviews of market conditions for all asset categories to ensure that the fair value of assets as at the 31 March are not materially misstated.</p>	<p>At 31 March 2023, the Council revalued Property Plant and Equipment to the value of £48.217 million, and investment properties to the value of £16.558 million. A 1% change in the estimation of these property values would lead to a £4.82 million change in the value of the Council's land and buildings and £0.166 million change in the value of the Council's investment properties. These changes to valuations would not have a direct impact on the Council's general fund, since any effect charged to the CIES would be reversed to the Council's unusable reserves.</p>

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if Actual Results Differ from Assumptions
Provisions	The Council makes prudent provision for likely future liabilities, specifically for the impact of successful business rate appeals. The Council has assessed the likely impact of the appeals however the provision may require significant adjustment in future years.	An increase over the forthcoming year of 10% in value of successful appeals would have the effect of adding £0.632m to the overall provision. Total provision for the council element is £6.32m.

Note 6: Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations

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

	2022-23	General Fund Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Movement in Unusable Reserves
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Adjustments involving the Capital Adjustment Account (see note 19)	(6,193)				6,193
Adjustments involving the Revaluation Reserve	2,227				(2,227)
Adjustments involving the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	1,354			(1,354)	-
Adjustments involving the Capital Receipts Reserve	(1,615)		616		999
Adjustments involving Dedicated Schools Grant Adjustment Account	572				(572)
Adjustments involving the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account	(97)				97
Adjustments involving the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve	377				(377)
Adjustments involving the Pensions Reserve	34,059				(34,059)
Adjustments involving the Pooled Fund Adjustment Account	2,676				(2,676)
Adjustments involving the Collection Fund Adjustment Account (see note 21)	(9,563)				9,563
Adjustments involving the Accumulated Absences Adjustment Account	35				(35)
Total Adjustments	23,832	616	(1,354)	(23,094)	

	2020-21 Comparative figures	General Fund Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Movement in Unusable Reserves
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Adjustments involving the Capital Adjustment Account	5,659				(5,659)
Adjustments involving the Revaluation Reserve	1,918				(1,918)
Adjustments involving the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	(1,670)			1,670	-
Adjustments involving the Capital Receipts Reserve	(1,134)		193		941
Adjustments involving Dedicated Schools Grant Adjustment Account	(571)				571
Adjustments involving the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account	(126)				126
Adjustments involving the Pensions Reserve	32,530				(32,530)
Adjustments involving the Pooled Fund Adjustment Account	(2,424)				2,424
Adjustments involving the Collection Fund Adjustment Account	(8,835)				8,835
Adjustments involving the Accumulated Absences Adjustment Account	95				(95)
Total Adjustments	25,442	193	1,670	(27,305)	

Note 7: Movements in Earmarked Reserves

This note sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund balances in earmarked reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans and the amounts posted back from earmarked reserves to meet General Fund expenditure in 2022-23. The purpose of each earmarked reserve is set out in Appendix A. Note 24 to the accounts provides further detail on the Dedicated School Grant Deficit.

Earmarked Reserves	Balance at 31 March 2021	Transfers Out 2021-22	Transfers In 2021-22	Balance at 31 March 2022	Transfers Out 2022-23	Transfers In 2022-23	Balance at 31 March 2023
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Capital Reserves							
Stockton Town Centre Regeneration	(834)	105	(25)	(754)	121	-	(633)
Approved Capital Schemes	(9,178)	2,948	(2,863)	(9,093)	1,199	(767)	(8,661)
Fleet Renewals Fund	(4,508)	1,054	(479)	(3,933)	2,367	(514)	(2,080)
Total Capital Reserves	(14,520)	4,107	(3,367)	(13,780)	3,687	(1,281)	(11,374)
Revenue Reserves							
Insurance Fund	(10,167)	3,000	(1,624)	(8,791)	3,083	(1,668)	(7,376)
Commuted Lump Sums	(753)	-	(318)	(1,071)	143	(70)	(998)
ICT Infrastructure	(807)	719	(874)	(962)	355	(150)	(757)
Government Grants Income In Advance	(388)	-	-	(388)	43	-	(345)
Transformation & Implementation Reserve	(5,260)	2,664	(1,192)	(3,788)	1,789	(942)	(2,941)
MTFP Transition Reserve	(2,284)	2,578	(9,541)	(9,247)	2,975	-	(6,272)
ARCC Probation Service	(1,239)	-	(50)	(1,289)	-	-	(1,289)
Health & Integration	(10,234)	1,215	(4,273)	(13,292)	5,101	(395)	(8,586)
Collection Fund Deficit Reserve	(2,227)	1,138	-	(1,089)	545	-	(544)
NNDR S31 Grant	(16,354)	16,354	(7,759)	(7,759)	6,547	(213)	(1,425)
Covid Recovery Funds	-	765	(2,483)	(1,718)	1,523	-	(195)
Other Revenue Reserves	(9,626)	2,378	(2,895)	(10,143)	2,363	(2,824)	(10,604)
Total Revenue Reserves	(59,339)	30,811	(31,009)	(59,537)	24,467	(6,262)	(41,332)
Schools Related Reserves							
Balances held by schools under a scheme of delegation	(5,201)	819	(102)	(4,484)	996	(5)	(3,493)
Dedicated Schools Grant (Deficit)	-	-	-	-	-	(2,186)	(2,186)
Total Schools Related Reserves	(5,201)	819	(102)	(4,484)	996	(2,191)	(5,679)
Total Earmarked Reserves	(79,060)	35,737	(34,478)	(77,801)	29,150	(9,734)	(58,385)

Note 8: Segmental Income

The Council receives significant Fees and Charges income from external customers. The total income received on a segmental basis is analysed below:

Segmental Income	2022-23	2021-22
	£000s	£000s
Services		
Adults & Health	(16,470)	(14,120)
Childrens Services	(6,111)	(4,411)
Community Services, Environment & Culture	(4,843)	(4,206)
Corporate Management & Services	(1,685)	(1,928)
Finance, Development & Regeneration	(8,217)	(7,496)
Corporate Services	(332)	(743)
Other Income	(6,412)	(6,308)
Total income analysed on a segmental basis	(44,070)	(39,212)

Note 9: Members' Allowances

Details of the amounts paid to each elected member of the Council are published annually. The total amount paid to members in respect of basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, Mayoral Allowances, travel & subsistence and carer's allowances was £725,275 (last year: £721,357).

Members' Allowances	2022-23	2021-22
	£000s	£000s
Basic Allowances	541	516
Special Responsibility Allowances	184	205
Travel & Expenses	0	0
Total	725	721

Note 10: Employee Remuneration

The number of employees whose taxable remuneration, including benefits, redundancy and other severance payments, exceeded £50,000 is shown below, in bands of £5,000:

Remuneration Summary Bandings	Number of Employees			
	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22
	Council	Council	Schools	Schools
£50,000 - £54,999	50	34	24	21
£55,000 - £59,999	17	33	17	14
£60,000 - £64,999	18	8	10	11
£65,000 - £69,999	8	9	6	3
£70,000 - £74,999	2	10	6	8
£75,000 - £79,999	4	3	5	4
£80,000 - £84,999	6	5	1	2
£85,000 - £89,999	2	3	1	-
£90,000 - £94,999	11	4	-	1
£95,000 - £99,999	2	1	-	-
£100,000 - £104,999	3	-	-	1
£105,000 - £109,999	-	-	1	-
£115,000 - £119,999	-	1	-	-
£125,000 - £129,999	-	-	-	-
£130,000 - £134,999	1	-	-	-

Remuneration of the Chief Executive and the Council's senior staff has been excluded above. Details are shown in the following tables.

Remuneration of Senior Employees 2022-23

Post holder information	Salary (Including fees & Allowances)	Expense Allowances	Benefits in kind	Total Remuneration excluding pension contributions 21/22	Compensation for Loss of Office	Pension contributions	Total Remuneration including pension contributions 21/22
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<i>Managing Director (Julie Danks)</i>	163,310	-	-	163,310	-	21,394	184,704
<i>Chief Executive (Mike Greene)</i>	65,324	-	165	65,489	-	8,416	73,905
<i>Director of Finance, Development & Regeneration</i>	141,898	379	-	142,277	-	18,589	160,866
<i>Director of Children's Services</i>	131,338	-	-	131,338	-	17,205	148,543
<i>Director of Adults and Health</i>	131,338	-	-	131,338	-	17,205	148,543
<i>Director of Corporate Services</i>	54,724	-	-	54,724	-	7,169	61,893
<i>Director of Community Services & Transport</i>	34,600	-	-	34,600	381,008	4,533	420,140
<i>Head of HR, Legal and Communications (Monitoring Officer)</i>	109,448	-	-	109,448	-	14,338	123,786
<i>Director of Community Services, Environment & Culture</i>	131,338	-	656	131,994	-	16,419	148,413
	963,318	379	821	964,518	381,008	125,267	1,470,794

Notes:

During 2022/23 the Council restructured its services and a number of senior staff changes were implemented as part of this restructure. Managing Director, Director of Community Services & Transport and Head of HR, Legal & Communications all left their posts at differing times during the year. These posts were replaced by a new Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services.

Remuneration of Senior Employees 2021-22

Post holder information	Salary (Including fees & Allowances)	Expense Allowances	Benefits in kind	Total Remuneration excluding pension contributions 20/21	Compensation for Loss of Office	Pension contributions	Total Remuneration including pension contributions 20/21
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<i>Managing Director (Julie Danks)</i>	155,915	-	-	155,915	-	20,425	176,340
<i>Director of Town Centres Development Team *</i>	102,457	-	-	102,457	-	13,393	115,849
<i>Director of Finance & Business Services</i>	124,520	-	-	124,520	-	16,312	140,832
<i>Director of Children's Services</i>	124,520	-	-	124,520	-	16,312	140,832
<i>Director of Adults and Health</i>	124,520	-	-	124,520	-	16,312	140,832
<i>Director of Culture, Leisure & Events</i>	124,520	-	138	124,658	-	16,050	140,708
<i>Director of Community Services & Transport</i>	124,520	-	-	124,520	-	16,312	140,832
<i>Head of HR, Legal and Communications (Monitoring Officer)</i>	124,520	-	-	124,520	-	16,312	140,832
	1,005,492	0	138	1,005,630	0	131,428	1,137,058

Notes:

* Officer left position at the end of January 2022 and the post has not been replaced.

Note 11: Non Current Assets - Property, Plant & Equipment

Movements in 2022-23	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	PP&E Under Construction	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Cost or Valuation						
At 1 April 2022	200,338	20,496	210	2,671	1,511	225,226
Additions	13,854	3,520	-	105	222	17,701
Accumulated depreciation written off on revaluation						-
Accumulated depreciation & impairment written off to Gross Carrying Amount (GCA)	(13,152)		-	(15)		(13,167)
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	10,344		-	836		11,180
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the (Surplus)/Deficit on provision of services	8,181		-	336		8,517
Derecognition - disposals	(6,481)	(1,124)	-	(327)		(7,932)
Other reclassifications	(2,636)	(244)	-	-	(602)	(3,482)
At 31 March 2023	210,448	22,648	210	3,606	1,131	238,043
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment						
At 1 April 2022	(21,231)	(10,919)	-	-	(602)	(32,752)
Depreciation Charge	(7,946)	(2,119)		(48)		(10,113)
Accumulated depreciation written off on revaluation	13,152			15		13,167
Impairment losses/reversals recognised in the (Surplus)/Deficit on provision of services	(11,257)	(418)	-	-	-	(11,675)
Derecognition - disposals	1,978	1,025		33		3,036
Other reclassifications	2,636	244		-	602	3,483
At 31 March 2023	(22,668)	(12,187)	-	-	-	(34,854)
Net Book Value						
At 31 March 2023	187,780	10,461	210	3,606	1,131	203,189
At 31 March 2022	179,107	9,577	210	2,671	909	192,476

In accordance with the Temporary Relief offered by the update to the Code on infrastructure assets, this note does not include disclosure of gross cost and accumulated depreciation for infrastructure assets because historical reporting practices and resultant information deficits mean that this would not faithfully represent the asset position to the users of the financial statements. The authority has chosen not to disclose this information as the previously reported practices and resultant information deficits mean that gross cost and accumulated depreciation are not measured accurately and would not provide the basis for the users of the financial statements to take economic or other decisions relating to infrastructure assets. Details of the Net Book value of Infrastructure Assets are included in the table below.

Infrastructure Assets Net Book Value	Total
At 31 March 2022	175,086
Additions	14,381
Depreciation	(9,265)
Other	(11)
At 31 March 2023	180,191

Total Non Current Assets Net Book Value is shown in the table below;

Total Non Current Assets Net Book Value	Total
At 31 March 2022	367,562
At 31 March 2023	383,380

Movements in 2021-22	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	PP&E Under Construction	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Cost or Valuation						
At 1 April 2021	171,059	19,072	210	2,978	26,516	219,835
Additions	15,377	3,448	-	322	1,747	20,894
Accumulated depreciation written off on revaluation						-
Accumulated depreciation & impairment written off to Gross Carrying Amount (GCA)	(1,328)		-	(59)		(1,387)
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	4,373		-	152		4,525
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the (Surplus)/Deficit on provision of services	(12,267)		-	(832)		(13,099)
Derecognition - disposals	(1,355)	(1,612)	-	-		(2,967)
Reclassified to/from Investment Properties	(233)					(233)
Other reclassifications	24,712	(412)	-	110	(26,752)	(2,342)
At 31 March 2022	200,338	20,496	210	2,671	1,511	225,226
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment						
At 1 April 2021	(13,724)	(10,792)	-	-	(252)	(24,768)
Depreciation Charge	(8,050)	(1,750)		(26)		(9,826)
Accumulated depreciation written off on revaluation	1,328			59		1,387
Impairment losses/reversals recognised in the (Surplus)/Deficit on provision of services	(2,636)	(244)	-	-	(602)	(3,482)
Derecognition - disposals	120	1,454				1,574
Reclassified to/from Investment Properties	20					20
Other reclassifications	1,711	412		(33)	252	2,342
At 31 March 2022	(21,231)	(10,919)	-	-	(602)	(32,752)
Net Book Value						
At 31 March 2022	179,107	9,577	210	2,671	909	192,476
At 31 March 2021	157,335	8,280	210	2,978	26,264	195,069

Infrastructure Assets Net Book Value	Total
At 31 March 2021	173,294
Additions	10,944
Depreciation	(9,091)
Other	(61)
At 31 March 2022	175,086

Total Non Current Assets Net Book Value is shown in the table below;

Total Non Current Assets Net Book Value	Total
At 31 March 2021	368,363
At 31 March 2022	367,562

Depreciation

The following useful lives and depreciation rates have been used in the calculation of depreciation:

PPE

Other Land and Buildings	30 to 90 years
Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	5 to 15 years

Infrastructure Assets

Carriageways	30 years
Footways and cycle tracks	30 years
Structures (bridges)	80 years
Street lighting	30 years
Bus shelters	25 years
Traffic management systems	15 years
Traffic signals	15 years
Pedestrian crossings	15 years

Assets held under finance leases

Property, Plant and Equipment, set out in the preceding tables, includes assets held under finance leases. The value of these assets totalled £4.4m (Last year: £5.3m).

Capital Commitments

At 31 March 2023, the Authority has entered into a number of contracts for the construction or enhancement of Property, Plant and Equipment in 2022/23 and future years of which the major schemes are as follows:

School place extensions/ alterations - £7.937m

Elton Interchange Highways Works - £5.269m

Local Transport Plan - £4.000m

The total value of contracts in place at the balance sheet date was £17.207m

Revaluations

The Council has implemented out a rolling programme that ensures that all property, plant and equipment required to be measured at current value is revalued at least every three years; this replaces a programme that previously required valuations to be carried out at least every five years. The majority of valuations were carried out internally with a small number carried out by the Valuation Office Agency, Knight Frank and Sanderson Weatherall. Valuations of land and buildings were carried out in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. The effective date for all revaluations in 22/23 is 31st March 2023.

Operational Assets	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Surplus Assets	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Valued at historical cost		22,648		22,648
Valued at current value as at:				
Current Year	85,548		3,605	89,153
2021/2022	29,190		-	29,190
2020/2021	95,708			95,708
Total	210,446	22,648	3,605	236,699

Note 12: Non Current Assets - Heritage Assets

2022-23	Artworks	Ceramics Glass Silverware & Decorative Art	Weapons & Militaria	Transport	Archaeological	Civic Regalia	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Valuation							
At 1 April 2022	6,500	1,464	2,538	47	35	144	10,728
Additions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2023	6,500	1,464	2,538	47	35	144	10,728

2021-22	Artworks	Ceramics Glass Silverware & Decorative Art	Weapons & Militaria	Transport	Archaeological	Civic Regalia	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Valuation							
At 31 March 2021	6,500	1,464	2,538	47	35	144	10,728
Additions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2022	6,500	1,464	2,538	47	35	144	10,728

Revaluations

A comprehensive valuation was undertaken in 2018/19 by Anderson & Garland Ltd who are auctioneers and valuers. Dependant on the artifact in question the value is either the new replacement value, the second-hand replacement value, the facsimile value or the compensation value. The Authority considers that the cost of obtaining annual external valuations would involve disproportionate costs in relation to the benefits to the user of the Authority's accounts. Heritage Assets are carried at their revalued amount and are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the valuations remain current.

Note 13: Non Current Assets - Investment Property

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

Non Current Assets - Investment Property	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s
Rental income from investment property	1,172	1,094
Direct operating expenses arising from investment property	(119)	(126)
Net gain/(loss)	1,053	968

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

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

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

Movement in the fair value of investment properties over the year		31 March 2023	31 March 2022
		£000s	£000s
Balance at the start of the year		17,407	16,048
Additions:	Purchases	-	348
	Construction		
	Subsequent expenditure	-	-
Disposals		-	(298)
Net gains/(losses) from fair value adjustments		(850)	1,095
Transfers:	To/from Property, Plant & Equipment	-	213
Other changes		-	-
Balance at the end of the year		16,558	17,407

The Council's largest investment is the Hampton by Hilton Hotel on the North Shore development (£10.6m). The Council's interests in the Hotel have been valued by a specialist at 31st March 2023.

The Hotel has been valued using the Income Capitalisation method and discounted cash flow using Level 2 observable inputs. The valuation technique applied in respect of the Fair Value hotel valuation was the income approach. The inputs to this technique constitute Level 2 inputs.

Note 14: Expenditure and Income Analysed by Nature

The Council's expenditure and income is analysed as follows:

The Council's expenditure and income	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s
Expenditure		
Employee benefits expenses	178,096	167,137
Other services expenses	271,270	227,726
Support service recharges	13,224	14,768
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	38,972	71,167
Interest payments	36,983	29,874
Precepts and levies	1,318	967
Loss on the disposal of assets	3,676	587
Total Expenditure	543,540	512,226
Income		
Fees, charges and other service income	(65,095)	(74,019)
Gain on the disposal of assets	-	(31)
Interest and investment income	(27,556)	(18,527)
Income from council tax and business rates	(144,971)	(133,519)
Government grants and contributions	(261,257)	(255,963)
Total Income	(498,879)	(482,059)
(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	44,661	30,167

Note 15: Debtors

Debtors	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s
Central Government	13,582	11,848
Local Government	5,594	5,908
National Health Service	2,198	692
Local Taxation	14,207	13,087
Other entities and individuals	20,293	17,758
	55,874	49,293

Note 15 (a): Debtors for Local Taxation

The past due but not impaired amount for local taxation (Council Tax & non-domestic rates) can be analysed by age as follows:

	31 March 2023
	£000s
Less than three months	753
Three to six months	825
Six months to one year	6,441
More than one year	6,188
	<u>14,207</u>

Note 16: Cash & Cash Equivalents

Cash & Cash Equivalents	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s
Bank and Imprests	64	71
Cash Equivalents	15,240	30,680
Bank Overdraft	(4,520)	(16,389)
	<u>10,784</u>	<u>14,362</u>

Note 17: Short Term Creditors

Short Term Creditors	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s
Central Government	(15,909)	(14,656)
Local Government	(3,784)	(4,567)
National Health Service	(2,035)	(1,209)
Local Taxation	(2,852)	(4,852)
Other entities and individuals	(24,980)	(18,429)
	<u>(49,560)</u>	<u>(43,713)</u>

Note 18: Other Long Term Liabilities

Other Long Term Liabilities	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s
Finance lease liability	(3,489)	(4,502)
PFI liability	(3,304)	(3,554)
Net pensions liability	-	(243,939)
	<u>(6,793)</u>	<u>(251,995)</u>

Note 19: Capital Adjustment Account

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

with the amounts set aside by the Council as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and enhancement.

The account contains accumulated gains and losses on investment properties and gains recognised on donated assets that have yet to be consumed by the Council.

The account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on property, plant and equipment before 1 April 2007, the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains.

Capital Adjustment Account

	2022-23		2021-22
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance at 1 April		(151,575)	(156,292)
Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:			
• Charges for depreciation and impairment of non-current assets	29,149		21,040
• Revaluation losses on property, plant and equipment	(8,517)		13,099
• Revaluation losses / (gain) on AHFS & Investment Properties	848		(1,095)
• Amortisation of intangible assets	103		10
• Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	15,820		6,542
• Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale	4,619		1,214
		<u>42,022</u>	<u>40,811</u>
Capital financing applied in the year:			
• Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	(1,000)		(941)
• Capital grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	(31,693)		(15,913)
• Application of grants to capital financing from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	(8,441)		(12,714)
• Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment charged against the General Fund balance	(3,418)		(3,165)
• Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund balance	(4,655)		(3,360)
		<u>(49,207)</u>	<u>(36,093)</u>
Other adjustments		-	-
Balance at 31 March		<u>(158,761)</u>	<u>(151,575)</u>

Note 20: Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its property, plant and equipment. The balance is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

- revalued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost
- used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation, or
- disposed of and the gains are realised.

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

Revaluation Reserve	2022-23		2021-22
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance at 1 April		(59,482)	(56,875)
Upward revaluation of assets	(12,994)		(6,189)
Downward revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the (surplus)/deficit on the provision of services	1,814		1,664
Surplus or deficit on revaluation of non-current assets not posted to the (surplus)/deficit on the provision of services		(11,180)	(4,525)
Difference between fair value depreciation and historical cost depreciation	1,950		1,443
Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	277		476
Amount written off to the Capital Adjustment Account		2,227	1,919
Balance at 31 March		(68,435)	(59,482)

Note 21: Collection Fund Adjustment Account

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

Collection Fund Adjustment Account	2022-23		2021-22
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance at 1 April		9,747	18,582
Amount by which council tax income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from council tax income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements		(469)	(629)
Amount by which business rates income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from business rates income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements		(9,095)	(8,207)
Balance at 31 March		184	9,747

Note 22: Related Party Transactions

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

Central Government

Central government has effective control over the general operations of the Council – it is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Council operates, provides the majority of its funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Council has with other parties (e.g. council tax bills, housing benefits). Grants received from government departments are set out in the analysis in Note 28.

Members

Members of the Council have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies. The total of members' allowances paid in 2022/23 is shown in Note 9. During 2022/23, £36,398 in value were commissioned from companies where members have a controlling interest (last year: £73,523). If contracts were entered into these would be in full compliance with the Council's standing orders.

Entities Controlled or Significantly Influenced by the Council

The Council has two subsidiaries over which it has control by virtue of its 100% shareholding. The Council's subsidiary companies are Stockton Hotel Company and Stockton Holding Company. The Council received £840k from these companies during the year. Additional information can be found in the Group Accounts section of the accounts.

A number of elected members and senior officers sit on the management committees or boards of local organisations. During 2022/23 the Council had transactions that totalled £5.817 million (last year: £7.065 million) to bodies that included Catalyst Stockton-on-Tees, Stockton Shopmobility, Spark of Genius North East, Stockton & District Advice and Information Service, Friends of Ropner, Tees Active Limited, Onsite, Hardwick in Partnership, Eastern Ravens Trust, Stockton Hotel and Stockton Holding Companies, FRADE, Billingham, Ingleby Barwick and Thornaby Town Councils, North East Regional Employers Organisation, and Tees Music Alliance. The transactions consisted of grants and payments for services provided to and by the Council. At the 31st March the Council owed £40k from related party suppliers and they in turn owed £1.051 million to the Council.

Note 23: External Audit Costs

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

External Audit Costs	2022-23	2021-22
	£000s	£000s
Fees payable to Mazars LLP with regard to external audit services	155	130
Fees payable to Mazars LLP for the certification of grant claims	12	11
Fees payable in respect of other services provided by Mazars LLP	5	4
	172	145
<i>Rebate from Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd</i>	0	19
<i>Government Funding Additional Audit Requirements</i>	51	50

Note 24: Dedicated Schools Grant

The council's expenditure on schools is funded primarily by grant monies provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). DSG is ringfenced and can only be applied to meet expenditure properly included in the Schools Budget, as defined in the School Finance and Early Years (England) Regulations 2017. The Schools Budget includes elements for a range of educational services provided on an authority-wide basis and for the Individual Schools Budget, which is divided into a budget share for each maintained school. Details of the deployment of DSG receivable for 2022/23 are as follows:

2022/23	Central Expenditure £000s	Individual Schools Budget £000s	Total £000s
Final Dedicated Schools Grant for 2022/23 before academy and high needs recoupment			199,900
Academy and high needs figure recouped for 2022/23			(119,203)
Total DSG after Academy and high needs recoupment for 2022/23			80,697
Plus: Brought forward from 2021/22			571
Less: Carry-forward to 2023/24 agreed in advance			-
Agreed initial budgeted distribution in 2022/23	29,371	51,897	81,268
In year adjustments	-	(93)	(93)
Final budgeted distribution for 2022/23	29,371	51,804	81,175
Less: Actual central expenditure	27,185		27,185
Less: Actual ISB deployed to schools		51,804	51,804
Plus: Local authority contribution for 2022/23	-	-	-
In Year Carry-forward Surplus / (Deficit) to 2023/24	2,186	-	2,186
Plus: Carry-forward to 2023/24 agreed in advance			-
Carry-forward to 2023/24			2,186
DSG unusable reserve at the end of 2021/22			6,052
Addition to DSG unusable reserve at the end of 2022/23			-
Total of DSG unusable reserve at the end of 2022/23			6,052
Net DSG position at the end of 2022/23			(3,866)

At 31st March 2023, the DSG shows a cumulative deficit balance of £3.866million. This has arisen due to the increased pressure in supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities from what is also commonly referred to as High Needs spend. For example, these services has been impacted by the increasing number of Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP) being undertaken. This is a national challenge and locally in Stockton, there has been a significant growth in the number of EHCPs in the last 5 years. During 2022-23 the net position has improved by £1.615m.

On the 6 November 2020, the secretary of state for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government laid before Parliament a statutory instrument 1 (the instrument) to amend The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations (the 2003 Regulations). The provisions came into effect from 29 November 2020.

The instrument amends the 2003 Regulations by establishing new accounting practices in relation to the treatment of local authorities' schools budget deficits such that where a local authority has a deficit on its schools budget relating to its accounts for a financial year beginning on 1st April 2020, 1st April 2021 or 1st April 2022, it must not charge the amount of that deficit to a revenue account. The local authority must record any such deficit in a separate account established solely for the purpose of recording deficits relating to its school's budget. The new accounting practice has the effect of separating schools budget deficits from the local authorities' general fund for a period of three financial years. Note that these Regulations have been extended for three years by means of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2022 (SI 2022 No 1328) to the financial years beginning on 1 April 2020 and ending 31 March 2026.

The Authority must charge the amount of the deficit (£6.052m), to an account established, charged and used solely for the purpose of recognising deficits in respect of its schools budget: the Code established this as the 'Dedicated Schools Grant Adjustment Account', an unusable reserve.

2021/22	Central Expenditure £000s	Individual Schools Budget £000s	Total £000s
Final Dedicated Schools Grant for 2021/22 before academy and high needs recoupment			191,143
Academy and high needs figure recouped for 2021/22			(113,457)
Total DSG after Academy and high needs recoupment for 2021/22			77,686
Plus: Brought forward from 2020/21			-
Less: Carry-forward to 2022/23 agreed in advance			-
Agreed initial budgeted distribution in 2021/22	25,105	52,581	77,686
In year adjustments	-	108	108
Final budgeted distribution for 2021/22	25,105	52,689	77,794
Less: Actual central expenditure	24,533		24,533
Less: Actual ISB deployed to schools		52,689	52,689
Plus: Local authority contribution for 2021/22	-	-	-
In Year Carry-forward Surplus / (Deficit) to 2022/23	572	-	572
Plus: Carry-forward to 2022/23 agreed in advance			-
Carry-forward to 2022/23			572
DSG unusable reserve at the end of 2020/21			6,052
Addition to DSG unusable reserve at the end of 2021/22			-
Total of DSG unusable reserve at the end of 2021/22			6,052
Net DSG position at the end of 2021/22			(5,480)

Note 25: Private Finance Initiative and Similar Contracts

The Council entered into an agreement with Robertson Group to build a secondary school, primary school, nursery unit and a community library at Ingleby Barwick under the Private Finance Initiative. Ingleby Barwick Community Campus opened in September 2003 and payments to the contractor started from that date for a period of 25 years. The contractor took on the obligation to construct the buildings and maintain them in a minimum acceptable condition and to procure and maintain the plant and equipment needed to operate them. The secondary school has attained academy status and is not therefore included within assets held under the scheme.

Payments

The Council makes a contractual payment which is increased each year by an agreed inflation formula and can be reduced if the contractor fails to meet availability and performance standards in any year but which is otherwise fixed.

Payments remaining to be made under the PFI contract at 31 March 2023 (excluding any estimation of inflation and availability/performance deductions) are as follows:

Future Payments	Payment for Services	Reimbursement of Capital Expenditure	Interest	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Payment due:				
In 2023-24	857	251	299	1,407
Within two to five years	1,935	2,920	774	5,629
Within six to ten years	170	384	32	586
	2,962	3,555	1,105	7,622

Note 26: Leases

Operating leases: Council as lessor

The Council acts as a lessor and has granted a number of long-term leases to commercial operations for land and property, accounting for them as operating leases.

Future minimum lease payments receivable	2022-23	2021-22
	£000s	£000s
Not later than one year	2,057	2,825
Later than one year & not later than five years	7,078	8,730
Later than five years	24,126	24,232
	33,261	35,787

Note 27: Capital Expenditure and Financing

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

Capital Expenditure and Financing	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	185,356	182,173
Capital investment		
Property, plant and equipment	32,161	32,196
Intangible assets	91	538
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	15,820	6,542
Sources of Finance		
Capital receipts	(1,000)	(941)
Government grants and other contributions	(40,134)	(28,628)
<i>Sums set aside from revenue:</i>		
Direct revenue contributions	(4,655)	(3,360)
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	(3,418)	(3,164)
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	184,221	185,356
Explanation of movements in year		
Increase/(Reduction) in underlying need to borrow	(1,426)	1,205
Assets acquired under finance leases	290	1,968
Increase/(decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement	(1,136)	3,173

Note 28: Grant Income

The Council credited the following grants, contributions and donations to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in 2022-23. This excludes Dedicated Schools Grant which is detailed in Note 24.

Credited to Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income	2022-23 £000s	2021-22 £000s
<u>Non-ringfenced government grants</u>		
RSG	5,265	5,104
New Homes Bonus	2,596	2,076
NNDR s31 Grant	8,467	9,916
Other Services Grant	2,735	-
Lower Tier Services Grant	292	-
Income Loss Support	-	445
Other Revenue Income	379	-
Covid 19 - Various Non Service Specific	5,251	15,789
Council tax Hardship Fund	-	656
	24,985	33,986
<u>Capital grants and contributions</u>		
DCSF Capital Grants	2,890	260
TVCA (CRST / Local Transport Plan)	3,980	4,371
Future High Streets	5,549	1,350
Town Deal	166	1,195
Homes England	8,293	1,088
TVCA	1,955	5,745
National Lottery	205	162
Other Capital grants	667	888
Other Capital Contributions	121	11,020
	23,826	26,079
Total - Non Specific Grant Income	48,811	60,065
Credited to Services		
Public Health	14,852	14,446
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Administration	947	939
Adult Education SFA/ESA/TVCA	1,443	2,020
Basic need	1,245	2,420
School Condition Allowance	58	-
SEND Higher Needs Capital Grant	965	-
Rent Rebates	22	42
Rent Allowance Subsidy	38,840	41,018
Covid 19 - Service Specific	4,711	8,684
Pupil Premium	4,506	4,326
UIFSM	619	747
Primary PE & Sports Grant	375	395
Arts Council Music Grant	666	894
Adoption Reform Grant	431	693
Disabled Facilities Grant	2,116	1,799
Independent Living Fund	501	501
Improved Better care fund	7,172	6,961
Levelling Up Fund	3,062	-
Future High Street Fund	1,208	-
Town Deal	3,630	-
Troubled families	992	774
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	1,049	52
Ukraine Refugees Scheme	435	-
Holiday Activities and Food Programme	945	664
Adult Social Care Grant	7,945	5,766
Adults Markets Sustainability Grant	571	-
Other Grants	10,300	6,519
	109,606	99,660

The Council has received a number of grants, contributions and donations that have yet to be recognised as income as they have conditions attached to them that will require the monies or property to be returned to the giver. The balances at the year end are as follows:

Capital and Revenue Grants Receipts in Advance	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s
Offenders' Learning and Skills Service	82	82
Other	7	-
Ukraine Refugee Schemes	1,377	-
Afgan Resettlement Schemes	213	-
Asylum Seeker Schemes	213	-
S31 Grant NNDR	-	-
Covid 19 - Various	20	594
Well Being For Education	24	24
Discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate	46	450
Foundation Learning	166	166
Total	2,148	1,316

Note 29: Financial Instruments

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

Financial Liabilities

A financial liability is an obligation to transfer economic benefits controlled by the Council and can be represented by a contractual obligation to deliver cash, financial assets or an obligation to exchange financial assets and liabilities with another entity that is potentially unfavourable to the Council. The majority of the Council's financial liabilities held during the year are measured at amortised cost and comprised:

- long-term loans from the Public Works Loan Board and commercial lenders
- overdraft with the NatWest bank
- lease payables
- Private Finance Initiative contracts
- trade payables for goods and services received

Financial Assets

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

- Financial assets held at amortised cost. These represent loans and loan-type arrangements

where repayments or interest and principal take place on set dates and at specified amounts. The amount presented in the Balance Sheet represents the outstanding principal received plus accrued interest. Interest credited to the CIES is the amount receivable as per the loan agreement.

- Fair Value Through Other Comprehensive Income (FVOCI) – These assets are measured and carried at fair value. All gains and losses due to changes in fair value (both realised and unrealised) are accounted for through a reserve account, with the balance debited or credited to the CIES when the asset is disposed of.
- Fair Value Through Profit and Loss (FVTPL). These assets are measured and carried at fair value. All gains and losses due to changes in fair value (both realised and unrealised) are recognised in the CIES as they occur.

Financial assets held at amortised cost and some assets held at fair value through other comprehensive income are shown net of a loss allowance reflecting the statistical likelihood that the borrower or debtor will be unable to meet their contractual commitments to the Council.

Financial Instruments - Balances

The value of debtors and creditors reported in the tables below are solely those amounts meeting the definition of a financial instrument. The balances of debtors and creditors reported in the balance sheet also include balances which do not meet the definition of a financial instrument, such as tax-based debtors and creditors.

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

Financial Liabilities (at Amortised Cost)	Long Term		Short Term	
	31 March 2023	31 March 2022	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Loans	77,427	78,538	16,813	5,925
Bank Overdraft	0	0	4,520	16,389
Total Other Long-term Liabilities	6,793	8,056	251	578
Financial Liabilities Included in Creditors	272	198	43,436	34,944
Total Financial Liabilities	84,492	86,792	65,020	57,836

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

Financial Assets	Long Term		Short Term	
	31 March 2023	31 March 2022	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Loans to Companies and for Service Purposes at Amortised Cost	626	827	94	524
At Fair Value Through Other Comprehensive Income	0	377	0	0
At Fair Value Through Profit & Loss	13,557	16,233	15,000	30,000
Cash and Cash Equivalents at Amortised Cost	0	0	304	751
Financial Assets at Amortised Cost Included in Debtors	0	0	29,873	23,930
Total Financial Assets	14,183	17,437	45,271	55,205

Equity instruments elected to fair value through other comprehensive income

The Council has elected to account for the following investments in equity instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income because they are long-term strategic holdings and changes in their fair value are not considered to be part of the Council's annual financial performance.

Equity instruments	Fair Value		Dividends	
	31 March 2023	31 March 2022	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
SITA	0	377	0	0
Teesside Airport	0	0	0	0
Total	0	377	0	0

Financial Instruments - Gains and Losses

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

Financial Instruments - Gains and Losses	Financial Liabilities	Financial Assets	2022-23 Total	2021-22 Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Interest expense on liabilities held at amortised cost	4,271	0	4,271	4,183
Losses from changes in fair value of assets held at fair value through profit and loss	0	2,676	2,676	(2,424)
Fees paid	2	0	2	4
Interest payable and similar charges	4,273	2,676	6,949	1,763
Interest income on assets held at amortised cost	0	(887)	(887)	(64)
Dividend income on assets held at fair value through profit and loss	0	(587)	(587)	(536)
Interest and investment income	0	(1,474)	(1,474)	(600)
Net impact on surplus/deficit on provision of services	4,273	1,202	5,475	1,163
Gains / Loss on revaluation	0	0	0	0
Gain on revaluation	0	0	0	0
Amounts recycled to surplus/deficit on provision of services	0	0	0	0
Impact on other comprehensive income	0	0	0	0
Net Gain/(Loss) for the Year	4,273	1,202	5,475	1,163

Financial Instruments - Fair Values

Financial instruments classified at amortised cost are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost. Their fair values have been estimated by calculating the net present value of the remaining contractual cash flows at 31st March 2023, using the following methods and assumptions:

- Loans borrowed by the Council have been valued by discounting the contractual cash flows over the whole life of the instrument at the appropriate market rate for local authority loans.
- Discount rates for "Lender's Option Borrower's Option" (LOBO) loans have been reduced to reflect the value of the embedded options. The size of the reduction has been calculated using proprietary software.
- The fair values of other long-term loans and investments have been discounted at the market rates for similar instruments with similar remaining terms to maturity on 31st March.
- The fair values of finance lease assets and liabilities and of PFI scheme liabilities have been calculated by discounting the contractual cash flows (excluding service charge elements) at the appropriate AA-rated corporate bond yield.

- No early repayment or impairment is recognised for any financial instrument.
- The fair value of short-term instruments, including trade payables and receivables, is assumed to approximate to the carrying amount given the historically low interest rate environment.

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

- Level 1 – fair value is only derived from quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities, e.g. Pooled Property Fund based on the latest market value from quarterly unaudited accounts.
- Level 2 – fair value is calculated from inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability. For PWLB loans payable, PWLB premature repayment rates. PFI Liabilities have been arrived at using a discounted cash flow analysis over the remaining term of the instrument.
- Level 3 – fair value is determined using unobservable inputs. Loans are based on estimated creditworthiness.

Financial Liabilities	Fair Value Level	Balance Sheet 31 March 2023 £000s	Fair Value 31 March 2023 £000s	Balance Sheet 31 March 2022 £000s	Fair Value 31 March 2022 £000s
<i>Financial liabilities held at amortised cost:</i>					
Long-term loans from PWLB	2	40,630	46,470	41,968	40,193
Long-term LOBO loans	2	37,000	44,786	37,000	60,646
Other long-term loans	2	1,131	269	4,909	5,254
Lease payables and PFI liabilities	2	7,044	4,125	8,635	5,292
TOTAL		85,805	95,650	92,512	111,385
Liabilities for which fair value is not disclosed *		63,707		52,116	
TOTAL FINANCIAL LIABILITIES		149,512		144,628	
<i>Recorded on balance sheet as:</i>					
Short-term creditors		48,207		51,911	
Short-term borrowing		16,813		5,925	
Short-term provisions		0		0	
Long-term creditors		272		198	
Long-term borrowing		77,427		78,538	
Long-term provisions		0		0	
Other long-term liabilities		6,793		8,056	
TOTAL FINANCIAL LIABILITIES		149,512		144,628	

* The fair value of short-term financial liabilities held at amortised cost, including trade payables, is assumed to approximate to the carrying amount.

Financial Assets	Fair Value Level	Balance Sheet 31 March 2023 £000s	Fair Value 31 March 2023 £000s	Balance Sheet 31 March 2022 £000s	Fair Value 31 March 2022 £000s
<i>Financial assets held at fair value:</i>					
Money market funds	1	15,000	15,000	30,000	30,000
Bond, equity and property funds	1	13,557	13,557	16,233	16,233
Shares in unlisted companies	3	0	0	377	377
<i>Financial assets held at amortised cost:</i>					
Long-term loans to local authorities	2	0	0	0	0
Long-term loans to companies	3	626	626	827	827
Lease receivables	3	0	0	0	0
TOTAL		29,183	29,183	47,437	47,437
Assets for which fair value is not disclosed *		30,271		25,205	
TOTAL FINANCIAL ASSETS		59,454		72,642	
<i>Recorded on balance sheet as:</i>					
Long-term debtors		626		827	
Long-term investments		13,557		16,610	
Short-term debtors		29,967		24,454	
Short-term investments		0		0	
Cash and cash equivalents		15,304		30,751	
TOTAL FINANCIAL ASSETS		59,454		72,642	

* The fair value of short-term financial assets held at amortised cost, including trade receivables, is assumed to approximate to the carrying amount.

Financial Instruments - Risks

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

The Council complies with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management and Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, both revised in December 2021. The Treasury Management Strategy includes an Investment Strategy in compliance with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Guidance on Local Government Investments. This Guidance emphasises that priority is to be given to security and liquidity, rather than yield. The Council's Treasury Management Strategy and its Treasury Management Practices seek to achieve a suitable balance between risk and return or cost.

The main risks covered are:

- **Credit Risk:** The possibility that the counterparty

to a financial asset will fail to meet its contractual obligations, causing a loss to the Council.

- **Liquidity Risk:** The possibility that the Council might not have the cash available to make contracted payments on time.
- **Market Risk:** The possibility that an unplanned financial loss will materialise because of changes in market variables such as interest rates or equity prices.

Credit Risk: Treasury Investments and Commitments

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

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

Credit Rating	31 March 2023		31 March 2022	
	Long-term £000s	Short-term £000s	Long-term £000s	Short-term £000s
AA-	0	15,000	0	30,000
A+	0	0	0	0
Unrated local authorities	0	0	0	0
Total	0	15,000	0	30,000
Credit risk not applicable	13,557	0	16,610	0
Total Investments	13,557	15,000	16,610	30,000

Credit Risk: Trade and Lease Receivables and Contract Assets

The Council's credit risk on lease receivables is mitigated by its legal ownership of the assets leased, which can be repossessed if the debtor defaults on the lease contract. The following analysis summarises the Council's trade and lease receivables, by due date. Only those receivables meeting the definition of a financial asset are included.

Credit Risk	31 March 2022	31 March 2021
	Trade & Lease Receivables	Trade & Lease Receivables
Current / Past due < 3 months	12,686	7,724
Past due 3-6 months	1,162	1,069
Past due 6-12 months	1,658	921
Past due 12+ months	3,630	2,735
TOTAL RECEIVABLES	19,136	12,449

Liquidity Risk

The Council has ready access to borrowing at favourable rates from the Public Works Loan Board and other local authorities, and at higher rates from banks and building societies. There is no perceived risk that the Council will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments. It is however exposed to the risk that it will need to refinance a significant proportion of its borrowing at a time of unfavourably high interest rates. This risk is managed by maintaining a spread of fixed rate loans and managing the maturities of loans in any financial year. The Council holds £15.2m (2022: £30.7m) of liquid financial assets that can be withdrawn or sold at short notice if required to meet cash outflows on financial liabilities.

The maturity analysis of financial instruments is as follows:

Time to maturity (years)	31 March 2023			31 March 2022		
	Liabilities £000s	Assets £000s	Net £000s	Liabilities £000s	Assets £000s	Net £000s
Not over 1	16,813	(15,000)	1,813	5,925	(30,000)	(24,075)
Over 1 but not over 2	1,372	0	1,372	1,334	0	1,334
Over 2 but not over 5	9,249	0	9,249	4,195	0	4,195
Over 5 but not over 10	7,703	0	7,703	12,578	0	12,578
Over 10	59,103	0	59,103	60,431	0	60,431
Uncertain date	0	(13,557)	(13,557)	0	(16,610)	(16,610)
Total	94,240	(28,557)	65,683	84,463	(46,610)	37,853

The Council has £37m (2022: £37m) of "Lender's option, borrower's option" (LOBO) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the rate payable; the Council will then have the option to accept the new rate or repay the loan without penalty. In the event that the lender exercises its option, the Council is likely to repay these loans.

Market Risks: Interest Rate Risk

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

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

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

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

The financial effect if all interest rates had been 1% higher (with all other variables held constant)	31 March 2023 £000s	31 March 2022 £000s
Increase in interest payable on variable rate borrowings	370	370
Increase in interest receivable on variable rate investments	(15)	(266)
Impact on Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	355	104
Decrease in fair value of investments held at FVOCI	0	0
Impact on Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	355	104
Decrease in fair value of fixed rate borrowing *	(9,443)	(10,866)

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

Market Risks: Price Risk

The Council's investment in a pooled property fund is subject to the risk of falling commercial property prices. A 5% fall in commercial property prices at 31st March 2023 would result in a £0.632m charge to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services which is then transferred to the Pooled Investment Funds Adjustment Account.

Note 30: Pensions Schemes accounted for as Defined Contribution Schemes

Teachers employed by the Council are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme, administered by the Department for Education. 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.

Former NHS staff who transferred to the Council as part of the transfer of Public Health responsibilities are members of the NHS Pension Scheme that is administered by NHS Pensions on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care. The scheme provides employees with specified benefits upon their retirement, and the Council contributes towards the costs by making contributions based on a percentage

of members' pensionable salaries.

Both schemes are technically a defined benefit scheme. However, the schemes are unfunded and notional funds are used as the basis for calculating the employers' contribution rate paid by local authorities. The Council is not able to identify its share of underlying financial position and performance of the schemes with sufficient reliability for accounting purposes. For the purposes of this Statement of Accounts, they are therefore accounted for on the same basis as defined contribution schemes.

Contributions to the schemes by the Council and contribution rate as a percentage of total pay are shown in the table below:

Scheme	Contributions 2022-23		Contributions 2021-22	
	£000s	%	£000s	%
Teachers' Pension Scheme	4,430	23.68	4,497	23.68
NHS Pension Scheme	12	13.10	11	14.38
	4,442		4,508	

There were no contributions remaining payable at the year end.

The Council is responsible for the costs of any additional benefits awarded upon early retirement outside of the terms of the teachers' scheme. These costs are accounted for on a defined benefit basis and detailed in Note 31.

Note 31: Defined Benefit Pension Schemes

Legal and Regulatory Uncertainty

The pension figures have been prepared on the basis of accounting for the impact of the McCloud / Sargent judgement and for full pension increases to be paid on GMP equalisation and indexation to individuals reaching pension age after April 2016. The Actuary have previously carried out some approximate analysis across their LGPS clients to understand the potential impact of implementing a solution to correct the past underpayment of spouses' benefits (Goodwin Treatment). The remedy is still uncertain but the Actuary estimate the potential impact of this to be very small for a typical Fund.

Participation in Pension Schemes

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

The Council participates in The Local Government Pension Scheme, administered locally by Middlesbrough Council – this is a funded defined benefit final salary scheme, meaning that the Council and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pensions liabilities with investment assets.

The principal risks to the authority of the scheme are the longevity assumptions, statutory changes to the scheme, structural changes to the scheme (i.e. large-scale withdrawals from the scheme), changes to inflation, bond yields and the performance of the equity investments held by the scheme. These are mitigated to a certain extent by the statutory requirements to charge to the General Fund the amounts required by statute as described in the accounting policies note.

Discretionary Post-retirement Benefits

Discretionary post-retirement benefits on early retirement are an unfunded defined benefit arrangement, under which liabilities are recognised when awards are made. There are no plan assets built up to meet these pension liabilities.

Asset Ceiling

Following the pensions valuation by the Councils actuary, Hymans Robertson LLP, the Council determined that the fair value of its pension plan assets outweighed the present value of the plan obligations at 31 March 2023 resulting in a pension plan asset for the first time. IAS 19 Employee Benefits requires that, where a pension plan asset exists, it is measured at the lower of:

- The surplus in the defined benefit plan; and
- The asset ceiling.

The asset ceiling is the present value of any economic benefits available in the form of refunds from the plan or reductions in future contributions to the plan. The Council's actuary's calculated the asset ceiling as the net present value of future service costs less net present value of future contributions.

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

Reconciliation of the Movements in the Fair Value of Scheme (Plan) Assets	Defined Benefit Pension Scheme	
	2022-23	2021-22
	£000s	£000s
Opening fair value of scheme assets	972,605	863,409
Interest income	26,073	17,927
Remeasurement gains and (losses)	(11,900)	82,956
Contributions from the employer	12,805	12,890
Contributions from employees into the scheme	5,850	5,391
Other Experiences	(863)	(2,683)
Settlements	-	24,060
Benefits paid	(29,550)	(31,345)
Closing fair value of scheme assets at 31 March	975,020	972,605

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

Reconciliation of Present Value of the Scheme Liabilities (Defined Benefit Obligation)	Defined Benefit Pension Scheme	
	2022-23	2021-22
	£000s	£000s
Opening balance at 1 April	(1,216,544)	(1,227,358)
Current service cost	(41,343)	(40,003)
Interest cost	(33,013)	(26,028)
Contributions by scheme participants	(5,850)	(5,391)
Actuarial gains and losses - financial assumptions	449,556	12,546
Actuarial gains and losses - demographic assumptions	7,704	37,714
Actuarial gains and losses - liability experience	(65,620)	(4,736)
Benefits paid	31,522	33,246
Settlements	1,212	4,564
Past service cost	(902)	(1,098)
Closing balance at 31 March	(873,278)	(1,216,544)

Local Government Pension Scheme assets comprised:

Local Government Pension Scheme assets comprised:	Fair value of scheme assets			
	2022-23		2021-22	
	£000s	%	£000s	%
Equity investments (Quoted and un-quoted)	689,616	70.7	661,371	68.0
Property (Quoted and un-quoted)	85,619	8.8	77,808	8.0
Cash	64,896	6.7	155,617	16.0
Other Investments	134,889	13.8	77,808	8.0
Total Assets	975,020	100.0	972,604	100.0

Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, etc. Both the Local Government Pension Scheme and discretionary benefits liabilities have been assessed by Hymans Robertson LLP, an independent firm of actuaries; estimates for the Teesside Pension Fund being based on the latest full valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2022.

The significant assumptions used by the actuary have been:

	2022-23	2021-22
Mortality assumptions:		
<i>Longevity at 65 for current pensioners:</i>		
Men	20.6	20.9
Women	23.7	23.9
<i>Longevity at 65 for future pensioners:</i>		
Men	21.5	21.9
Women	25.2	25.5
Other assumptions:		
<i>Rate of inflation (CPI)</i>	3.0%	3.15%
<i>Rate of increase in salaries</i>	4.0%	4.2%
<i>Rate of increase in pensions</i>	3.0%	3.2%
<i>Rate for discounting scheme liabilities</i>	4.8%	2.7%

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

Impact on the Defined Benefit Obligation in the Scheme

	Rate	Change in Assumption		
		+0.1% p.a. £000's	Base £000's	-0.1% p.a. £000's
Rate of increase in salaries	0.21%	875,085	873,278	871,471
Rate of increase in pensions in payment	1.51%	886,671	873,278	859,885
Rate for discounting scheme liabilities	-1.75%	858,290	873,278	888,266
		-1 year £000's	Base £000's	+1 year £000's
Post retirement mortality assumption	3.85%	908,209	873,278	838,347

Impact on the Authority's Cash Flows

The objectives of the scheme are to keep employers' contributions at as constant a rate as possible. The Council has agreed a strategy with the scheme's actuary to achieve a funding level of 100% over the next 18 years. Funding levels are monitored on an annual basis. The latest triennial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2022.

The scheme will need to take account of the national changes to the scheme under the Public Pensions Services Act 2013. Under the Act, the Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales and the other main existing public service schemes may not provide benefits in relation to service after 31 March 2014 (or service after 31 March

2015 for other main existing public service pension schemes in England and Wales). The Act provides for scheme regulations to be made within a common framework, to establish new career average revalued earnings schemes to pay pensions and other benefits to certain public servants.

The Council anticipates to pay £12.089m contributions to the scheme in 2023/24

The weighted average duration of the defined benefit obligation for scheme members is 18.0 years.

(Last year 20.0 years).

Note 32: Termination Benefits

The Council terminated the contracts of a number of employees in 2022/23, incurring liabilities of £0.829m (£2.452m in 2021/22). The amounts have been payable in relation to officers from across the Council reflecting the end of specific grant funding and the rationalisation of services as part of the Council's programme of service reviews. Please note that these don't include termination payments made to senior officers and that senior officers payments are disclosed in note 10.

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

Exit package cost band (including special payments)	Number of compulsory redundancies		Number of other departures agreed		Total number of exit packages by cost band		Total cost of exit packages in each band	
	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22
							£000s	£000s
£1 to £20,000	6	3	16	21	22	24	177	169
£20,001 to £40,000	3	-	6	9	9	9	237	242
£40,001 to £60,000	1	3	1	5	2	8	101	417
£60,001 to £80,000	1	1	2	3	3	4	215	278
£80,001 to £100,000	1	-	-	3	1	3	99	268
£100,001 to £150,000	-	5	-	2	-	7	-	845
£150,001 +	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	233
Total	12	12	25	44	37	56	829	2,452

Note 33: Provisions

The Council has established a provision for lost income that arises due to successful rating appeals by business rates payers. The Council's share of the provision at the balance sheet date stood at £6.321m (last year £8.477m).

Provisions	Ratings Appeals £000's
Balance at 1 April 2022	8,477
Provisions Released in 2022/23	-3,044
Amounts Used in 2022/23	888
Balance at 31 March 2023	6,321

Note 34: Contingent Liabilities

A contingent liability is a potential liability which depends on the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events. The Council has identified the following contingent liabilities as at 31 March 2023.

Achieving Real Change in Communities (ARCC)

ARCC is the new probation service for the Tees Valley that has been established in association with a number of partners. The Council has agreed to guarantee the performance of ARCC under the Services Agreement pursuant to a Guarantee with the Secretary of State for Justice. The total aggregate liability cap for all partners is £14.0m of which Stockton's share is £4.9m (34.7%).

Business Rate Appeals

The Council has made a provision for the loss of Business Rates that result from current and future appeals made by ratepayers. The total provision set aside at the end of March was £12.9m.

Note 35: Better Care Fund

The Council has entered into a pooled budget arrangement with NHS North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB), the Better Care Fund, for the commissioning of health and social care services for the residents of the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees. The arrangement was with NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) until the establishment of the ICB from 1st July 2022. The services will be provided by the Council or the NHS depending upon the mix required by clients. The Council and the ICB have an agreement in place for funding these services with the partners contributing funds to the pooled budget.

The pooled budget is hosted by the Council on behalf of the two partners to the agreement.

Better Care Fund	2022-23		2021-22
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Funding provided to the pooled budget:			
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	9,881		8,966
NHS North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB)	17,378		16,568
		27,259	25,534
Expenditure met from the pooled budget:			
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	(22,190)		(20,803)
NHS North East & North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB)	(5,069)		(4,731)
		(27,259)	(25,534)
Net surplus arising on the pooled budget during the year		-	-
Council share of the net surplus arising on the fund		-	-

Note 36: Events after the reporting period

Events after the Balance Sheet date are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period 31 March 2023 and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue. Two types of events can be identified:

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

There are no adjusting events after the balance sheet date.

Note 37: Cash Flow Statement - Reconciliation of liabilities arising from financing activities

Cash Flow Statement - Reconciliation of liabilities arising from financing activities	1 April 2022	Financing Cash Flows	Changes which are not financing cash flows		31 March 2023
			Acquisition	Other Non financing cash flows	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Long Term Borrowing	78,538	(1,111)	-	-	77,427
Short Term Borrowing	5,925	10,888	-	-	16,813
Lease Liabilities	(864)	(1,012)	-	(290)	(2,166)
Other Balance Sheet PFI Liabilities	3,555	(251)	-	-	3,304
Total Liabilities From Financing Activities	87,154	8,514	-	(290)	95,378

Comparative Information	1 April 2021	Financing Cash Flows	Changes which are not financing cash flows		31 March 2022
			Acquisition	Other Non financing cash flows	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Long Term Borrowing	73,472	5,066	-	-	78,538
Short Term Borrowing	6,554	(629)	-	-	5,925
Lease Liabilities	397	707	-	(1,968)	(864)
Other Balance Sheet PFI Liabilities	4,133	(578)	-	-	3,555
Total Liabilities From Financing Activities	84,556	4,566	-	(1,968)	87,154

General Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarise the Council's transactions for the 2022/23 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31st March 2023. 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 2022/23, as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

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

The concept of materiality has been applied in the process of preparing the accounts, such that insignificant items are excluded and fluctuations under an acceptable level of tolerance are permitted, provided that in aggregate they would not affect the interpretation of the accounts by an informed reader.

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.

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 no more than three months or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

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

Charges to Revenue for Non Current Assets

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

- depreciation attributable to the assets used by the

relevant service

- revaluation and impairment losses on assets used by the service where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which the losses can be written off
- amortisation of intangible non current 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 and impairment losses and amortisations are therefore replaced by the contribution in the General Fund Balance, the 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.

Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates

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

Accounting for Council Tax and NDR

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

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

Employee Benefits

Benefits Payable During Employment

Short term employee benefits such as wages and salaries, paid annual leave, sick leave and expenses are paid on a monthly basis and charged on an accruals basis to the relevant service line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement..

Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Council to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy and are charged on an accruals basis 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 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.

Post Employment Benefits

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

- The Teachers' Pension Scheme, administered by Capita Teachers' Pensions on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).
- The NHS Pension Scheme, administered by NHS Pensions on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care.
- The Local Government Pensions Scheme, administered by Middlesbrough Council.

The schemes provided defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees worked for the Council. However, the arrangements for the teachers' and NHS schemes mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot ordinarily be identified specifically to the Council. The schemes are therefore accounted for as if they were defined contribution schemes and no liability for future payments of benefits is recognised in the Balance Sheet.

The Local Government Pension Scheme

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

- The liabilities of the Teesside Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method – i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc, and projections of projected earnings for current employees.
- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate based on the indicative rate of return on the Hymans Robertson LLP Central AA Curve.
- The assets of the Teesside Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:
 - quoted securities* - current bid price
 - unquoted securities* - professional estimate
 - unitised securities* - current bid price
 - property* - market value.

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

Service cost comprising:

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

changes in the net defined benefit liability during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.

Remeasurements comprising:

- *the return on plan assets* - excluding amounts included in the net interest on the net defined benefit liability - charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
- *actuarial gains and losses*: changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

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

Events after the Reporting Period

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

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

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the financial statements.

Financial Instruments

Financial liabilities

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

For most of the borrowings that the 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.

Where premiums and discounts have been charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, regulations allow the impact on the General Fund Balance to be spread over future years. The Council has a policy of spreading the gain or loss over the term that was remaining on the loan against which the premium was payable or discount receivable when it was repaid within the general fund. The reconciliation of amounts charged to the

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the net charge required against the General Fund Balance is managed by a transfer to or from the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Financial Assets

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)

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

Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost

Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the authority becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value. They are subsequently measured at their amortised cost. Annual credits to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For most of the financial assets held by the authority, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable (plus accrued interest) and interest credited to the CIES is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

However, the authority has made loans to organisations at less than market rates (soft loans). When soft loans are made, a loss is recorded in the CIES (debited to the appropriate service) for the present value of the interest that will be foregone over the life of the instrument, resulting in a lower amortised cost than the outstanding principal.

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

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

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit of Loss

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

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

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

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

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

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

Government Grants and Contributions

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

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

Amounts recognised as due to the Council are not credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement until conditions attached to the grant or contribution have been satisfied. Conditions are stipulations that specify that the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset 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 receipts in advance. 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 ringfenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants

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

Heritage Assets

Heritage Assets are primarily held at the Authority's museum. There are 6 categories of Heritage Assets which are held in support of the primary objective of the authority's museum, i.e. increasing the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the authority's history and local area. Heritage assets are recognised and measured (including the treatment of revaluation gains and losses) in accordance with the Council's accounting policies on property, plant and equipment. However, some of the measurement rules are relaxed in relation to heritage assets: where the cost of an asset cannot be identified with certainty, the value has been assessed by a suitably experienced officer or a suitably experienced external valuer. In certain cases, high value heritage assets that are on long term loan to the Council have been treated as though owned by the Council and included within the reported values.

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

Intangible Assets

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

Interest in Companies and Other Entities

The Council has interests in companies that require it to prepare group accounts. In the Councils own single entity accounts, the interest in companies are recorded as financial assets at cost, less any provision for losses.

Inventories

Inventories are included in the Balance Sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value. The cost of inventories is determined on the basis of the initial invoice price, except for stock held by Community Services, which is valued on the basis of last invoice price.

Investment Property

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

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, based on the amount at which the asset could be exchanged 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.

Leases

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

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

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

The Council as Lessee

Finance Leases

Property, plant and equipment held under finance leases is recognised on the Balance Sheet at the commencement of the lease at its fair value measured at the lease's inception (or the present value of the minimum lease payments, if lower). The asset recognised is matched by a liability for the obligation to pay the lessor. Initial direct costs of the Council are added to the carrying amount of the asset. Premiums paid on entry into a lease are applied to writing down the lease liability. Contingent rents are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

Lease payments are apportioned between:

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

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

The Council is not required to raise council tax to cover depreciation or revaluation and impairment losses arising on leased assets. Instead, a prudent annual contribution is made from revenue funds towards the deemed capital investment in accordance with statutory requirements. Depreciation, 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 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 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 and replaced by a long-term debtor in the Balance Sheet valued on the future income due under the finance lease.

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property, plant or equipment – applied to write down the lease debtor (together with any premiums received), and
- a 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 non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are therefore appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Operating Leases

Where the Council grants an operating lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the asset is retained in the Balance Sheet. Rental income is

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

Overheads and Support Services

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

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 and cost more than £10,000 are classified as property, plant and equipment.

Recognition

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

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

- the purchase price
- any costs attributable to 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 whilst assets are under construction.

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

exchange, the cost of the acquisition is the carrying amount of the asset given up by the Council.

Where gains are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

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

- infrastructure, community assets and assets under construction – depreciated historical cost
- school buildings – current value, but because of their specialist nature, are measured at depreciated replacement cost which is used as an estimate of current value
- surplus assets – the current value measurement base is fair value, estimated at highest and best use from a market participant's perspective
- all other assets – current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV).

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

Where non property assets that have short useful lives or low values (or both), depreciated historical cost basis is used as a proxy for current value. Assets included in the Balance Sheet at current value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their current value at the year-end, but as a minimum every three years. Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains. Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement where they arise from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service.

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

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

Income and Expenditure Statement.

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

Impairment

Assets are assessed at each year end as to whether there is any indication that 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:

- buildings – straight line allocation over the useful life of the property as estimated by the valuer
- vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment – straight line over the useful life of the asset, as advised by a suitably qualified officer
- infrastructure – straight line allocation over a period of 10 to 80 years.

Where an item of property, plant and equipment has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components will be depreciated separately if the change in depreciation cost is considered to be significant. 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.

The authority has determined in accordance with Regulation 30M England of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England/Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 that the carrying amounts to be derecognised for infrastructure assets when there is replacement expenditure is nil.

Disposals and Non current Assets Held for Sale

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

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

Assets that are to be abandoned or scrapped are not reclassified as Assets Held for Sale. When an asset is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether Property, plant and equipment or Assets held for sale) is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited to

the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Amounts received for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. A proportion of receipts relating to housing disposals is payable to the Government. The balance of receipts is required to be credited to the Capital Receipts Reserve, and can then only be used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the Council's underlying need to borrow (the capital financing requirement). Receipts are appropriated to the reserve from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Mortgage receipts are treated as capital receipts irrespective of their value.

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

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 the services passes to the PFI contractor. As the Council is deemed to control the services that are provided under its PFI schemes, and as ownership of the property, plant and equipment will pass to the Council at the end of the contracts for no additional charge, the Council carries the assets used under the contracts on its Balance Sheet as part of property, plant and equipment.

- The original recognition of these assets at fair value (based on the cost to purchase the property, plant and equipment) was balanced by the recognition of a liability for amounts due to the scheme operator to pay for the capital investment.
- Non current assets 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 operators 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 the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in 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 in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

payment towards liability – applied to write down the Balance Sheet liability towards the PFI operator (the profile of write downs is calculated using the same principles as for a finance lease)

lifecycle replacement costs – proportion of the amounts payable is posted to the Balance Sheet as a prepayment and then recognised as additions to Property, plant and equipment when the relevant works are eventually carried out.

Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

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. For instance, the Council may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or the payment of compensation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year 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.

Contingent Liabilities & Contingent Assets

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. 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 liabilities and contingent assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts.

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. 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 appropriated back into the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement so that there is no net charge against council tax for the expenditure.

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

Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute

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

VAT

VAT on income and expenditure is included only to the extent that it is not recoverable from HM Revenue and Customs.

Schools

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23, as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets confirms that the balance of control for local authority maintained schools (i.e. those categories of school identified in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended) lies with the local authority. The Code also stipulates that those schools' assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows are recognised in the local authority financial statements (and not in Group Accounts). Therefore schools' transactions, cash flows and balances are recognised in each of the financial statements of the Council as if they were the transactions, cash flows and balances of the Council.

Fair Value Measurement

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

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

The Council measures the fair value of an asset or liability on the same basis that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability (assuming those market participants were acting in their economic best interest).

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

The Council uses appropriate valuation techniques for each circumstance, maximising the use of relevant known data and minimising the use of estimates or unknowns. This takes into account the three levels of categories for inputs to valuations for fair value assets:

- Level 1 - quoted prices
- Level 2 - inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly.
- Level 3 - unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

Going Concern

The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis, under the assumption that the Council will continue in existence for the foreseeable future.

Revenue Recognition

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. Revenue is measured as the amount of the transaction price which is allocated to that performance obligation. Where the Council is acting as an agent of another organisation the amounts collected for that organisation are excluded from revenue.

Collection Fund Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023

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

Collection Fund Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023	2022-23			2021-22		
	Council	Business	Total	Council	Business	Total
	Tax	Rates		Tax	Rates	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Income						
Income from Council Tax payers	(125,306)		(125,306)	(118,865)		(118,865)
Contribution from General Fund	(46)		(46)	(2,138)		(2,138)
Income from business ratepayers		(79,553)	(79,553)		(66,529)	(66,529)
Total Income	(125,352)	(79,553)	(204,905)	(121,003)	(66,529)	(187,532)
Expenditure						
Precepts, demands and shares:						
Central Government		31,857	31,857		25,588	25,588
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	102,623	31,242	133,865	99,039	24,237	123,276
Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland	15,890		15,890	15,211		15,211
Cleveland Fire Authority	4,717	629	5,346	4,598	486	5,084
	123,230	63,728	186,958	118,848	50,311	169,159
Apportionment of Previous Year Estimated Surplus/Deficit						
Central Government		-	-		-	-
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	(471)	-	(471)	(561)	-	(561)
Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland	(74)		(74)	(88)		(88)
Cleveland Fire Authority	(22)	-	(22)	(26)	-	(26)
	(567)	-	(567)	(675)	-	(675)
Charges to Collection Fund						
Write off of uncollectable amounts	1,107	98	1,205	242	(15)	227
Change in Bad Debt Provision	1,017	1,335	2,352	1,832	250	2,082
Change in Provision for Appeals		(4,400)	(4,400)		(1,000)	(1,000)
Cost of Collection		234	234		234	234
	2,124	(2,733)	(609)	2,074	(531)	1,543
Surplus (-) / Deficit arising during the year	(565)	(18,558)	(19,123)	(756)	(16,749)	(17,505)
Balance at 1st April	1,247	17,775	19,022	2,003	34,524	36,527
Balance at 31st March	682	(783)	(101)	1,247	17,775	19,022

Note 1: Council Tax Base

Council Tax Base	2022-23		2021-22	
	Number in Category	Band D Equivalent	Number in Category	Band D Equivalent
Property Category and Council Tax Banding	No.	No.	No.	No.
A - up to £40,000	35,074	13,831.50	35,174	14,182.10
B - £40,001 to £52,000	17,196	10,421.90	17,107	10,303.60
C - £52,001 to £68,000	16,299	12,351.40	16,134	12,176.00
D - £68,001 to £88,000	10,010	8,931.80	9,930	8,860.90
E - £88,001 to £120,000	6,129	6,943.00	5,993	6,780.50
F - £120,001 to £160,000	2,744	3,743.00	2,652	3,599.40
G - £160,001 to £320,000	1,437	2,252.60	1,386	2,172.80
H - over £320,000	123	179.50	124	185.00
Gross Tax Base		58,654.70		58,260.30
Non Collection	1.75%	(1,026.40)	1.75%	(1,019.56)
Council Tax Base		57,628.30		57,240.74

Note 2: National Non Domestic (Business) Rates Gross Rateable Value

National Non Domestic (Business) Rates Gross Rateable Value	2022-23	2021-22
	£	£
Value at the year end	196,407,038	197,992,273

Note 3: National Non Domestic (Business) Rates Multiplier

National Non Domestic (Business) Rates Multiplier	2022-23	2021-22
	pence	pence
Standard Multiplier for the year	51.2p	51.2p



Group Accounts & Explanatory Notes

The purpose of the Group Accounts is to provide a picture of Stockton Borough Council and the group of companies, which are either controlled or are significantly influenced by the Council. The Group Accounts show the full extent of the Authority's wider assets and liabilities. The Group Accounts provide transparency and enable comparison with other entities that have different corporate entities.

The Group Accounts include the following:

- Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement - summarises the resources that have been generated and consumed in providing services and managing the Group during the year. It includes all day-to-day expenses and related income on an accruals basis.
- Group Movement in Reserves - shows the movement in the year on the Council's single entity usable and unusable reserves together with the Council's share of the Group reserves.
- Group Cash Flow Statement - shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Group during the year. The statement shows how the Group generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cashflows as operating, financing and investing activities.
- Group Balance Sheet - shows the assets and liabilities of the group as at the 31st March 2023.
- Notes to the Group Accounts where the balances are materially different to those in the single entity accounts.

Subsidiaries

The following entities are 100% controlled by Stockton Council by virtue of 100% shareholding and are consolidated with Stockton Council. to form the group accounts.

Stockton Borough Holding Company Limited -
Registration Number 10523559

Stockton Hotels Company Limited - Registration
Number 10525068

Audit of the Accounts

Under s479A of the Company's Act 2006 a company is exempt from the requirements of the Act relating to audit of its individual accounts (but not any group accounts) for a financial year if the company is included in the consolidated accounts drawn up for that year and the parent undertaking discloses in the notes to the consolidated accounts that the company is exempt from the requirements of the Act relating to the audit of individual accounts by virtue of s479A.

The Board of Directors for Stockton Hotel Company and Stockton Borough Holding Company engage an independent audit of both subsidiary companies, rather than utilise the exemption described above, due to delays in the approval of the Local Authority (and group) accounts in previous years.

Movement in Reserves Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023

The Movement in Reserves Statement shows the movement in year on reserve balances held by the Group.

Movement in Reserves Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023	Unearmarked General Fund Balance	Earmarked Schools Budget Reserve	Other Earmarked Reserves	General Fund Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Council Reserves	Council's share of group reserves	Total Authority reserves
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance at 1st April 2021	12,879	-	79,060	91,939	2,244	45,957	140,140	(177,552)	(37,412)	(6)	(37,418)
Movement in reserves during 2021-22											
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(30,167)	-	-	(30,167)	-	-	(30,167)	157,066	126,899	126	127,025
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations (Note 6)	-	-	25,442	25,442	193	1,670	27,305	(27,305)	-		
Increase/Decrease before transfer to earmarked reserves	(30,167)	-	25,442	(4,725)	193	1,670	(2,862)	129,761	126,899	126	127,025
Transfers to / from earmarked reserves	26,701		(26,701)	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Increase / Decrease in the year	(3,466)		(1,259)	(4,725)	193	1,670	(2,862)	129,761	126,899	126	127,025
Balance at 31 March 2022 Carried Forward	9,413		77,801	87,214	2,437	47,627	137,278	(47,791)	89,487	120	89,607
Balance at 1 April 2022	9,413	-	77,801	87,214	2,437	47,627	137,278	(47,791)	89,487	120	89,607
Movement in Reserve in 2022-23											
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(44,662)	-	-	(44,662)	-	-	(44,662)	390,915	346,253	133	346,386
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations (Note 6)	-	-	23,833	23,833	616	(1,354)	23,095	(23,095)	-	-	-
Increase/Decrease before transfer to earmarked reserves	(44,662)	-	23,833	(20,829)	616	(1,354)	(21,567)	367,820	346,253	133	346,386
Transfers to / from earmarked reserves	43,249	-	(43,249)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Increase / Decrease in the year	(1,413)	-	(19,416)	(20,829)	616	(1,354)	(21,567)	367,820	346,253	133	346,386
Balance at 31 March 2023 carried forward	8,000		58,385	66,385	3,053	46,273	115,711	320,029	435,740	253	435,993

Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Authorities raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with statutory requirements; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in both the Expenditure and Funding analysis and the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Restated 2021-22			2022-23		
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
	Expenditure	Income	Net	Expenditure	Income	Net
Adults & Health	126,760	(86,548)	40,212	121,789	(78,315)	43,474
Children's Services	159,016	(103,062)	55,954	174,343	(117,371)	56,972
Community Services, Environment & Culture	61,748	(9,696)	52,052	67,717	(10,132)	57,585
Corporate Management & Services	1,827	4,133	5,960	10,082	(2,624)	7,458
Finance, Development & Regeneration	98,288	(61,673)	36,616	91,409	(60,433)	30,976
Corporate Services	8,834	(1,653)	7,181	10,407	(738)	9,669
Cost of Services	456,473	(258,499)	197,975	475,747	(269,613)	206,134
Other Operating Expenditure:						
Parish council precepts	873	-	873	926	-	926
(Gain) or loss on the disposal of Investment Properties	-	(31)	(31)	-	-	-
(Gain) or loss on the disposal of non-current assets	587	-	587	4,493	(816)	3,677
			-			-
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure:						
Interest payable and similar charges	4,183	-	4,183	4,271	-	4,271
Net (gains)/losses on financial assets at fair value through profit and loss	-	(2,424)	(2,424)	2,676	(18)	2,658
Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset	26,028	(17,927)	8,101	33,013	(26,073)	6,940
Interest receivable and similar income		(562)	(562)		(1,449)	(1,449)
(Gain) or loss on trading accounts (not applicable to service)	17,861	(9,078)	8,783	18,490	(8,666)	9,824
Income & costs and changes in fair value relating to investment properties	567	(2,030)	(1,463)	1,506	(1,081)	425
			-			-
Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income:						
Council tax income	-	(99,064)	(99,064)	-	(102,576)	(102,576)
Retained Business Rates	-	(34,455)	(34,455)	-	(42,395)	(42,395)
Non-ringfenced government grants	7,547	(33,986)	(26,439)	4,874	(24,985)	(20,111)
Capital grants and contributions	-	(26,079)	(26,079)	-	(23,826)	(23,826)
(Surplus) or Deficit on Provision of Services	514,119	(484,135)	29,985	545,996	(501,498)	44,498
Tax Expenses of Subsidiary	56		56	31		31
Group Surplus or Deficit			30,041			44,529
(Surplus) or deficit on revaluation of non current assets			(4,524)			(11,180)
Re-measurements of the defined benefit liability			(152,540)			(379,740)
Other (gains) and losses			(2)			5
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			(157,066)			(390,915)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			(127,025)			(346,386)

Group Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Group.

Group Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023

	Note	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
		£000s	£000s
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment		383,386	367,562
Investment property		16,558	17,409
Intangible assets		555	520
Heritage Assets		10,728	10,728
Pension Fund Net Assets		101,742	-
Long term investments		13,557	16,610
Long Term Debtors		849	1,994
Total non-current assets		527,375	414,823
Current assets			
Inventories		443	483
Debtors	1 & 4	56,153	49,447
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2	16,666	31,978
Assets held for sale		136	136
Total current assets		73,398	82,044
Current liabilities			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2	(4,520)	(16,389)
Short Term Borrowing		(16,813)	(5,925)
Short Term Creditors	3	(50,487)	(44,423)
Provisions		(6,321)	(8,477)
Total current liabilities		(78,141)	(75,214)
Long term liabilities			
Long Term Creditors		(272)	(198)
Long Term Borrowing		(77,427)	(78,538)
Other Long Term Liabilities		(6,793)	(251,995)
Grants Receipts in Advance		(2,148)	(1,316)
Total long term liabilities		(86,640)	(332,047)
Net Assets:		435,993	89,607
Reserves			
Usable reserves:			
General Fund Balance		8,000	9,413
Earmarked General Fund Reserves		58,385	77,801
Capital Receipts Reserve		3,053	2,437
Capital Grants Unapplied		46,273	47,627
Profit and Loss Reserve - Stockton Borough Holding Group		253	120
		115,964	137,398
Unusable Reserves:			
Revaluation Reserve		68,435	59,482
Capital Adjustment Account		158,761	151,574
Financial Instruments Adjustment Account		(116)	(213)
Pooled Fund Adjustment Account		(1,443)	1,233
Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve		-	377
Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve		154	154
Pensions Reserve		101,742	(243,939)
Collection Fund Adjustment Account		(184)	(9,747)
Dedicated Schools Grant Adjustment Account		(6,052)	(5,480)
Accumulated Absences Account		(1,268)	(1,233)
		320,029	(47,791)
Total Reserves:		435,993	89,607

Group Cash Flow Statement For The Year Ended 31 March 2023

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Group during the reporting period.

Group Cash Flow Statement For The Year Ended 31 March 2023	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s
Net (surplus) or deficit on the provision of services	44,529	30,041
Adjustments to net surplus or deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements:		
Depreciation, impairment and amortisation of non current assets	(31,194)	(22,496)
Revaluation (gains)/losses	8,629	(11,346)
Pension Fund adjustments	(34,059)	(32,530)
Carrying amount of Non-Current Assets Sold	(6,235)	(2,348)
Other non-cash movement	11,105	14,330
Increase/(Decrease) in Inventories (Stock)	(40)	(63)
Increase/(Decrease) in Debtors	7,841	1,775
(Increase)/Decrease in Creditors	(3,341)	(8,485)
(Increase)/Decrease in Provisions	2,156	490
Increase/(Decrease) in Long Term Debtors	(1,226)	(1,501)
	(46,363)	(62,173)
Adjustments for items included in the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities:		
Capital Grants credited to surplus or deficit on the provision of services	38,782	30,298
Proceeds from the disposal of non current assets	1,616	1,134
	40,398	31,432
Net cashflow from operating activities	38,564	(700)
Investing activities		
Purchase of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	28,185	33,537
Derease in short term and long term investments	(3,053)	2,424
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangibles	(1,616)	(1,134)
Proceeds from short term and long term investments	377	0
Other receipts from investing activities	(39,614)	(24,723)
Net cashflow from investing activities	(15,721)	10,104
Financing activities		
Other receipts from financing activities	(11,176)	(14,314)
Cash payments for liabilities relating to finance leases and PFI Contracts	1,553	1,839
Increase in short and long term borrowings	(9,777)	(4,437)
Net cashflow from financing activities	(19,400)	(16,912)
Net (increase) or decrease in cash and cash equivalents	3,443	(7,508)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	(15,589)	(8,081)
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	(12,146)	(15,589)
The cashflow for operating activities includes the following items:		
Interest received	(830)	(27)
Dividends received	(587)	(536)
Interest paid	3,342	2,927

Group Notes

The group notes are largely the same as those specified with the Council only statement, however there are some slight divergencies from these within the group as detailed below.

Group Note 1: Debtors

	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s
Central Government	13,582	8,026
Local Government	5,594	5,908
National Health Service	2,198	692
Local Taxation	14,207	13,087
Other entities and individuals	20,572	21,734
	56,153	49,447

Group Note 2: Cash and Cash Equivalents

	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s
Bank and Imprests	1,426	1,298
Cash Equivalents	15,240	30,680
Bank Overdraft	(4,520)	(16,389)
	12,146	15,589

Group Note 3: Short Term Creditors

	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s
Central Government	(15,908)	(14,656)
Local Government	(3,784)	(4,567)
National Health Service	(2,035)	(1,209)
Local Taxation	(2,852)	(4,852)
Other entities and individuals	(25,907)	(19,138)
	(50,487)	(44,423)

Note 4: Group Financial Instruments

The value of debtors and creditors reported in the tables below are solely those amounts meeting the definition of a financial instrument. The balances of debtors and creditors reported in the balance sheet also include balances which do not meet the definition of a financial instrument, such as tax-based debtors.

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

Financial Liabilities (at Amortised Cost)	Long Term		Short Term	
	31 March 2023	31 March 2022	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Loans	77,427	78,538	16,813	5,925
Bank Overdraft	0	0	4,520	16,389
Total Other Long-term Liabilities	6,793	8,056	251	578
Financial Liabilities Included in Creditors	272	198	44,362	35,653
Total Financial Liabilities	84,492	86,792	65,946	58,545

Financial Assets	Long Term		Short Term	
	31 March 2023 £000s	31 March 2022 £000s	31 March 2023 £000s	31 March 2022 £000s
Loans to Companies and for Service Purposes at Amortised Cost	146	267	94	524
At Fair Value Through Other Comprehensive Income	0	377	0	0
At Fair Value Through Profit & Loss	13,557	16,233	15,000	30,000
Cash and Cash Equivalents at Amortised Cost	0	0	1,666	1,978
Financial Assets at Amortised Cost Included in Debtors	0	0	30,152	24,084
Total Financial Assets	13,703	16,877	46,912	56,586

Responsibilities for the Annual Financial Statements

The Council's Responsibilities

The Council is required to:

- make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this Council, that officer is the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance;
- manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets;
- approve the Annual Financial Statements by the date specified by the Secretary of State.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance Responsibilities

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance is responsible for the preparation of the Council's Annual Financial Statements (and Group) in accordance with proper practice as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23, as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets.

In preparing the Annual Financial Statements, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- complied with the Local Authority Code of Practice.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance has also::

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

Certification of the accounts by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance

In accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, I certify that by signing this statement the Annual Financial Statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council (and Group) at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2023.



G Cummings CPFA

Date: 31 July 2023

Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance

These financial statements replace the unaudited financial statements certified by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance on 31 July 2023.

G Cummings CPFA

Date: 30 May 2024

Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance

Approval Of Statement Of Accounts

The Statement of Accounts was approved by Stockton Councils Audit and Governance Committee

Councillor Barry Woodhouse

Date: 30 May 2024

Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Report on the audit of the financial statements.

Opinion on the financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council ('the Council') and its subsidiaries ('the Group') for the year ended 31 March 2023, which comprise the Council and Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statements, the Council and Group Movement in Reserves Statements, the Council and Group Balance Sheets, the Council and Group Cash Flow Statements, the Collection Fund and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23, as amended by the Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes for Infrastructure Assets ('the Code Update'), published in November 2022.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council and the Group as at 31st March 2023 and of the Council's and the Group's expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 as amended by the Code update.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities section of our report. We are independent of the Council and Group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, and taking into account the requirements of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 as amended by the Code Update, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Council's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

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

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance's Responsibilities, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 as amended by the Code Update, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance is also responsible for such internal control as the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance is required to comply with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 as amended by the Code Update and prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, on the assumption that the functions of the Council will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance is responsible for assessing each year whether or not it is appropriate for the Council and Group to prepare its accounts on the going concern basis and disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. Based on our understanding of the Council, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to the Local Government Act 2003 (and associated regulations made under section 21), the Local Government Finance Acts of 1988, 1992 and 2012, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements.

To help us identify instances of non-compliance with these laws and regulations, and in identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect to non-compliance, our procedures included, but were not limited to:

- inquiring with management and the Audit and Governance Committee, as to whether the Council is in compliance with laws and regulations, and discussing their policies and procedures regarding compliance with laws and regulations;
- communicating identified laws and regulations throughout our engagement team and remaining alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout our audit; and
- considering the risk of acts by the Council and the Group which were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

We evaluated the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls) and determined that the principal risks were related to posting manual journal entries to manipulate financial performance, management bias through judgements and assumptions in significant accounting estimates and significant one-off or unusual transactions.

Our audit procedures in relation to fraud included but were not limited to:

- "making enquiries of management and the Audit and Governance Committee on whether they had knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- gaining an understanding of the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud;
- discussing amongst the engagement team the risks of fraud; and
- addressing the risks of fraud through management override of controls by performing journal entry testing.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of irregularities including fraud rests with management and the Audit and Governance Committee. As with any audit, there remained a risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal controls.

We are also required to conclude on whether the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance, Transformation & Performance's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate. We performed our work in accordance with Practice Note 10: Audit of financial statement and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom, and Supplementary Guidance Note 01, issued by the National Audit Office in February 2023.

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

Report on the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We are required to report to you if, in our view, we are not satisfied that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2023.

We have nothing to report in this respect.

Responsibilities of the Council

The Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

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

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

We have undertaken our work in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in January 2023.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception under the Code of Audit Practice

We are required by the Code of Audit Practice to report to you if:

- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we make a recommendation under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; or
- we exercise any other special powers of the auditor under sections 28, 29 or 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

We have nothing to report in these respects

Use of the audit report

This report is made solely to the members of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, as a body, in accordance with part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as set out in paragraph 44 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the members of the Council those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the members of the Council, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Delay in certification of completion of the audit

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate until we have completed the work necessary to issue our assurance statement in respect of the Council's Whole of Government Accounts consolidation pack.

Gavin Barker

Key Audit Partner

For and on behalf of Mazars LLP

The Corner, Bank Chambers,

26 Mosley Street

Newcastle Upon Tyne

NE1 1DF

Date to be Confirmed

Stockton Town Centre Regeneration

This incorporates the balance of funds being used by the Council to contribute to the Stockton Town Centre Regeneration project.

Approved Capital Schemes

To be used to assist the funding of capital expenditure in future years.

Fleet Renewals Fund

A reserve formed to cover the replacement of the Council's vehicle fleet.

Insurance Fund

The fund covers the insurance policy 'excess' on liability, motor and property claims. The 'excess' on liability covers any public, employers, officials and professional indemnity and libel and slander liability claims. A property 'excess' covers claims relating to property. The excess on motors covers claims relating to vehicles.

Commuted Lump Sums

These lump sums have been received to help cover the maintenance costs of bridges, play areas and open spaces, for which the Council has become responsible.

ICT Infrastructure

Reserve to develop workflow technologies and flexible working arrangements, as detailed within the Council's ICT Strategy

Government Grants Income In Advance

Reserve holding grants received by the Council whose conditions may require repayment if the grant conditions are not met. This is an International Financial Reporting Standard requirement.

Transformation & Implementation Reserve

Reserve to support the Council as it responds to current and future budget pressures. It will fund items such as redundancy costs and the transformation agenda.

MTFP Transition Reserve

A reserve created to assist in dealing with budget pressures that will arise of the life of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

ARCC Probation Service

Funds set aside to support the Tees Valley-wide Probation Service partnership.

Health and Integration

Includes the ring-fenced Public Health reserve and funds retained for future use on initiatives to support the Better Care Fund objectives and other health and social care projects.

Collection Fund Deficit Reserve

Due to collection fund accounting rules funding has been set aside to offset collection fund deficits in future years.

NNDR S31 Grant

Based on estimates, an upfront payment of compensation for the cost of these reliefs was given to local authorities via a Section 31 Grant in 2021/22. Due to Collection Fund accounting rules, the additional costs of reliefs resulted in a Collection Fund deficit in 2021/22. Therefore, the upfront payment received in 2021/22 was set aside in reserves at year end to offset this deficit in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Covid Recovery Funds

Funding for various schemes to support the Council in its Covid recovery.

Other Revenue Reserves, generally less than £2m and include:

Youth Offending

The reserve will be utilised to fund the Youth Offending Service, including the cost of inspection and other essential services, such as Regional Training Consortium and Developing Initiatives for Supporting Communities (DISC).

Xentrall

Stockton Borough Council's share of any surplus generated from the Xentrall partnership with Darlington Borough Council.

Learning & Skills Surplus

Learning & Skills offers apprenticeships, E2E training programmes and adult education courses across the borough. A specific reserve has been created to ringfence funding for future developments and restructuring as funding for these projects is not guaranteed to remain at the same levels.

Miscellaneous

This reserve contains other smaller amounts which will be utilised in future years.

Pooled Funds and Interest Rate Risk

To offset the risk of increased interest rate costs to the authority in the high interest environment and to mitigate any reduction in the value of the authority's long term pooled fund investment.

Town Centre Events / SIRF

Funding set aside to undertake increased activities during the forthcoming year.

Schools Related Reserves

Balances held by schools under a scheme of delegation

Balances retained by individual schools from their delegated budget.

Dedicated Schools Grant

Surplus on DSG spending over the previous two financial years. This is offset against the overall DSG deficit which is shown within the unusable reserves section of the balance sheet. See DSG note 24 for further information on the deficit.

Accruals

The concept that income and expenditure are recognised as they are earned or incurred, not as money is received or paid.

Amortised cost

The amount at which a financial asset or financial liability is measured at initial recognition, less principal repayments and plus or minus any unamortised original premium or discount. International Accounting Standard (IAS) 39 requires the amortised cost to be calculated using the effective interest method.

Capital Charge

A charge to service revenue accounts to reflect the cost of non current assets used in the provision of a service.

Capital Expenditure

Expenditure on the acquisition of a non current asset or expenditure designed to extend its useful life.

Community Assets

Assets that the Council intends to hold in perpetuity, that have no determinable useful life and that may have restrictions on their disposal. Examples of community assets are parks and historic buildings.

Consistency

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

Contingency

A condition which exists at the balance sheet date, where the outcome will be confirmed only on the occurrence or non occurrence of one or more uncertain future events.

Depreciation

The measure of the wearing out, consumption or other reduction in the useful economic life of a non current asset, whether arising from use, effluxion of time or obsolescence through technological or other changes.

Effective interest method

This is a method of calculating the amortised cost of a financial asset or financial liability, and of allocating the interest income or interest expense over the relevant period. The effective interest rate

in a financial instrument is the rate that exactly discounts the cash flows associated with the instrument to the net carrying amount at initial recognition.

Exceptional Items

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

Extraordinary Items

Material items, possessing a high degree of abnormality, which derive from events or transactions that fall outside the ordinary activities of the Council and which are not expected to recur. They do not include exceptional items, nor do they include prior period items, merely because they relate to a prior period.

Fair Value

The fair value of an asset is the price at which it could be exchanged in an arm's length transaction, less, where applicable, any grants receivable towards the purchase or use of the asset.

Finance Lease

A lease that transfers substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership of a non current asset to the lessee. Such a transfer of risks and rewards may be presumed to occur if at the inception of the lease the present value of the minimum lease payments, including any initial payment, amounts to substantially all of the fair value of the leased asset.

Going Concern

The concept that the Council will remain in operational existence for the foreseeable future, in particular that the revenue accounts and balance sheet assume no intention to curtail significantly the scale of operations.

Government Grants

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

Heritage Assets

Heritage assets are held in support of the primary objective of increasing the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the Council's history and local area. They include items such as works of art, museum collections and civic regalia.

Infrastructure Assets

Non current assets that are inalienable, expenditure on which is recoverable only by continued use of the asset created. Examples of infrastructure assets are highways and footpaths.

Inventories

Comprise the value of items held in the following categories:

- a) goods or other assets purchased for resale;
- b) consumable stores;
- c) raw materials and components purchased for incorporation into products for sale;
- d) products and services in intermediate stages of completion;
- e) long term contract balances; and
- f) finished goods.

Investments

A long term investment is an investment that is being held for use on a continuing basis in the activities of the Council. Investments should be so classified only where an intention to hold the investment for the long term can clearly be demonstrated or where there are restrictions as to the investor's ability to dispose of the investment. Investments which do not meet the above criteria are classified as current assets.

Investment Properties

Interest in land and/or buildings:

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

Long Term Contracts

A contract entered into for the design, manufacture or construction of a substantial asset or the provision of a service (or a combination of assets or services which together constitute a single project), where the time taken to substantially complete the contract is such that the contract activity falls into different accounting periods. Some contracts with a shorter duration

than one year should be accounted for as long term contracts, if they are sufficiently material to the activity of the period.

Net Book Value

The amount at which non current assets are included in the balance sheet i.e. the historical cost or current value, less the cumulative amounts provided for depreciation.

Net Current Replacement Cost

The cost of replacing or recreating the particular asset in its existing condition and in its existing use i.e. the costs of its replacement or of the nearest equivalent asset, adjusted to reflect the current condition of the existing asset.

Net Realisable Value

The open market value of the asset in its existing use (or open market value in the case of a non operational asset), less any expenses incurred in realising the asset.

Non Current Assets

Tangible assets that yield benefits to the Council and the services it provides for a period of more than one year.

Non Operational Assets

Non current assets held by a council but not directly occupied, used or consumed in the delivery of services. Examples of non-operational assets are investment properties and assets that are surplus to requirements, pending sale or redevelopment.

Operating Lease

A lease other than a finance lease.

Operational Assets

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

Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

An agreement with the private sector to design, build and operate facilities specified by an authority in return for an annual payment.

Post Balance Sheet Events

Those events, both favourable and unfavourable, which occur between the balance sheet date and the date on which the Statement of Accounts is signed by the responsible financial officer.

Prior Year Adjustments

Those material adjustments applicable to prior years, arising from changes in accounting policies or from the correction of fundamental errors. They do not include normal recurring corrections or adjustments of accounting estimates in prior years.

Prudence

The concept that revenue is not anticipated, but is recognised only when realised, in the form either of cash or of other assets, the ultimate cash realisation of which can be assessed with reasonable certainty.

Usable Reserves

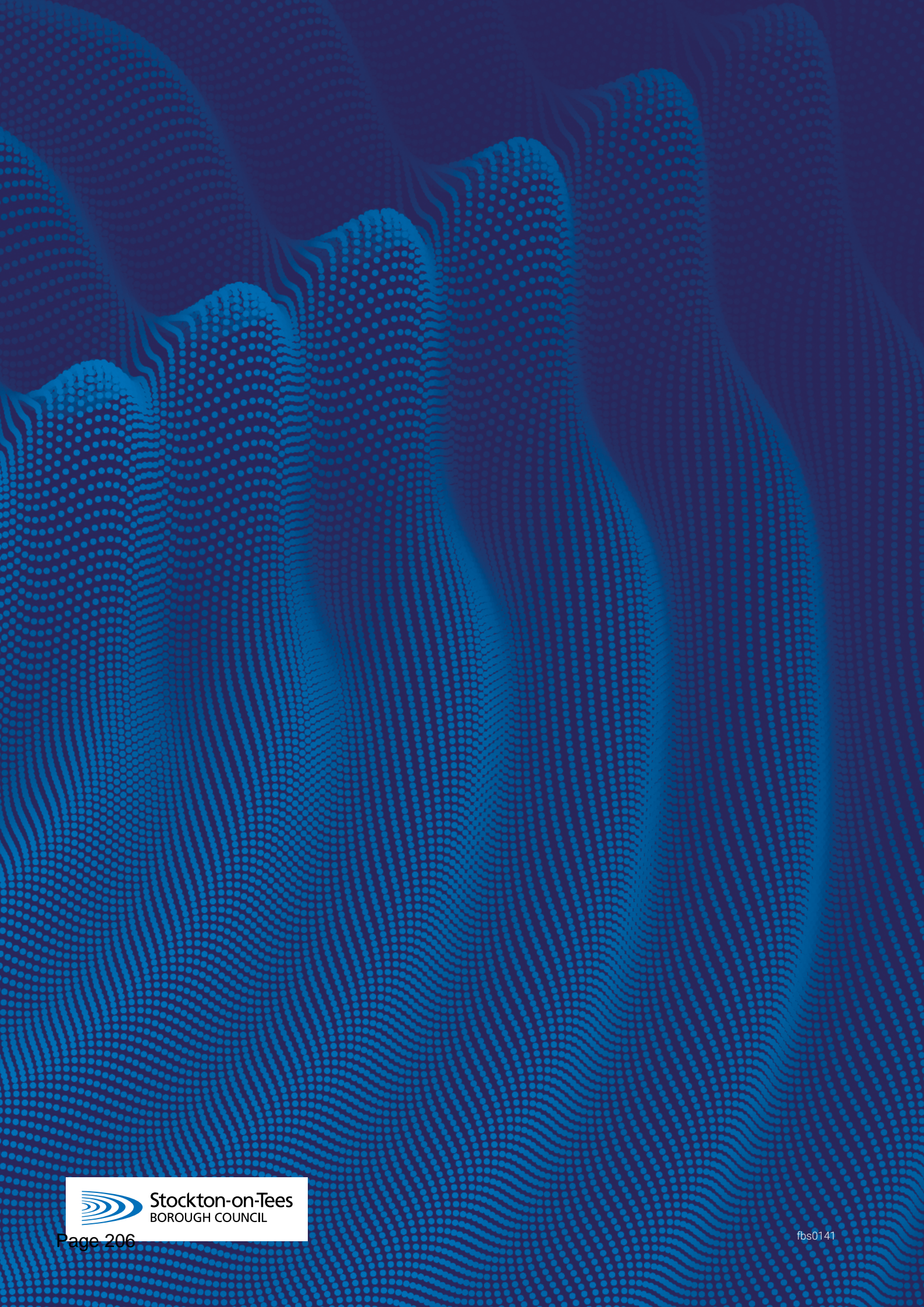
Amounts set aside to meet future costs, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use.

Unusable Reserves

Reserves that not available to spend; this category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line "Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations".

Useful Life

The period over which the Council will derive benefits from the use of a non current asset.



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Audit Committee Programme 2024/2025

Diary of Meetings & Work Programme

Date	Work Programme	
30-May-24	Health and Safety report Risk Register Update and Audit Activity Internal Audit Charter Work Programme 2024 - 2025 Annual Statement of Accounts 2022/23 - Final Annual Statement of Accounts 2023/24 - Draft prior to Audit Draft Annual Governance Statement Audit Certificate, 2021/22 Audit Audit Completion Report, 2022/23 Audit Auditor's Annual Report, DRAFT, 2022/23 Audit	To be Confirmed To be Confirmed To be Confirmed
29-Jul-24	Annual Financial Statements - Draft prior to Audit Draft Annual Governance Statement Health and Safety report External Audit - Audit Progress Report Risk Register Update and Audit Activity Work Programme 2024 - 2025	To be Confirmed To be Confirmed
30-Sep-24	Health and Safety report Annual Financial Statements - Approval after Audit Annual Governance Statement approval Treasury Management Annual Report External Audit - Audit Completion Report 2023/24 Risk Register Update and Audit Activity Work Programme 2024 - 2025	
25-Nov-24	External Audit - Audit Completion Report 2023/24 External Audit - Auditor's Annual Report Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy Treasury Management Mid Term Review Annual Report of the Audit Committee (For Discussion) Health and Safety report Risk Register Update and Audit Activity Work Programme 2024 - 2025	
24-Feb-25	Annual Report of the Audit Committee (Final) Constitutional Update if required External Audit - Audit Progress Report Risk Register Update and Audit Activity Internal Audit Charter Work Programme 2024 - 2025	

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