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Head of Legal and Democratic
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MEETING : AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE SUB-COMMITTEE
VENUE : COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD
DATE : THURSDAY 16 MARCH 2023
TIME : 10.00 AM

PLEASE NOTE TIME AND VENUE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Councillor Mark Pope (Chairman)
Councillors A Alder and R Fernando

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AGENDA

1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Members' Declarations of Interest.

3. Chairman's Announcements

4. Training - Statement of Accounts

5. Receipt of the External Auditor's Audit Results Report 2020/21 (Pages 5 - 57)

6. Approval of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts (Pages 58 - 168)

7. Urgent Items

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration and is not likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information.

East Herts Council Report

Audit and Governance Committee

Date of meeting: 16 March 2023

**Report by: Steven Linnett, Head of Strategic Finance & Property
(s.151 Officer)**

**Report title: Receipt of the External Auditor's Audit Results
Report 2020/21**

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary – The external auditor will present their Provisional Audit Results Report 2020/21 to the Committee setting out the final results of their delayed audit of the 2020/21 statement of accounts. The Committee received an Interim Audit Results Report 2020/21 at its meeting on 5th April 2022 ([Web Link to Interim Audit Results Report](#))

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:

- a)** Receive the external auditor's Audit Results Report 2020/21

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 The delayed 2020/21 statement of accounts audit has been substantially completed and the external auditor has issued a Final Audit Results Report setting out their audit work on the opinion on the 2020/21 statement of accounts, their assessment of risk and audit findings and indicative fee levels which will be decided by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. The statement of accounts approval follows on from this item on the agenda.

- 1.2 The report and proposals are the external auditors and whilst officers are consulted on factual accuracy, they have no ability to change anything in the report.
- 1.3 The external auditor's Audit Results Report for 2020/21 is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.4 Officers have agreed to amend the accounts due to an error in the Analyse Local software which is used by a majority of local authorities to assist with Business Rates appeals provisions and also to assist with revenue protection. The Analyse Local software incorrectly included yield losses in future years. The accounts have been adjusted and the Collection Fund Earmarked Reserve, which exists to smooth out unusual movements in financial years relating to appeals and provisions in the Collection Fund has been reduced by £325k so that there is a nil effect on the General Fund.
- 1.5 After the agreed adjustments were made to the accounts and the completion of final work over the last 12 months, the external auditor is now ready to give an unqualified audit opinion on the 2020/21 statement of accounts and an unqualified Value for Money conclusion.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended) require local authorities to publish their audited statement of accounts by 30 September 2021. The external auditor was unable to resource the audit and it did not begin until January 2022. The council was required to publish (which must include publication on the website) a notice stating that it has not been able to publish the statement of accounts and the reasons for this.
- 2.2 Only 9% of local authorities received an audit opinion by 30 September and Members will be aware of the virtual

collapse of the local audit system. Since the Provisional Audit Results Reports was considered in April 2022 almost a year has passed before the audit work was completed.

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 The external auditor is required by auditing standards to present the Committee with their Audit Results Report.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 Members can ask questions and make observations to the external auditor but they cannot reject the Provisional Audit Results Report.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 The delay to the completion of the audit by a further 12 months has placed strains on the finance team and for the second year running we have had to contend with producing a budget at the same time as dealing with audit queries. The audit of the 2021/22 accounts has begun but it is concerning that this work will overlap with the processes to close the 2022/23 accounts.
- 5.2 The production of the budget alongside the audit placed a huge strain on resources given that the finance team has vacancies and once again and required the Head of Strategic Finance & Property and senior officers in Finance to work long hours and led to the process, again, being both stressful and less than efficient. We also, due to the November ICT outage, missed an upgrade window for the Business Rates Income System which necessitated the forecast of Business Rates in 2023/24 to be compiled manually . This work required 12 business rates and reliefs calculations for all 4,886 hereditaments in the district to be completed. Again, this was a most unwelcome additional

work to assist colleagues in the Revenues Shared Service to produce the calculations for East Herts and Stevenage. As stated last year, this is not a sustainable position going forward and fundamentally the requirements for local authority accounts needs urgent simplification.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

These are contained in the main body of the report

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

These are contained in the main body of the report

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

No

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

Appendices:

Appendix A –Audit Results Report 2020/21

Background Papers:

None

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**East Hertfordshire District
Council
Audit Results Report**

Year ended 31 March 2021

2 February 2023



Audit and Governance Committee Members
East Hertfordshire District Council
Pegs Lane
Hertford
SG13 8EQ

2 February 2022

Dear Audit and Governance Committee Members

We are pleased to provide our final audit results report for our 2020/21 audit of East Hertfordshire District Council.

We have now completed the outstanding procedures detailed in our Provisional Audit Results Report, and this report provides an update on the additional findings arising from those procedures and our overall conclusions. Due to the number of matters outstanding at the time of our previous report, we do not highlight changes since our previous report and instead encourage that this report be taken in full.

We confirm that we expect to issue an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements in the form at Section 3. We also have no matters to report on your arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources.

This report is intended solely for the use of the Audit and Governance Committee, other members of the Council, and senior management. It should not be used for any other purpose or given to any other party without obtaining our written consent.

We would like to thank your staff for their help during the engagement.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the contents of this report with you at the next meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Hanson
For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP

Contents



Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) issued the "Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies". It is available from the PSAA website (<https://www.psaa.co.uk/audit-quality/statement-of-responsibilities/>). The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The "Terms of Appointment and further guidance (updated April 2018)" issued by the PSAA sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and in legislation, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This report is made solely to the Audit and Governance Committee and management of East Hertfordshire District Council in accordance with the statement of responsibilities. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Committee and management of East Hertfordshire District Council those matters we are required to state to them in this 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 Audit and Governance Committee and the management of East Hertfordshire District Council for this report or for the opinions we have formed. It should not be provided to any third-party without our prior written consent.



01

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Scope update

In our Audit Planning Report presented to the July 2021 to Audit and Governance Committee, we provided you with an overview of our audit scope and approach for the audit of the financial statements. We carried out our audit in accordance with this plan, with the following exceptions that were communicated in the provisional plan presented to the Audit and Governance Committee in April 2022:

- Accounting for new grants, including the Covid-related grants the council received from loss of income from sales, fees and charges - we reduced the scope of the grants risk noted above to higher inherent risk
- Calculation of Minimum Revenue Provision - no longer presented as a risk

Materiality: In our Audit Planning Report, we communicated that our audit procedures would be performed using a materiality of £1.48 million, with performance materiality, at 75% of overall materiality, of £1.11 million and a threshold for reporting misstatements, at 5% of overall materiality, of £0.074 million. Our materiality threshold was set at 2% of the Council's gross expenditure on provision of services. We have reassessed these thresholds during the course of our audit and are content they remain appropriate.

Information Produced by the Entity (IPE): As a result of Covid-19, we identified an increased risk around the completeness, accuracy, and appropriateness of information produced by the entity due to the inability of the audit team to verify original documents. We undertook the following to address this risk:

- Used the screen sharing function of Microsoft Teams to evidence re-running of reports used to generate the IPE we audited; and
- Agree IPE to scanned documents or other system screenshots.

Status of the audit

Our audit work is now complete and we will issue our audit opinion once the accounts have been approved.



Executive Summary

Auditor responsibilities under the new Code of Audit Practice 2020

Under the Code of Audit Practice 2020 we are still required to consider whether the Council has put in place 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources. The 2020 Code requires the auditor to design their work to provide them with sufficient assurance to enable them to report to East Hertfordshire District Council a commentary against specified reporting criteria (see below) on the arrangements the East Hertfordshire District Council has in place to secure value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of its resources for the relevant period.

The specified reporting criteria are:

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

Status of the audit - Value for money

In the Audit Planning Report and subsequent update to the Audit Committee, we reported that we had substantially completed our value for money (VFM) work and not identified any risk of significant weakness against the three reporting criteria we are required to consider under the NAO's 2020 Code. We have revisited our assessment on completion of the audit of the financial statements and remain satisfied that we have not identified any significant weaknesses and have completed our planned VFM procedures.

As a result, we have no matters to report by exception in the auditor's report (see Section 03). We will include our detailed commentary on our VFM work in our Auditor's Annual Report which will be issued to the Council three months after the date of the final 2020/21 audit opinion for the Council.

Executive Summary

Audit differences

- Our audit identified a number of uncorrected misstatements resulting in the net overstatement of non-current assets by £0.233 million, net overstatement of noncurrent liabilities by £0.238 million, understatement of other comprehensive expenditure by £0.005 million and overstatement of expenditure by £0.009 million.
- We also identified a number of misstatements which management have corrected with an aggregate impact of £0.315 million decrease in expenditure, £0.124 million net increase in other comprehensive income, £1.674 million net increase in liabilities and £2.516 million decrease in unusable reserves.
- Corrected misstatements also include the following classification errors:
 - between cash (understated) and receivables (overstated) amounting to £1.3 million,
 - between property, plant and equipment (other land and buildings) (overstated) and property, plant and equipment (assets under construction) (understated) amounting to £0.5 million
 - between the revaluation reserve (overstated) and capital adjustment account (understated) amounting to £0.972 million
- Several disclosure misstatements were also identified which management agreed to correct. The significant ones which also required a correction of a misstatement of prior year figures related to:
 - Note 32 (leases) where we noted an understatement in the future minimum lease payments receivable under non-cancellable leases amounting to £22 million and
 - Note 7 (property, plant and equipment) where the opening balances of gross cost and accumulated depreciation were restated to correct an overstatement of £30.899 million as at 31 March 2020 and £29.273 million as at 1 April 2019. Since these net off, the net balance of other land and buildings is not materially misstated.
- The Council is also applying the statutory override instrument on infrastructure assets which required the presentation of this PPE category on a net book value basis.

See further details in Section 04.

Other reporting issues

We have reviewed the information presented in the Annual Governance Statement for consistency with our knowledge of the Council. We have no matters to report as a result of this work. We have no other matters to report.

Control observations

Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control we are required to communicate to you internal controls that require certain improvements and have three matters to report to you. Please refer to Section 07 for our detailed findings and recommendations.

Independence

Please refer to Section 09 for our update on Independence.



Executive Summary

Areas of audit focus

In our Audit Planning Report, we identified a number of key areas of focus for our audit of the financial report of East Hertfordshire District Council. This report sets out our observations and status in relation to these areas, as amended per our scope update, including our views on areas which might be conservative and areas where there is potential risk and exposure. Our consideration of these matters and others identified during the period is summarised within the "Areas of Audit Focus" section of this report.

Fraud Risk	Findings & Conclusions
Misstatements due to fraud or error	We have completed our audit work in respect of journal entries, estimates and unusual transactions. We have not identified any indications of management override of controls.
Incorrect capitalisation of revenue expenditure	We have completed our audit work on capital additions (including REFCUS considerations) and have not identified any misstatements.
Valuation of property, plant and equipment and investment properties	We have completed our audit work on property, plant and equipment and investment properties valuation. We have identified a judgmental difference in the value of Charringtons House recorded as other land and buildings, resulting in an overstatement in value by £0.354 million. Management have not corrected for this error. We also identified a classification error between property, plant and equipment (other land and building) and property, plant and equipment (assets under construction) amounting to £0.5 million. Management have corrected for this error.
Going concern disclosure	We received the going concern assessment and cash flow forecast from the Council on 30 November 2022. We have now completed our audit work in this area, including review of cashflow forecast of the Council up to March 2024. Based on the work undertaken we are satisfied that management's assessment on going concern is adequate and supportable.
Pension liability valuation	We have completed our work on this area, including the review of the assumptions used by the actuary in the calculation of pension liability and the review of response from the pension fund auditor seeking assurance on the value of pension fund assets. The pension fund auditor identified an unadjusted increase in valuation of pension fund assets. The Council's share of the misstatement was £0.238 million. Management have not corrected for this error. In addition to the completion of the above procedures, the Council made us aware that there was an error in the actuary's IAS19 report and the net pension liabilities reported in this. This was due to the incorrect treatment of assets related to Hertfordshire Building Control (HBC) at outset of HBC's participation in the Hertfordshire Pension Fund (HPF). We performed additional procedures on this area which are detailed in section 2 of this report. The impact of the error was an understatement of net pension fund liability by £2.516 million as at 31 March 2020 and £2.450 million at 31 March. Management have corrected for this error.

Executive Summary

Areas of audit focus (continued)

In our Audit Planning Report, we identified a number of key areas of focus for our audit of the financial report of East Hertfordshire District Council. This report sets out our observations and status in relation to these areas, as amended per our scope update, including our views on areas which might be conservative and areas where there is potential risk and exposure. Our consideration of these matters and others identified during the period is summarised within the "Areas of Audit Focus" section of this report.

Area of audit focus	Findings & Conclusions
Business rates appeals provision	We have completed our work on this area and identified a formulaic error in the specialist's calculation of the provision as of 31 March 2021. This resulted in an overstatement of the appeals provision by £2.4 million at an all preceptors level, with the Council share being overstated by £0.966 million. Management have corrected for this error.
Group Accounting	We have completed our work in respect of group accounting. We have identified an error in the group cash flow statement where the impact of additional loan granted by the Council to Millstream was not eliminated. This resulted in overstatement of cash outflow in investing activities, and overstatement of cash inflow in financing activities by £2.7 million. Management have corrected for this error. We also identified minor disclosure errors such as undisclosed investment property balances in group notes and external audit fee note.
Recognition of grant income associated with Covid-19 (includes sales fees and charges and other Covid-19 funding streams)	We have completed our work on this area and have not identified any issues.

We request that you review these and other matters set out in this report to ensure:

- ▶ There are no residual further considerations or matters that could impact these issues
- ▶ You concur with the resolution of the issue
- ▶ There are no further significant issues you are aware of to be considered before the financial report is finalised

There are no matters, other than those reported by management or disclosed in this report, which we believe should be brought to the attention of the Audit and Governance Committee or Management.



02

Areas of Audit Focus

Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Misstatements due to fraud or error

What is the risk?

The financial statements as a whole are not free of material misstatements whether caused by fraud or error.

As identified in ISA (UK) 240, management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of its ability to manipulate accounting records directly or indirectly and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. We identify and respond to this fraud risk on every audit engagement.

What judgements are we focused on?

We focused our testing on accounting estimates which include pension liability, property valuation, and NNDR appeals provision. We also perform mandatory procedures including testing of journal entries. We identified a specific fraud risks relate to the inappropriate capitalisation of expenditure and details of our response to this risk are set out on the next page.

What did we do?

This is a risk that we recognise on all engagements. Our overall response to this for East Hertfordshire District Council was:

- ▶ Assessment to identify fraud risks during the planning stages.
- ▶ Inquired management about risks of fraud and the controls put in place to address those risks.
- ▶ Understood the oversight given by those charged with governance of management's processes over fraud.
- ▶ Considered the effectiveness of management's controls designed to address the risk of fraud.
- ▶ Determined an appropriate strategy to address those identified risks of fraud.
- ▶ Performed mandatory procedures regardless of specifically identified fraud risks, including testing of journal entries and other adjustments in the preparation of the financial statements, assessing accounting estimates for evidence of management bias and evaluating the business rationale for significant and unusual transactions.

We have utilised our data analytics capabilities to assist with our work.

What are our conclusions?

We have completed our audit work in respect of journal entries, estimates and unusual transactions, including reviews from Manager and Partner.

We have not identified any material weaknesses in controls or evidence of material management override.

We have not identified any instances of inappropriate judgements being applied.

We did not identify any transactions during our audit which appeared unusual or outside the Council's normal course of business.



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure

What is the risk?

Linking to our risk of misstatements due to fraud and error above, we have considered the capitalisation of revenue expenditure on property, plant and equipment as a specific area of risk given the extent of the Council's capital programme.

What judgements are we focused on?

Whether expenditure which management have classified expenditure as capital in nature meets the definition of capital in line with IAS16.

What did we do?

We have undertaken additional procedures to address the specific risk we have identified, which included:

- For significant additions to property, plant and equipment, we have examined invoices, capital expenditure authorisations, leases and other data that support these additions. We have ensure that they have been correctly classified as capital in line with accounting standards and included at the correct value in order to identify any revenue items that have been inappropriately capitalised.
- We have extended our testing of items capitalised in the year by lowering our testing threshold. We have also review a random sample of capital additions below our testing threshold.
- Considered whether there was a risk related to revenue costs being inappropriately classified as Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute (REFCUS). We concluded that, as the amount of REFCUS (at £248k) was below our materiality there was no risk and we did not perform any further testing.
- Journal testing - we have used our testing of journals to identify high risk transactions, such as items originally recorded as revenue expenditure and subsequently capitalised.

What are our conclusions?

We have completed our audit work on capital additions including reviews from Manager and Partner.

We have not identified any revenue items that have been inappropriately capitalised from our substantive testing.



Areas of Audit Focus

Inherent risks and other areas of audit focus

What is the risk/area of focus?

Valuation of property, plant and equipment (PPE) and investment property

As the Council's asset base is significant (44 million PPE and 9 million investment property), and the outputs from the internal valuer are subject to estimation, there is a higher inherent risk PPE may be under/overstated or the associated accounting entries incorrectly posted. ISAs (UK and Ireland) 500 and 540 require us to undertake procedures on the use of experts and assumptions underlying fair value estimates.

What have we done?

We have:

- ▶ Disaggregated the Council's property, plant and equipment and investment property and adopted different testing strategies.
- ▶ For specialist assets such as leisure facilities which typically are valued on the basis of depreciated replacement cost (DRC) we tested 2 sample of valuations, challenging the Council on key assumptions and base data such as agreeing floor areas back to original documentation, BCIS rates used, land area, land values and obsolescence rates.
- ▶ For non-specialist assets such as offices and car parks, which are typically valued on an Existing Use Valuation (EUV) basis, and investment properties which are based on fair value, we tested 12 samples of PPE and 4 samples of Investment Properties. We also engaged our own expert (EYRE) who tested one sample. We challenged the key assumptions by agreeing the income used to invoices and market rent, traced the number of years in the calculation to lease agreements, and inspected floor plans for site area used.

Our conclusions

- ▶ We have now completed our audit work in this area, including receipt and review of our internal valuation specialists report. We engaged our valuations specialist (EY Real Estates) to review a sample of 2 assets: Hillcrest hostel (PPE) and Charringtons House (split between PPE and investment property). We verified the reasonableness of the valuation methodology applied and key assumptions used.
- ▶ We noted that the overall value of Charringtons House determined by Council (combined PPE and investment property elements) is within the range determined by EY Real Estates.
- ▶ We also compared the Council's split of the asset value between PPE and investment property to the value ranges determined by our specialist for these two elements. The Council's investment property element value of £1.5 million falls within the range of £1.5 to £2.3 million estimated by EY Real Estates. However, the PPE element, valued by the Council at £0.9 million is outside the range determined by our valuer by £0.4 million.
- ▶ We discussed this with management who concluded that since this is a difference of opinion between the two valuers and the amount is not material, no adjustment will be made.
- ▶ We also identified a classification error within PPE. Northgate End car park, which is valued at £0.5 million, was classified in the fixed assets register as 'other land and buildings'. However, we were informed by management that as of 31 March 2021, the site was being developed into the new multi-storey car park. Hence, at year-end, this asset was under construction. Management agreed to move this asset to assets under construction.
- ▶ We also identified that the Council had not been complying with some aspects the Cipfa Code in terms of capital accounting. The Code requires that if the change in value of an asset is supported by a formal valuation by a professional, then the gross value is recognised and any previously accumulated depreciation and impairment balances should be written out. The Council has not been doing this. This has resulted in opening balances for gross cost and accumulated depreciation being overstated by £30.899 million at 31 March 2020 and £29.273 million at 1 April 2019. The net balance is not materially misstated. This has also resulted in the understatement of the Capital Adjustment Account and Revaluation Reserve by £0.972 million.



Areas of Audit Focus

Inherent risks and other areas of audit focus

What is the risk/area of focus?

Pension liability valuation and disclosures

The Council's pension fund deficit is a material estimated balance and the Code requires that this liability be disclosed on the Council's balance sheet. At 31 March 2021, this totalled £35 million (31 March 2020 - £21.6 million).

The information disclosed is based on the IAS 19 report issued to the Council by the actuary to the County Council.

Accounting for this scheme involves significant estimation and judgement and therefore management engages an actuary to undertake the calculations on their behalf. ISAs (UK and Ireland) 500 and 540 require us to undertake procedures on the use of management experts and the assumptions underlying fair value estimates.

What have we done and our conclusions?

To address this risk, we have carried out a range of procedures including:

- ▶ Liaising with the auditors of Hertfordshire Pension Fund, to obtain assurances over the information supplied to the actuary in relation to East Hertfordshire District Council.
- ▶ Assessing the work of the Pension Fund actuary (Hymans Robertson) including the assumptions they have used by relying on the work of PWC - Consulting Actuaries commissioned by The National Audit Office for all Local Government sector auditors, and considering the reviews of this undertaken by the EY actuarial team;
- ▶ Reviewing and testing the accounting entries and disclosures made within the Council's financial statements in relation to IAS19.

ISA540 (revised) requires auditors to test the method of measurement of accounting estimates to determine whether the model is appropriately designed, consistently applied and mathematically accurate, and that the integrity of the assumptions and the data has been maintained in applying the model. Neither we, nor PWC as consulting actuaries commissioned by the NAO for all local government sector audits, are able to access the detailed models of the actuaries in order to evidence these requirements. Therefore, we modified our planned approach and undertook alternate procedures to create an auditor's estimate, to provide a different method of gaining assurance. We employed the services of an EY Pensions specialist to review the Council's IAS19 reports and run a parallel actuarial model which was compared to that produced by the Council's actuary.

We reviewed the EY Pensions specialist's report and concluded that there are no material differences in the balances calculated by the actuary and the balance by the EY Pensions specialist.

We also reviewed the response communicated by the Hertfordshire Pension Fund auditor and noted that there is an unadjusted increase in valuation of pension fund assets. The Council's share of this difference was £0.238 million. We discussed this with management and they concluded that due to the amount involved, they will not adjust for this.

Areas of Audit Focus

Inherent risks and other areas of audit focus

What have we done?

Pension liability valuation and disclosures (continued)

In addition to the completion of the procedures in the previous page, the Council made us aware that there was an error in the actuary's IAS19 report and the net pension liabilities reported in this. This was due to the incorrect treatment of assets related to Hertfordshire Building Control (HBC) at outset of HBC's participation in the Hertfordshire Pension Fund (HPF). Below is a brief summary of this issue and impact on East Hertfordshire District Council's accounts.

Background:

In 2017, when HBC began participation in the HPF, assets were allocated to HBC from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) rather than from each of the seven originating councils. As a result, since this date, asset shares for HCC have been understated, with asset shares for the seven originating councils correspondingly overstated.

In addition to this, another adjustment which impacts the balances of fund assets and liabilities was communicated by the actuary - employers were not meant to be pooled with certain employers. This includes NSL Limited, one of the admitted bodies to the Hertfordshire Pension Scheme, which was initially pooled with EHDC.

Impact for the Council

- Whilst the transfer of HBC took place in 2017, the first IAS19 accounting reports to be affected were those at 31 March 2020. This is because the accounting reports are based on a rollforward of the most recent formal valuation for the Fund, so those up to and including the 31 March 2019 accounting reports were based on a rollforward from the 31 March 2016 formal valuation.

What have we done and our conclusions?

- We have obtained updated IAS 19 reports from the actuary Hyman's Robertson who have corrected the error and the impact is as follows:
 - 31st March 2020: £2.516 million understatement of net pension liability
 - 31st March 2021: £2.450 million understatement of net pension liability
- This error was due to the work of the Council's actuary and was not identified by management or the audit team in the prior year, as reliance was placed on the work of the actuary as a management specialist.
- The Council has been assured by the actuary that this was a one-off communication error. Hymans Robertson have strengthened their systems as part of their continual improvements to client services, to remove the chance of error impacting the process again.
- We have engaged EY Pensions who have liaised with Hyman's Robertson to provide a review of the liabilities and asset transfers for the Council relating to this issue.
- The other adjustment relating to NSL Ltd was then confirmed with the actuary to relate to the fund assets and liabilities which had been incorrectly pooled with the Council. This is included in the £2.450 million adjustment above (although the vast majority of this relates to the HBC issue)
- Considering the impact of the misstatement on the balances of net pension liability as at 31 March 2021 and 2020, management have corrected the current year balances as well as the prior period comparatives.

No other issues identified.



Areas of Audit Focus

Inherent risks and other areas of audit focus

What is the risk/area of focus?

Going concern disclosures

Covid-19 has created a number of financial pressures throughout Local Government. It is creating financial stress through a combination of increasing service demand leading to increased expenditure in specific services, and reductions in income sources. There is currently not a clear statement of financial support from MHCLG that covers all financial consequences of Covid-19.

In addition, the auditing standard, International Auditing Standard 570 Going Concern, has been revised in response to enforcement cases and well-publicised corporate failures where the auditor's report failed to highlight concerns about the prospects of entities which collapsed shortly after.

The revised standard is effective for audits of financial statements for periods commencing on or after 15 December 2019, which for the Council will be the audit of the 2020/21 financial statements.

CIPFA's Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 states that an Council's financial statements shall be prepared on a going concern basis; the accounts should be prepared on the assumption that the functions of the Council will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and can only be discontinued under statutory prescription.

However, ISA 570, as applied by Practice Note 10: Audit of financial statements of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom, still requires auditors to undertake sufficient and appropriate audit procedures to consider whether there is a material uncertainty on going concern that requires reporting by management within the financial statements, and within the auditor's report.

To do this, the auditor must review management's assessment of the going concern basis applying IAS1 Presentation of Financial Statements.

What have we done and our conclusions?

The revised standard requires:

- ▶ auditor's challenge of management's identification of events or conditions impacting going concern, more specific requirements to test management's resulting assessment of going concern, an evaluation of the supporting evidence obtained which includes consideration of the risk of management bias;
- ▶ greater work for us to challenge management's assessment of going concern, thoroughly test the adequacy of the supporting evidence we obtained and evaluate the risk of management bias. Our challenge will be made based on our knowledge of the Council obtained through our audit, which will include additional specific risk assessment considerations which go beyond the current requirements;
- ▶ ensuring compliance with any updated reporting requirements;
- ▶ a stand back requirement to consider all of the evidence obtained, whether corroborative or contradictory, when we draw our conclusions on going concern; and
- ▶ necessary consideration regarding the appropriateness of financial statement disclosures around going concern.

We have now completed our audit work in this area. Management provided their the going concern assessment and the related cash flow forecast up to March 2024 on 30 November 2022.

We have now completed our review of the cashflow forecast and, based on the work undertaken, we are satisfied that management's assessment on going concern is adequate and supportable. We also reviewed the Council's disclosures within the financial statements and have assessed the need for any internal consultation. We have concluded that there is no need for any internal consultation as we have assessed the risk involved with management's use of going concern basis to be low.

We have no matters to report.

Areas of Audit Focus

Inherent risks and other areas of audit focus

What is the risk/area of focus?

Business rates appeals provision

The business rates appeals provision of £4.5 million (31 March 2020 - 2.5 million) includes not only claims up to 31 March 2021, but claims that relate to earlier periods and is subject to estimation.

As appeals are made to the Valuation Office, the Council may not be aware of the level of claims lodged. The Council may also find it difficult to obtain sufficient information to establish a reliable estimate.

Due to the level of estimation, size of the balance and the complexity of this provision we have included it as an area of risk for this year.

What have we done and our conclusions?

We have:

- ▶ Reviewed the Council's methodology underpinning the provision for business rate appeals to ensure it has been calculated on a reasonable basis in line with IAS 37;
- ▶ Ensured the provision is supported by appropriate evidence and that the level of estimation uncertainty is adequately disclosed; and
- ▶ Reviewed the completeness of the provision.

Our work is complete. We have identified an error in the business rate appeals provision performed by the specialist Analyse Local. This was due to a national issue identified concerning the Analyse Local threats report used in the calculation of the 2020/21 NDR appeals provision. The reports show total yield loss for the 2017 list but incorrectly includes yield losses until 2022/23, thereby overstating the provision by £2.4 million in the Collection Fund at an all preceptors level, with the Council's share calculated at £0.966 million. Management have corrected for the error in the Collection Fund Statement and the Council accounts.



Areas of Audit Focus

Inherent risks and other areas of audit focus

What is the risk/area of focus?

Group accounting

The Council prepares group accounts due to the consolidation of the Millstream Property Investments Limited financial statements with the single entity Council financial statements. We identified this as an inherent risk as this can be a complex area of accounting.

What have we done and our conclusions?

We have:

- ▶ Reviewed the group assessment prepared by the Council, ensuring that the accounting framework and accounting policies are aligned to the East Hertfordshire District Council Group;
- ▶ Scoped the audit requirements for Millstream Property Investment Limited based on their significance to the Group Accounts. The in-scope accounts identified are investment property and non-current liabilities.
- ▶ Liaised with the external auditor of Millstream Property Investment Limited to confirm their independence from the component.
- ▶ Ensured the appropriate consolidation procedures and the Code of Practice are applied when preparing the Group Accounts; and
- ▶ Tested a sample of investment properties owned by Millstream Property Investments Limited by comparing the values to market data.
- ▶ Tested a sample of non-current loans and recalculated the balances as of 31 March 2021 based on loan agreements.

We have completed our audit work on group accounts including reviews from Manager and Partner.

We have identified an error in the group cash flow statement where the impact of additional loan granted by the Council to Millstream was not eliminated. This resulted in overstatement of cash outflow in investing activities, and overstatement of cash inflow in financing activities by £2.7 million.

We also identified minor disclosure errors. The investment property note in the notes to group accounts did not show the balances for Millstream although the balance is £5.1 million. The notes to group accounts also do not include an external audit fee note which is a required disclosure. These have been corrected by Management.

Areas of Audit Focus

Inherent risks and other areas of audit focus

What is the risk/area of focus?

Recognition of grant income associated with Covid-19 (includes sales fees and charges and other Covid-19 funding streams)

Central Government has provided a number of new and different Covid-19 related grants to local authorities during the year. There are also funds that have been provided for the Council to distribute to other bodies. Total grants received related to Covid was £60.8 million).

The Council needs to review each of these grants to establish how they should be accounted for. The Council needs to assess whether it is acting as a principal or agent, with the accounting to follow that decision. Where the decision is that the Council is a principal, it must also assess whether there are any initial conditions that may also affect the recognition of the grants as revenue during 2020/21.

What have we done and our conclusions?

We have:

- ▶ Considered the revenue and capital grants received by the Council;
- ▶ Responsive to the risk, carried out testing to ensure the accounting treatment and recognition applied to grant income is appropriate.
- ▶ For a sample of the grant population we have:
 - Reviewed the Council's assessment of whether it is acting as principal or agent;
 - Reviewed whether any initial conditions are attached to grants impacting their recognition;
 - Assessed whether the accounting appropriately follows those judgements.

We have also checked that the Council has adequately disclosed grant income received in the year, under both principal and agent arrangements.

We have completed our audit work on these procedures including reviews from Manager and Partner, and did not identify any issues.



03 Audit Report

Draft audit report

Our draft opinion on the financial statements

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of East Hertfordshire District Council for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The financial statements comprise the:

- Authority and Group Movement in Reserves Statement,
- Authority and Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement,
- Authority and Group Balance Sheet,
- Authority and Group Cash Flow Statement
- the related notes 1 to 37 and notes to the Group Accounts 1 to 5
- Collection Fund and the related notes 1 to 4

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 2020/21.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of East Hertfordshire District Council and the Group as at 31 March 2021 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

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 for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the 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 the Comptroller and Auditor General's (C&AG) AGN01, 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 Head of Strategic Finance and Property's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

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

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Head of Strategic Finance and Property with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report. However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this statement is not a guarantee as to the authority's ability to continue as a going concern.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts 2020-21, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Head of Strategic Finance and Property is responsible for the other information contained within the statement of accounts.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

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 course of 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 themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of the other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we report by exception

We report to you if:

- in our opinion the annual governance statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information forthcoming from the audit or our knowledge of the [Authority](#);
- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we make written recommendations to the audited body under Section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we make an application to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we are not satisfied that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2021.

We have nothing to report in these respects



Audit Report

Our opinion on the financial statements

Responsibility of the Head of Strategic Finance and Property

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Head of Strategic Finance and Property Responsibilities set out on pages [xxx], the Head of Strategic Finance and Property 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 2020/21, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and for such internal control as the Head of Strategic Finance and Property Responsibilities determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Head of Strategic Finance and Property Responsibilities is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Authority either intends to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Authority 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 audit of the financial statements

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

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect irregularities, including fraud. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both those charged with governance of the entity and management.

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Authority and determined that the most significant are:
 - Local Government Act 1972,
 - Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 1992),
 - Local Government Act 2003,
 - The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended in 2018 and 2020,
 - Planning Act 2008 and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (SI 2010/948),
 - The Local Government Finance Act 2012,
 - The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, and
 - The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

In addition, the Authority has to comply with laws and regulations in the areas of anti-bribery and corruption, data protection, employment legislation, tax legislation, general power of competence, procurement and health and safety.

- We understood how East Hertfordshire District Council is complying with those frameworks by understanding the incentive, opportunities and motives for non-compliance, including inquiring of management, head of internal audit, those charged with governance and monitoring officer, and obtaining and reading documentation relating to the procedures in place to identify, evaluate and comply with laws and regulations, and whether they are aware of instances of non-compliance. We corroborated this through our reading of the Authority's committee minutes, inspection of internal control reports, risk registers and other information. Based on this understanding we designed our audit procedures to identify non-compliance with such laws and regulations. Our procedures had a focus on compliance with the accounting framework through obtaining sufficient audit evidence in line with the level of risk identified and with relevant legislation.
- We assessed the susceptibility of the Authority's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur by understanding the potential incentives and pressures for management to manipulate the financial statements, and performed procedures to understand the areas in which this would most likely arise. Based on our risk assessment procedures, we identified manipulation of reported financial performance through improper capitalisation of revenue expenditure and management override of controls to be our fraud risks.
- To address our fraud risk of inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure, we tested the Authority's capitalised expenditure to ensure the capitalisation criteria were properly met and the expenditure was genuine.
- To address our fraud risk of management override of controls, we tested specific journal entries identified by applying risk criteria to the entire population of journals. For each journal selected, we tested specific transactions back to source documentation to confirm that the journals were authorised and accounted for appropriately.

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

Scope of the review of arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice 2020, having regard to the guidance on the specified reporting criteria issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) in April 2021, as to whether East Hertfordshire District Council had proper arrangements for financial sustainability, governance and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Comptroller and Auditor General determined these criteria as those necessary for us to consider under the Code of Audit Practice in satisfying ourselves whether the East Hertfordshire District Council put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Audit Report

Our opinion on the financial statements

We planned our work in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice. Based on our risk assessment, we undertook such work as we considered necessary to form a view on whether, in all significant respects, East Hertfordshire District Council had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

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 Authority's Whole of Government Accounts consolidation pack. We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on the financial statements or our work on value for money arrangements.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the members of East Hertfordshire District Council, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and for no other purpose, as set out in paragraph 43 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and the Authority's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Debbie Hanson (Key Audit Partner)
Ernst & Young LLP (Local Auditor)
Luton
Date



04 Audit Differences

Audit Differences

In the normal course of any audit, we identify misstatements between amounts we believe should be recorded in the financial statements and the disclosures and amounts actually recorded. These differences are classified as “known” or “judgemental”. Known differences represent items that can be accurately quantified and relate to a definite set of facts or circumstances. Judgemental differences generally involve estimation and relate to facts or circumstances that are uncertain or open to interpretation.

Summary of Corrected Audit Differences

We highlight the following misstatements greater than the performance materiality of £1.1 million which have been identified during the course of our audit.

- A prior year error in which resulted in understatement of pension liability by £2.516 million as of 31 March 2020 due to the incorrect allocation of pension fund assets by the actuary to the members of the scheme. The error also impacts on figures for 31 March 2021, with an understatement of £2.450 million.
- Overstatement of business rate appeals provision by £2.4 million at an all preceptors level, with the Council share calculated as £0.966 million. Our audit work identified an error in the specialist's calculation of the provision whereby the reports show total yield loss for the 2017 list incorrectly includes yield losses until 2022/23. Taxation and non-specific grant income and creditors are also overstated by £0.592 million which equates to the impact of the decrease in provision to collection fund deficit, income tax guarantee and levy
- Overstatement of debtors balance and understatement of cash balance by £1.3 million due to a reclassification error between the accounts
- Error in classification of other land and buildings and assets under construction by £0.5 million
- Understatement of Capital Adjustment Account and Understatement of Revaluation Reserve by £0.972 million due to failure to reverse a previous impairment loss charged on the asset in case of in-year increase in value of other land and buildings.
- An error in the group cash flow statement where the impact of additional loan granted by the Council to Millstream was not eliminated. This resulted in overstatement of cash outflow in investing activities, and overstatement of cash inflow in financing activities by £2.7 million.

We also identified the following error which does not impact the primary statements but only the disclosure notes:

- On leases, the noted an understatement in the future minimum lease payments receivable under non-cancellable leases amounting to £22 million due to the incorrect lease period indicated in the operating leases schedule. The schedule noted the lease to have a remaining lease period of 118 years when the actual remainder of the lease is 236 years.
- On PPE, the opening balances of gross cost and accumulated depreciation were restated to correct the overstatement of £30.899 million as at 31 March 2020 and £29.273 million as at 1 April 2019. Since these net off, the net balance of other land and buildings is not materially misstated.

We have also identified a small number of minor disclosure differences in notes to the financial statements (casting, referencing, classification etc) which management have agreed to amend.



Audit Differences

In the normal course of any audit, we identify misstatements between amounts we believe should be recorded in the financial statements and the disclosures and amounts actually recorded. These differences are classified as “known” or “judgemental”. Known differences represent items that can be accurately quantified and relate to a definite set of facts or circumstances. Judgemental differences generally involve estimation and relate to facts or circumstances that are uncertain or open to interpretation.

Summary of Corrected Audit Differences

The Council was also impacted by a national issue which was identified in early 2022 in relation to accounting for infrastructure assets. The issue is that many local authorities were not writing out the gross cost and accumulated depreciation on infrastructure assets in line with the CIPFA Code requirements when a major part/component had been replaced or decommissioned. The issue arises principally because detailed information is not always available for these assets to meet the needs of accounting standards. Since this issue was identified, there has been a national focus on this and as a result a Statutory Override and CIPFA Code update were issued in late December 2022. These make provision for local authorities to amend the reporting for these assets to a net book value basis if they wish.

The Council holds material infrastructure assets with a gross book value of £8.560 million at 31 March 2021 and a net book value of £1.764 million. Following discussions with the finance team it was agreed that the Council would apply the statutory override and report these assets on a net basis.

The presentation of these balances in the accounts will therefore need to be amended to reflect these changes and appropriate disclosures included in the financial statements.

The statutory override instrument allows council's to continue with this presentation until 2024/25.

Audit Differences

Summary of Audit differences as at the date of this report (continued)

We In addition to the corrected misstatements in the previous page, we highlight the following misstatements to the financial statements and/or disclosures which were not corrected by management. We request that these uncorrected misstatements be corrected or a rationale as to why they are not corrected be considered and approved by the Audit and Governance Committee and provided within the Letter of Representation:

Uncorrected misstatements			Analysis of misstatements Debit/(Credit)						
No.	W/P ref.	Account (Note 1)	Assets Current	Assets Non-current	Liabilities Current	Liabilities Non-current	Equity components	Effect on the current period OCI	Income statement effect of the current period
		(misstatements are recorded as journal entries with a description)	Debit/(Credit) (Note 2)	Debit/(Credit) (Note 2)	Debit/(Credit) (Note 2)	Debit/(Credit) (Note 2)	Debit/(Credit)	Debit/(Credit)	Debit/(Credit) Non taxable
Factual misstatements:									
		EHDC share of unadjusted increase in valuation of pension fund assets (per the PF auditor response) 21 EHDC PG01.01 Strategy for the audit of the defined benefit LGPS pension fund liability.docx							
		Pension Liability				238,000			
		Actuarial Gain						(238,000)	
		We noted that the amount of revaluation loss to be charged to CIES should be 548k instead of 436k (difference of 111k). 21 EHDC Revaluation Reserve							
		Revaluation loss - CIES							111,000
		Revaluation loss - revaluation reserve						(111,000)	
		MIRS					(111,000)		
		Capital adjustment account					111,000		
Judgmental misstatements:									
		The OLB portion of Charringtons House is outside the range determined by EYRE for the asset. This results in an overstatement in OLB by 354k.							
		Revaluation Reserve						353,544	
		PPE-OLB		(353,544)					
		Overstatement of depreciation on infrastructure assets							
		PPE - Infrastructure assets		120,159					
		Depreciation						(120,159)	



05 Value for Money

Value for Money

The Council's responsibilities for value for money

The Council is required to maintain an effective system of internal control that supports the achievement of its policies, aims and objectives while safeguarding and securing value for money from the public funds and other resources at its disposal.

As part of the material published with its financial statements, the Council is required to bring together commentary on its governance framework and how this has operated during the period in a governance statement. In preparing its governance statement, the Council tailors the content to reflect its own individual circumstances, consistent with the requirements of the relevant accounting and reporting framework and having regard to any guidance issued in support of that framework. This includes a requirement to provide commentary on its arrangements for securing value for money from their use of resources.

Risk assessment

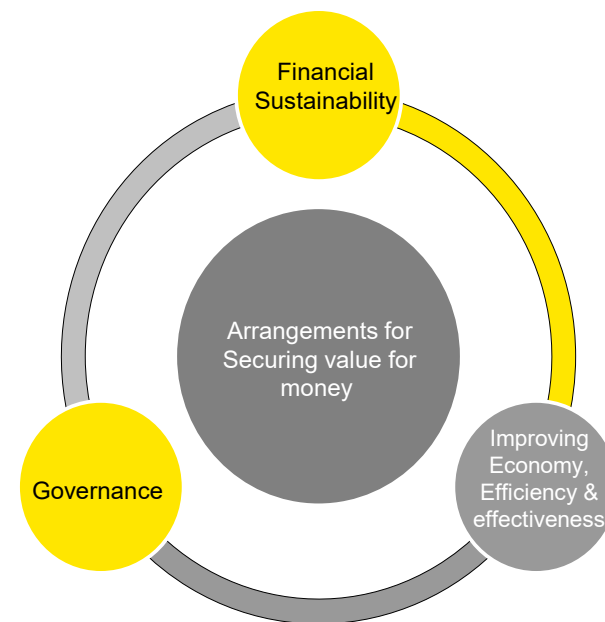
Throughout our audit we have performed a risk assessment in relation to the arrangements in place. This risk assessment looked at whether there was any risk of significant weaknesses in the VFM arrangements.

No significant risks were identified through our risk assessment.

The Council's responsibilities for value for money

We have completed our work on VFM arrangements and did not identify significant weaknesses against the three reporting criteria we are required to consider under the NAO's 2020 Code.

We therefore have no matters to report by exception in the audit opinion.



Reporting on VFM

Where we are not satisfied that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources the 2020 Code has the same requirement as the 2015 Code in that we should refer to this by exception in the audit report on the financial statements.

However, a new requirement under the 2020 Code is for us to include the commentary on arrangements in a new Auditor's Annual Report. The 2020 Code states that the commentary should be clear, readily understandable and highlight any issues we wish to draw to the Council's attention or the wider public. This should include details of any recommendations arising from the audit and follow-up of recommendations issued previously, along with our view as to whether they have been implemented satisfactorily. We will issue our Auditor's Annual Report once we have issued our audit opinion.



06 Other reporting issues

Other reporting issues

Other reporting issues

Consistency of other information published with the financial statements, including the Annual Governance Statement

We must give an opinion on the consistency of the financial and non-financial information in the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 2020/21 with the audited financial statements.

We must also review the Annual Governance Statement for completeness of disclosures, consistency with other information from our work, and whether it complies with relevant guidance.

Financial information in the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 2020/21 and published with the financial statements was consistent with the audited financial statements.

We have reviewed the Annual Governance Statement and can confirm it is consistent with other information from our audit of the financial statements and we have no other matters to report.

Whole of Government Accounts

Alongside our work on the financial statements, we also review and report to the National Audit Office (NAO) on your Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) return. The extent of our review, and the nature of our report, is specified by the NAO.

We have performed the procedures required by the National Audit Office on the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) submission. However, the rights and requirements of the NAO can extend beyond the revised thresholds of £2bn set by HM Treasury, which do not prejudice the rights of the NAO. As group auditor, the NAO WGA team will consider the revised HM Treasury thresholds alongside HM Treasury's developing analytical review controls and may require assurances from auditors of components who are below the HM Treasury thresholds. The change for 2020/21 is that in previous periods the existence of the HM Treasury thresholds has meant that in many instances the work that the NAO WGA team would have otherwise directed non-significant components to undertake in line with ISA 600 had already been carried out. The increase in HM Treasury's local government threshold means that there is a risk the NAO WGA team require some assurances from auditors of bodies below the new limit. Consequently, we cannot issue our certificate for 2020/21 until confirmation on the above-mentioned has been received from the NAO.

Other reporting issues

Other powers and duties

We have a duty under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to consider whether to report on any matter that comes to our attention in the course of the audit, either for the Authority to consider it or to bring it to the attention of the public (i.e. “a report in the public interest”). We did not identify any issues which required us to issue a report in the public interest.

We also have a duty to make written recommendations to the Authority, copied to the Secretary of State, and take action in accordance with our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

We did not identify any issues that require use of these powers.

Other matters

As required by ISA (UK&I) 260 and other ISAs specifying communication requirements, we must tell you significant findings from the audit and other matters if they are significant to your oversight of the Authority’s financial reporting process. They include the following:

- Significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures;
 - Any significant difficulties encountered during the audit;
 - Any significant matters arising from the audit that were discussed with management;
 - Written representations we have requested;
 - Expected modifications to the audit report;
 - Any other matters significant to overseeing the financial reporting process;
 - Findings and issues around the opening balance on initial audits (if applicable);
 - Related parties;
 - External confirmations;
 - Going concern;
 - Consideration of laws and regulations; and
- Group audits

We have no matters to report as of the date of this report.



07

Assessment of Control Environment



Assessment of Control Environment

Financial controls

It is the responsibility of the Council to develop and implement systems of internal financial control and to put in place proper arrangements to monitor their adequacy and effectiveness in practice. Our responsibility as your auditor is to consider whether the Authority has put adequate arrangements in place to satisfy itself that the systems of internal financial control are both adequate and effective in practice.

As part of our audit of the financial statements, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed. As we have adopted a fully substantive approach, we have therefore not tested the operation of controls.

Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control we are required to communicate to you internal controls that require certain improvements and have three matters to report to you:

Operating leases

Our audit of the operating leases note in the draft 2020/21 identified differences between the remaining lease period per the operating leases listing and the lease agreement. This resulted in a £22.8 million understatement of future minimum lease payments receivable under non-cancellable leases in future years. A prior year adjustment was therefore made to the comparatives in the 2020/21 financial statements.

The errors were not identified by the Council's review of the draft financial statements in 2019/20. To ensure such errors do not recur in future years, the Council should implement a robust monitoring of all active leases through their capital assets register.

Consistency checks before publication of the accounts:

Our consistency checks between the 2019/20 comparatives in the draft 2020/21 statement of accounts to the signed 2019/20 final accounts identified differences in the expenditure and funding analysis (EFA) and related note. Further checks of the prior year statement of accounts then identified differences between the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES), EFA and Notes to EFA. A prior year adjustment was therefore made to the comparatives in the 2020/21 financial statements.

The EFA provides a reconciliation of the adjustments between the authority's financial performance under the funding position and the surplus or deficit on the provision of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES). The EFA should therefore provide a clear picture of how the figures flow through each statement.

The errors were not identified by the Council's review of the draft financial statements in 2019/20. To ensure such errors do not recur in future years, the Council should implement a robust review process to check the internal consistency of the statement of accounts before approval and publication.

Assessment of Control Environment

Financial controls

Property, plant and equipment:

Our review of the Council's disclosure on property, plant and equipment identified that the current presentation of the note is not compliant with the CIPFA code. Both the gross cost of other land and buildings and accumulated depreciation and impairment are overstated by £30.899 million as of 31 March 2021 and £29.273 million as of 1 April 2020. Since these two components net out, the overall balance of property, plant and equipment is not misstated.

The misstatement occurred due to an oversight when the Council changed the accounting policy in 2016 (since this date all other land and buildings and surplus assets are revalued annually in contrast with a four-year rolling basis). To ensure such errors do not recur in future years, the Council should perform a review of its accounting policies to confirm they are in line with the Code.

Infrastructure assets:

Our review of the Council's infrastructure asset records showed that the fixed assets register does not have details of gross cost and accumulated depreciation that agrees with the disclosure on property, plant and equipment in the financial statements. It is important that the Council maintains records of gross cost and accumulated depreciation for capital expenditure on infrastructure assets, as well as any components derecognised as a result of in-year spend, as the current statutory override is only confirmed as in place until 2024/25. After this date, the Council may need to have more detailed records to report these balances on a basis other than net book value.



08 Data Analytics



Use of Data Analytics in the Audit

Data analytics

Analytics Driven Audit

Data analytics

We used our data analysers to enable us to capture entire populations of your financial data. These analysers:

- ▶ Help identify specific exceptions and anomalies which can then be the focus of our substantive audit tests; and
- ▶ Give greater likelihood of identifying errors than traditional, random sampling techniques.

In 2020/21, our use of these analysers in the Authority's audit included testing journal entries and employee expenses, to identify and focus our testing on those entries we deem to have the highest inherent risk to the audit.

We capture the data through our formal data requests and the data transfer takes place on a secured EY website. These are in line with our EY data protection policies which are designed to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of business and personal information.

Journal Entry Analysis

We obtain downloads of all financial ledger transactions posted in the year. We performed completeness analysis over the data, reconciling the sum of transactions to the movement in the trial balances and financial statements to ensure we have captured all data. Our analysers then review and sort transactions, allowing us to more effectively identify and test journals that we consider to be higher risk.

Payroll Analysis

We also use our analysers in our payroll testing. We obtain all payroll transactions posted in the year from the general ledger. We then analyse the data against a number of specifically designed procedures. These include analysis of payroll costs by month to identify any variances from established expectations, as well as more detailed transactional interrogation.



Journal Entry Testing

What is the risk?

In line with ISA 240 we are required to test the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements.

What judgements are we focused on?

Using our analysers we are able to take a risk based approach to identify journals with a higher risk of management override.

What did we do?

We obtained general ledger journal data for the period and have used our analysers to identify characteristics typically associated with inappropriate journal entries or adjustments, and journals entries that are subject to a higher risk of management override.

We then performed tests on the journals identified to determine if they were appropriate and reasonable.

What are our conclusions?

We have completed our work on journal entries and have found no exceptions to report.



09

Independence

Confirmation of independence and analysis of audit fees

The duty to prescribe fees is a statutory function delegated to Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. PSAA has published a scale fee for all relevant bodies. This is defined as the fee required by auditors to meet statutory responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Audit Practice and supporting guidance published by the National Audit Office, the financial reporting requirements set out in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting published by CIPFA/LASAAC, and the professional standards applicable to auditors' work. See below the fees charged by EY:

Description	Proposed Fee 2020/21 £	Scale Fee 2020/21 £	Final Fee 2019/20 £
Total Scale Fee - Code work	40,295	40,295	40,295
Final approved scale fee variation for 19/20 (Note 1)			25,840
Changes in work required to address professional and regulatory requirements and scope associated with risk (Note 2)	26,949		
Additional fee to address in-year risks as noted in this report (Note 3)	31,591		
Total indicative audit fees	98,835	40,295	66,135
Housing benefits certification work	11,000		21,140
Total audit fees	109,835	40,295	87,275

All fees exclude VAT

Notes on fees

Note 1: The final fee for 2019/20 has been discussed with management, approved by PSAA and paid.

Note 2: As reported in our Audit Plan, we are currently in discussion with PSAA nationally about an increase in the scale fee. We do not believe that the current scale fee reflects the changes in the audit market and increases in regulation since the most recent PSAA tender exercise. As a result of these factors, we have proposed an increase in the scale fee of £26,949 for 2020/21.

Note 3: For 2020 /21, the scale fee represents the base fee, i.e. not including any additional audit work. However, this has been impacted by a range of factors, as detailed in the Audit Plan, including Covid-19, additional risks identified relating to grants, and additional work required to be performed to meet ISA540 requirements, which have all resulted in additional work.

In addition to the above, PSAA published additional information for 2020/21 audit fees in August 2021, and provided guidance about the range of minimum additional fee in certain areas of audit, e.g. minimum additional fees audits for a district council audit for new VFM arrangements requirements £6,000 - £11,000 and ISA540 (accounting estimates) requirements £2,500. PSAA also revised its hourly rates for calculating the additional fee variations.

We will discuss with management the breakdown of the additional fee requested before submission to PSAA. PSAA will determine the final fee.



Independence

Relationships, services and related threats and safeguards

The FRC Ethical Standard requires that we provide details of all relationships between Ernst & Young (EY) and your Authority, senior management and its affiliates, including all services provided by us and our network to your Authority, senior management and its affiliates, and other services provided to other known connected parties that we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on the our integrity or objectivity, including those that could compromise independence and the related safeguards that are in place and why they address the threats.

There are no relationships from 1 April 2020 to the date of this report, which we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence and objectivity.

Other communications

EY Transparency Report 2021

Ernst & Young (EY) has policies and procedures that instil professional values as part of firm culture and ensure that the highest standards of objectivity, independence and integrity are maintained. Details of the key policies and processes in place within EY for maintaining objectivity and independence can be found in our annual Transparency Report which the firm is required to publish by law. The most recent version of this Report is for the year year end 30 June 2022:

[EY UK 2022 Transparency Report | EY UK](#)



10 Appendices

DRAFT Management representation letter

Management Representation Letter - DRAFT

Date xxxxxxxx

Ernst & Young
Ernst & Young
400 Capability Green
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 3LU

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the consolidated and council financial statements of East Hertfordshire District Council ("the Group and Council") for the year ended 31 March 2021. We recognise that obtaining representations from us concerning the information contained in this letter is a significant procedure in enabling you to form an opinion as to whether the consolidated and council financial statements give a true and fair view of the Group and Council financial position of East Hertfordshire District Council as of 31 March 2021 and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with, for the Group and Council, the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

We understand that the purpose of your audit of our consolidated and council financial statements is to express an opinion thereon and that your audit was conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing, which involves an examination of the accounting system, internal control and related data to the extent you considered necessary in the circumstances, and is not designed to identify - nor necessarily be expected to disclose - all fraud, shortages, errors and other irregularities, should any exist.

Accordingly, we make the following representations, which are true to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made such inquiries as we considered necessary for the purpose of appropriately informing ourselves:

A. Financial Statements and Financial Records

1. We have fulfilled our responsibilities, under the relevant statutory authorities, for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with, for the Group and Council, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.
2. We acknowledge, as members of management of the Group and Council, our responsibility for the fair presentation of the consolidated and council financial statements. We believe the consolidated and council financial statements referred to above give a true and fair view of the financial position, financial performance and cash flows of the Group and Council in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 and are free of material misstatements, including omissions. We have approved the consolidated and council financial statements.
3. The significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the Group and Council financial statements are appropriately described in Group and Council financial statements.
4. As members of management of the Group and Council, we believe that the Group and Council have a system of internal controls adequate to enable the preparation of accurate financial statements in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 for the Council that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. We have disclosed to you any significant changes in our processes, controls, policies and procedures that we have made to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our system of internal controls.

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

5. We believe that the effects of any unadjusted audit differences, summarised in the accompanying schedule, accumulated by you during the current audit and pertaining to the latest period presented are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the consolidated and council financial statements taken as a whole. We have not corrected these differences identified and brought to our attention by the auditor because *[specify]*

B. Non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud

1. We acknowledge that we are responsible for determining that the Group and Council's activities are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations and that we are responsible for identifying and addressing any non-compliance with applicable laws or regulations, including fraud.
2. We acknowledge that we are responsible for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls to prevent and detect fraud.
3. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the consolidated and council financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
4. We have no knowledge of any identified or suspected non-compliance with laws or regulations, including fraud, that may have affected the Group or Council (regardless of the source or form and including without limitation, any allegations by "whistleblowers"), including non-compliance matters:
 - Involving financial statements
 - Related to laws or regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the consolidated or council's financial statements
 - Related to laws or regulations that have an indirect effect on amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, but compliance with which may be fundamental to the operations of the Group or Council's activities, its ability to continue in business, or to avoid material penalties
 - Involving management, or employees who have significant roles in internal control, or others

- In relation to any allegations of fraud, suspected fraud or other non-compliance with laws and regulations communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

C. Information Provided and Completeness of Information and Transactions

1. We have provided you with:
 - Access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
 - Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
 - Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
2. All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and all material transactions, events and conditions are reflected in the consolidated and council financial statements, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of the Council and its relevant Committees (or summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared) held through the year to the most recent meeting on the following date: xx 2022.
4. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Group and Council's related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware, including sales, purchases, loans, transfers of assets, liabilities and services, leasing arrangements, guarantees, non-monetary transactions and transactions for no consideration for the year ended, as well as related balances due to or from such parties at the year end. These transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the consolidated and council financial statements.

Appendix E

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

5. We believe that the significant assumptions we used in making accounting estimates and related disclosures are appropriate and consistently applied to achieve recognition, measurement and disclosure that is in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.

6. We have disclosed to you, and the Group and Council has complied with, all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the consolidated and council financial statements in the event of non-compliance, including all covenants, conditions or other requirements of all outstanding debt.

7. From the date of our last management representation letter, being 26 November 2020, through the date of this letter we have disclosed to you any unauthorized access to our information technology systems that either occurred or to the best of our knowledge is reasonably likely to have occurred based on our investigation, including of reports submitted to us by third parties (including regulatory agencies, law enforcement agencies and security consultants), to the extent that such unauthorized access to our information technology systems is reasonably likely to have a material impact to the financial statements, in each case or in the aggregate.

D. Liabilities and Contingencies

1. All liabilities and contingencies, including those associated with guarantees, whether written or oral, have been disclosed to you and are appropriately reflected in the consolidated and council financial statements.
2. We have informed you of all outstanding and possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel.
3. We have recorded and/or disclosed, as appropriate, all liabilities related litigation and claims, both actual and contingent, and have disclosed in the consolidated and council financial statements all guarantees that we have given to third parties.

E. Going Concern

1. Note xx to the consolidated and Council financial statements discloses all the matters of which we are aware that are relevant to the Group and Council's ability to continue as a going concern, including significant conditions and events, our plans for future action, and the feasibility of those plans.

F. Subsequent Events

1. Other than as described in Note xx to the consolidated and Council financial statements, there have been no events, including events related to the COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent to year end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the consolidated and council financial statements or notes thereto.

G. Group audits

1. There are no significant restrictions on our ability to distribute the retained profits of the Group because of statutory, contractual, exchange control or other restrictions other than those indicated in the Group financial statements.
2. Necessary adjustments have been made to eliminate all material intra-group unrealised profits on transactions amongst Council and subsidiary undertakings and associated undertakings.

H. Other information

1. We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the other information. The other information comprises the Narrative Report and the Annual Governance Statement.
2. We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

I. Climate-related matters

1. We confirm that to the best of our knowledge all information that is relevant to the recognition, measurement, presentation and disclosure of climate-related matters has been considered and reflected in the consolidated and Council financial statements.
2. The key assumptions used in preparing the consolidated and Council financial statements are, to the extent allowable under the requirements of the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, aligned with the statements we have made in the other information or other public communications made by us.

H. Contingent Liabilities

1. We are unaware of any violations or possible violations of laws or regulations the effects of which should be considered for disclosure in the financial statements or as the basis of recording a contingent loss (other than those disclosed or accrued in the financial statements).
2. We are unaware of any known or probable instances of non-compliance with the requirements of regulatory or governmental authorities, including their financial reporting requirements, and there have been no communications from regulatory agencies or government representatives concerning investigations or allegations of non-compliance

I. Ownership of Assets

1. The Group and Council has satisfactory title to all assets appearing in the balance sheet(s), and there are no liens or encumbrances on the Group and Council's assets, nor has any asset been pledged as collateral, other than those that are disclosed in Note [X] to the financial statements. All assets to which the Group and Council has satisfactory title appear in the balance sheet(s).

2. All agreements and options to buy back assets previously sold have been properly recorded and adequately disclosed in the consolidated and Council financial statements.
3. There are no formal or informal compensating balance arrangements with any of our cash and investment accounts. Except as disclosed in Note [X] to the consolidated and Council financial statements, we have no other line of credit arrangements.

J. Reserves

1. We have properly recorded or disclosed in the consolidated and council financial statements the useable and unusable reserves.

K. Use of the Work of a Specialist

1. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we engaged to evaluate the *valuation of land and building assets and investment property, defined benefit pension scheme and business rates appeals provision* and have adequately considered the qualifications of the specialists in determining the amounts and disclosures included in the consolidated and council financial statements and the underlying accounting records. We did not give or cause any instructions to be given to the specialists with respect to the values or amounts derived in an attempt to bias their work, and we are not otherwise aware of any matters that have had an effect on the independence or objectivity of the specialist.

L. Property Valuation and Pension Liability Estimate

1. We confirm that the significant judgments made in making the estimates on valuation of land and building assets and investment property, defined benefit pension scheme and business rates appeals provision have taken into account all relevant information [and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on XXX] of which we are aware.

Appendix E

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

2. We believe that the selection or application of the methods, assumptions and data used by us have been consistently and appropriately applied or used in making the estimates on valuation of land and building assets and investment property, defined benefit pension scheme and business rates appeals provision.
3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in making the estimates on valuation of land and building assets and investment property, defined benefit pension scheme and business rates appeals provision appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out [describe the specific courses of action] on behalf of the entity.
4. We confirm that the disclosures made in the consolidated and Council entity financial statements with respect to the accounting estimate(s), including those describing estimation uncertainty and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on XXX, are complete and are reasonable in the context of the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.
5. We confirm that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in making the estimates on valuation of land and building assets and investment property, defined benefit pension scheme and business rates appeals provision.
6. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimate(s) and disclosures in the consolidated and parent entity financial statements, including due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

M. Retirement benefits

1. On the basis of the process established by us and having made appropriate enquiries, we are satisfied that the actuarial assumptions underlying the scheme liabilities are consistent with our knowledge of the business. All significant retirement benefits and all settlements and curtailments have been identified and properly accounted for.

Yours faithfully,

S151 Officer

Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee

About EY

EY is a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. The insights and quality services we deliver help build trust and confidence in the capital markets and in economies the world over. We develop outstanding leaders who team to deliver on our promises to all of our stakeholders. In so doing, we play a critical role in building a better working world for our people, for our clients and for our communities.

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ED None

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Agenda Item 6

East Herts Council Report

Audit and Governance Committee

Date of meeting: 16th March 2023

**Report by: Steven Linnett, Head of Strategic Finance & Property
(s.151 Officer)**

Report title: Approval of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary – This report presents the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts to the Audit and Governance Committee for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:

a) Approve the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts.

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 The Statement of Accounts is attached as Appendix A to this report.
- 1.2 The accounts have been prepared following the "Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 based on International Financial Reporting Standards" issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (the Code).
- 1.3 The Code constitutes "proper accounting practice" under section 66(4) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Regulation 7 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and deviations from it will usually lead to a qualified audit opinion..

- 1.4 The accounts have been prepared following International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The Movement in Reserves Statement reverses out most IFRS adjustments, particularly pensions, non-current asset revaluations and depreciation, to return to the same basis as Council Tax is levied.
- 1.5 In approving the Statement of Accounts the Committee is not expected to verify each figure and its accuracy. The Committee is expected to place reliance on the work of Internal Audit that the Council's financial systems are operating soundly and that its corporate governance arrangements are also sound, and that the external auditor has completed their audit and are prepared to give an opinion that the accounts give a true and fair view of the Council's financial position.
- 1.6 In accordance with Sections 26 and 27 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Regulations 14 and 15 the accounts were open to public inspection and no objections or questions from local electors were received.
- 1.7 The accounts are subject to audit by EY LLP who are the auditor appointed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd. They have conducted their audit and made a Final Audit Results Report in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) (ISA (UK & Ireland)), which is elsewhere on the agenda.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Regulation 9 (2) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 requires the Statement of Accounts to be approved by a resolution of a committee of the Council, such approval to

normally take place before 30 September immediately following the end of a year.

- 2.2 The Council has designated the Audit and Governance Committee as the committee of Council to approve the Statement of Accounts

3.0 Reason(s)

- 3.1 To comply with Regulation 9 (2) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 Members can ask questions and make observations but they must approve the statement of accounts

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 The delay to the completion of the audit, caused by the external auditors across the local audit market having insufficient resources causes severe pressures on staff trying to produce the budget and answer audit queries at the same time.
- 5.2 There is a risk that the delay to the external audit undermines a fundamental support to the council's financial control environment as well as undermining transparency to the public.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

No

Financial

These are contained in the main body of the report

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

These are contained in the main body of the report

Human Rights

No

Legal

These are covered in the main body of the report.

Specific Wards

No

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

Appendices:

Appendix A – 2020/21 Statement of Accounts

Background Papers:

None

Contact Officer

Steven Linnett, Head of Strategic Finance and Property

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Report Author

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STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2020-21

TABLE OF CONTENTS

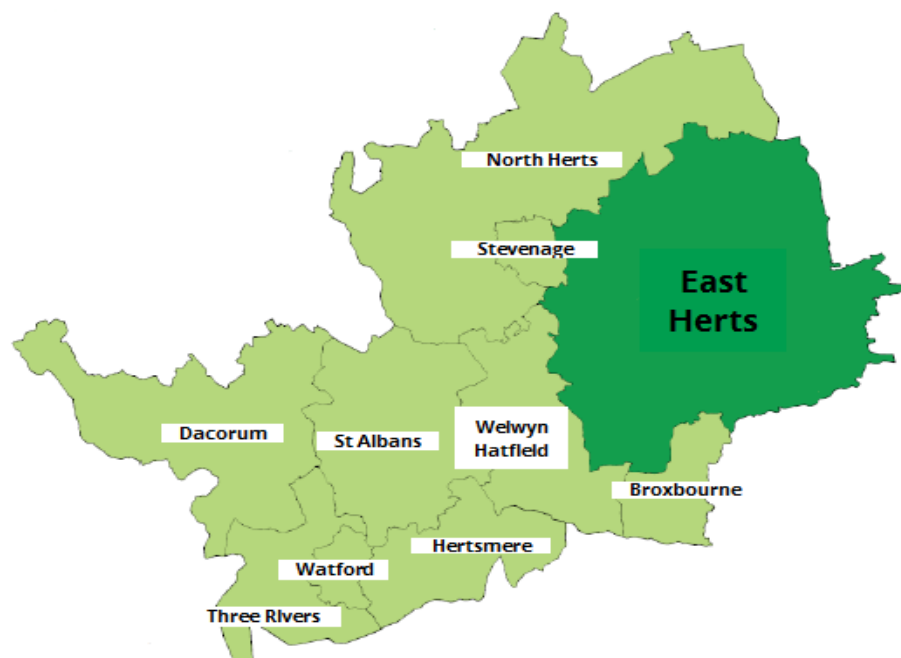
Narrative Statement	4
Explanation of Accounting Statements	12
The Core Accounting Statements	
Movement in Reserves Statement	13
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	14
Balance Sheet	15
The Cash flow Statement	16
Notes to the Financial Statements	
1. Accounting Policies	17
2. Expenditure and Funding Analysis	23
3. Accounting Standards issues not yet adopted	28
4. Assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty	28
5. Adjustments between Accounting basis and Funding basis under regulation	30
6. Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves	32
7. Property, Plant and Equipment	35
8. Analysis of Fixed Assets	39
9. Heritage Assets	39
10. Investment Properties	40
11. Intangible Assets	42
12. Financial Instruments	43
13. Financial Instruments Gains/Losses	48
14. Fair Value Assets and Liabilities at Amortised Cost	48
15. Debtors	49
16. Cash and Cash Equivalents	49
17. Assets held for Sale	49
18. Creditors	49
19. Provisions	50
20. Usable Reserves	50
21. Unusable Reserves	51
22. Nature of Expenses Disclosure	54
23. Jointly controlled Operations	55
24. External Audit Costs	56
25. Members Allowances	56
26. Officer Emoluments	57
27. Exit Packages	57
28. Senior Officer Remuneration	58
29. Grant Income	59
30. Related Party Transactions	60
31. Capital Expenditure and Capital financing	61
32. Leases	61
33. Pension Scheme	65

34. Nature and Extent of Risks arising from Financial Instruments	70
35. Capital Commitments	74
36. Contingent Liability	74
37. Post Balance Sheet events	74
The Collection Fund Income and Expenditure Account	75
Group Accounts	78
Group Movement in Reserves Statement	79
Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	80
Group Balance Sheet	81
Group Cash Flow Statement	82
Notes to Group Accounts	83
Glossary of Financial Terms	85
Annual Governance Statement 2020/21	89
Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts	105
Auditor's Opinion	106

AN INTRODUCTION TO EAST HERTS

East Herts is a vibrant district, the largest of the 10 districts in Hertfordshire, with a unique mix of rural and urban communities and is a great place to live and work.

East Herts is home to the historic County town of Hertford, four other market towns and over 100 villages or hamlets scattered across the district with over 144,000 residents in total.



Almost 91% of East Herts is green space and there are a number of heritage parks and gardens. The district is also steeped in history, boasting more than 10 museums and heritage centres spread across the district, in its rural villages as well as its town centres.

The vision of the Council is to provide East Herts residents and businesses with a future that is prosperous and sustainable. To achieve this, a number of strategic objectives have been developed which allow the Council, in conjunction with its many partners, to focus on the key issues that concern the residents of East Herts.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE IN 2020/21

The 2020/21 budget was set by Full Council in January 2020 as part of the budget report and Medium Term Financial Plan for 2020/21 to 2023/24. the budget was set prior to the Covid 19 Pandemic. There are five major 'building blocks' to the Council's revenue budget. These are shown below:

Net Costs of Services - Direct costs incurred by the Council in delivering services less any specific income generated	Use of Reserves - Funding within the revenue budget from earmarked reserves. The impact of the use of reserves is a reduction in the income demand on Council Tax payers, however this is a finite source of funding and should represent value for money	Corporate Budgets - Costs incurred and income received that are not service specific. For example Pension Fund deficit contributions, interest income and payments
Sources of Funding - These are income budgets that are general and non-service specific income sources. These include the Revenue Support Grant, Non Domestic Rate income, New Homes Bonus and other general grants	Council Tax - A local taxation on domestic properties which the Council collects for itself and on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council, the Police & Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire and Town & Parish Councils to support the services provided	

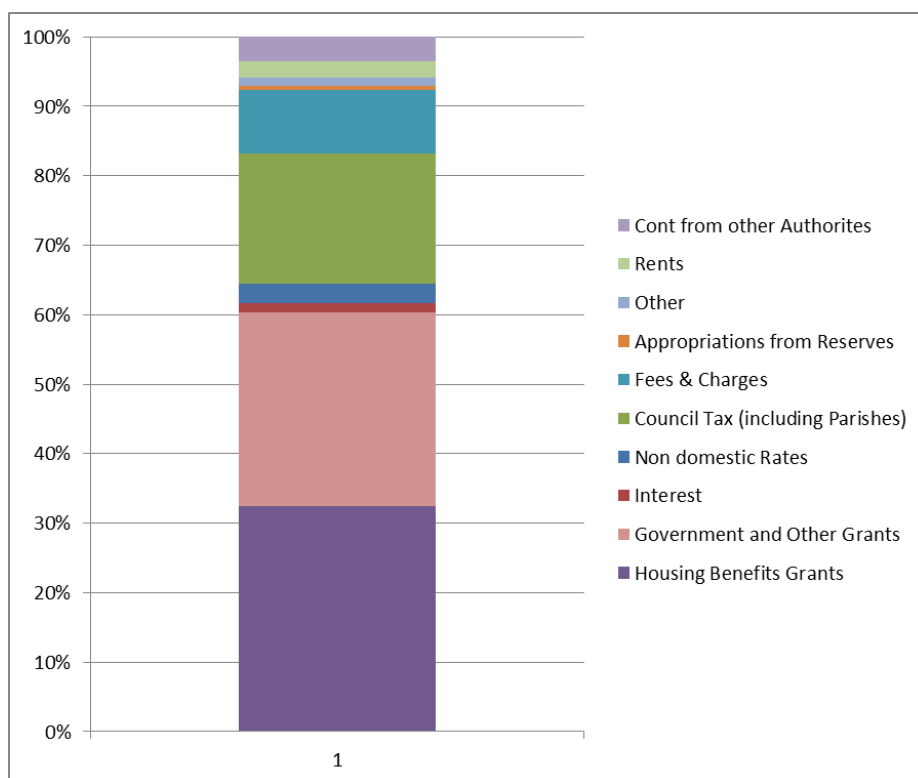
The table below details the Councils performance against the five major 'building blocks'. There was a £116k overspend in 2020/21, this has been funded from the General Fund.

	Original Budget 2020/21	2020/21 Outturn	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Total Net Cost of Services	15,603	16,274	671
Corporate Budgets Total	588	432	(156)
Net Use of Reserves	732	12,387	11,655
Funding	(6,256)	(18,310)	(12,054)
Council Tax	(10,667)	(10,667)	0
Overspend	-	116	116

The Council's budget is monitored monthly by senior management and reported quarterly to the Executive. The councils revenue budget was put under pressure in 2020/21 due to losses in income and increased costs due to national lockdowns and the Covid-19 pandemic

2020/21 Income streams

The chart below shows the £82.6m of income that the Council received in 2020/21. The largest source of income was Housing Benefits subsidy (from Central Government) which is used to fund the payment of Housing Benefits to claimants.



In 2020/21 the second largest source of funding for East Herts was government grants, with £23.1m funding received. This differs from previous years and is directly related to Covid -19 and the funding streams that central Government have put in place to support both local government, residents and businesses during the pandemic. Details are shown below;

- £2.8m of New Homes Bonus, which is a Government scheme aimed at encouraging local authorities to grant planning permission in return for additional revenue.
- £10.6m of grant from central government to fund mandatory reliefs given in respect of Non Domestic Rates. The majority of this has been transferred to an earmarked reserve in line with regulation and will be utilised as part of NNDR collection fund in 2021/22.
- £1.8m of government grant to support the revenue account during the Covid-19 pandemic
- £3.8m of to fund various government grant schemes to assist local business and residents during local and national lockdowns and to fund the administration of the grants.
- £2.3m Sales fees and charges compensation grant, to compensate for lost fees and charges income due to local and national lockdowns

As the billing authority, East Herts Council collects Council Tax income from residents of the district; this is then distributed between Hertfordshire County Council, East Herts Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner. Of the income collected the Council's share in 2020/21 was £15.4m; £4.8m of which was distributed to Town and Parish Councils across the district. The remaining Council Tax income is used to fund services in the year.

The Council earned Interest and Investment income of £1.1m in 2020/21 on its portfolio of investments and holdings in property funds. This was £195k above budget, this has been transferred to the Interest Equalisation reserve to mitigate future losses.

2020/21 Expenditure

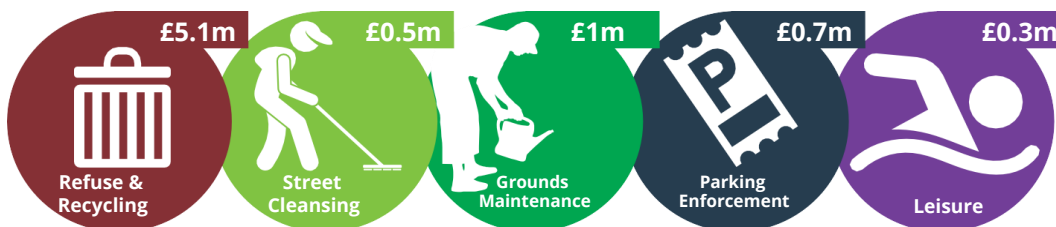
The chart below shows the £82.6m that the the Council spent in 2020/21. Housing benefits make up the largest outgoing of the Council.



Included in the Council's running expenses figure of £12.9m is the following expenditure:

- £2.9m of premises related costs, including ongoing maintenance of the Council's operational buildings, business rates, insurance and utilities costs for all the Council's buildings, car parks, theatre and leisure facilities;
- £7.5m direct costs of providing Council services throughout the year including, public and environmental health, planning, sports, leisure and parks;

The cost of the Council's main contracts are included in the contracted services figure (£10.8m) are as follows:



FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

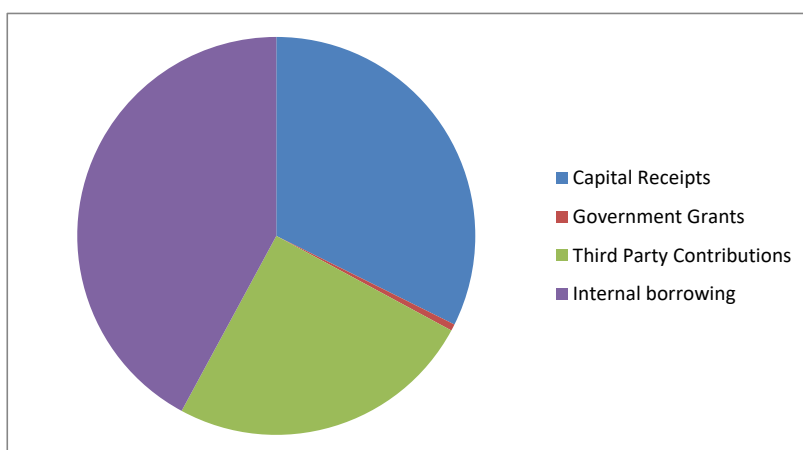
Capital

Capital expenditure relates to the acquisition or enhancement of assets which generates a benefit for a period greater than one year. This differs to the Revenue expenditure, discussed over the previous pages, which is defined as money that the authority spends or receives in the same year that the services are delivered.

The Council has embarked on an ambitious Capital Programme over the life of the Medium Term Financial Plan, during 2020/21 the Council incurred expenditure of £31.5m on capital projects, compared with a capital programme budget of £64.6m. A total budget of £33m has been carried forward to 2021/22 to match ongoing schemes which didn't commence in 2020/21 or where works are ongoing. A selection of the capital schemes undertaken this year are shown below:

£12.2m - improvements to our Leisure facilities	£0.4m - improvements to Information, Communication and Technology infrastructure	£2.3m - purchase and refurbishment of Rectory Hall to provide accommodation for homeless households
£1.1m - ongoing build costs for Hertford Theatre	£2.7m - loans to our Property management company, Millstream	£11.7m - redevelopment of Nothgate end car park in Bishops Stortford

A combination of capital grant income, receipts from disposal of assets, third party contributions and revenue contributions were used to fund the 2020/21 capital programme. The split is shown in the following pie chart:



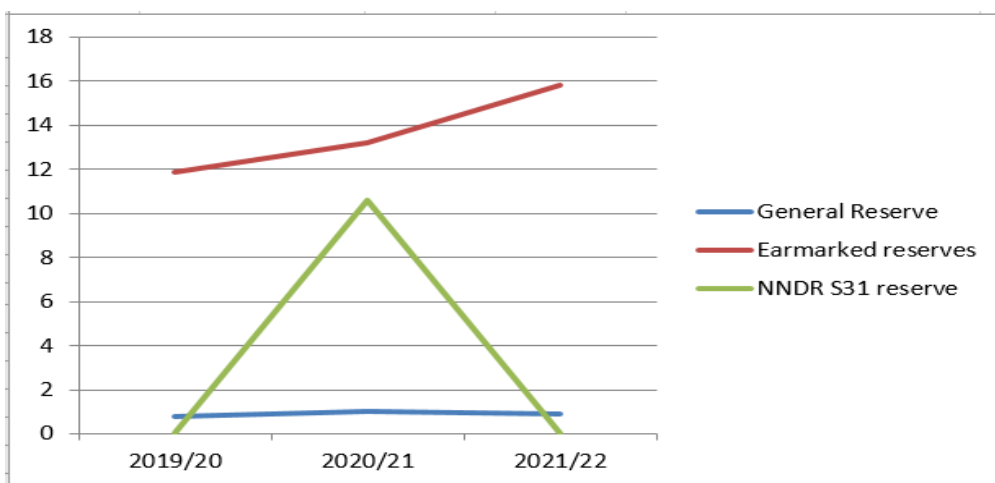
MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

East Herts' approach to setting the revenue and capital budget for the four years commencing 2021/22 was to improve the organisational financial sustainability and resilience in the forthcoming years.

The budget report sets out the proposals and outcomes that Officers and Members had arrived at to ensure that the Council maintains a sustainable budget position for the future.

The MTFP provides the framework for the development of annual budgets in line with the aims of the Council's Corporate Strategy.

Reserves are an essential part of good financial management. They help councils cope with unpredictable financial pressures, help them smooth the impact of known spending requirements over time, and help to fund any in-year overspending. In 2020/21 the Council contributed a net £12.5m to reserves; the balance held in the general and earmarked at the end of the year is £23.9m. Of this £10.6m is in respect of the NNDR collection fund and cannot be utilised for any other purpose and will be fully utilised in 2021/22. The following graph shows the use of reserves over the past 2 years and the projected use in 2021/22, this highlights the overall increase in the level



Details of the Council's earmarked reserves (set aside for a defined purpose to meet known or predicted future liabilities) and General Reserve (to manage cash flows and limit the need for temporary borrowing and to provide a contingency for unforeseeable events and emergency spending) can be found within the Statement of Accounts.

PENSION FUND

The Council participates in the Local Government Pension Scheme which is administered by Hertfordshire County Council. Under current accounting standards the impact of any pension liability must be shown in the balance sheet.

The Council's liability at 31 March 2021 was £35.038m which is an increase of £13m compared to the position at 31 March 2020.

Further information is given in note 33, on page 72.

Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the Council, and the financial impact will continue in subsequent years. The most significant impacts have been loss of car parking income, loss of other fees and charges and commercial rent deferrals. The Council has incurred additional expenditure to ensure that key services such as homelessness are maintained. The Council has distributed £44.9m of grants to businesses during the pandemic, details of the various schemes are shown below.

Under the Code of practice on Local Authority Accounting the Council has assessed the grants received from BEIS and the distribution of the grants to eligible businesses as either principal or agents transactions. The code sets out that authority is principal where it is acting on its own behalf, where this has been determined the transactions have been recorded in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement (CIES). An authority is deemed to be an agent where it is acting as an intermediary in this instance the transactions will not be reflected in an authorities financial statements, with the exception of the cash position in which case there is a debtor or creditor and the net cash position is included in the cash flow statement.

The Council has received some Government funding towards the additional costs and reduced income. The financial impact will depend on the level of Government funding received and how quickly services are able to return to pre COVID-19 operating levels. The Local Government Secretary of State has provided public assurances that Local Government will have the resources it needs to meet COVID-19 challenges.

Whilst the Council's un-ringfenced General Fund reserve would have some capacity to absorb a financial impact, a robust financial plan will be required to ensure the sustainability of the Council's finances are maintained and this will form part of the budget setting work for 2021/22.

The Council uses cash flow forecasting to assist with treasury management decisions and this has gained greater significance as unplanned expenditure has been required to respond to the emerging situation and specific grants to deal with COVID-19 have been paid and received. Cash flow will continue to be closely monitored to ensure sufficient funds are available for daily requirements.

More detail of specific risks and uncertainties is provided in Note 4, Assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty.

EXPLANATION OF ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

Statement	Explanation
Movement in Reserves Statement	Shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Council, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other reserves
Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	A summary of the resources generated and consumed by the Council in the year
Balance Sheet	Sets out the financial position of the Council on 31 March 2021
Cash Flow Statement	Summarises the Council's inflows and outflows of cash for the year 2020/21
Notes to the Accounts	Provides support to the core financial statements, which informs and gives sufficient information to present a good understanding of the Council's activities. The notes include a Statement of Accounting Policies which details the legislation and principles on which the Statement of Accounts have been prepared. The purpose is to explain the basis for recognition, measurement and disclosure of transactions and other events in the Statement of Accounts
Supplementary Financial Statements – The Collection Fund	Shows the level of Non Domestic Rates and Council Tax that has been received by the Council, as billing authority, during the period
Glossary of Financial Terms	Explains some of the key terms used in the Statement of Accounts
Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts	Identifies the officer who is responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs. The purpose is for the Chief Finance Officer to sign under a statement that the Statement of Accounts present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021

The Core Accounting Statements

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Council, analysed into usable reserves (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce taxation) and other reserves. The Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services line shows the economic cost of providing the Council's services with more details shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. These are different from the statutory amounts required to be charged to the General Fund Balance for council tax setting purposes. The Net Increase/Decrease before transfers to Earmarked Reserves line shows the statutory General Fund Balance before any discretionary transfers to or from earmarked reserves undertaken by the Council.

Due to a prior period adjustment in relation to the Pension fund, the 2019/20 MIRS has been restated. The Restated MIRS is shown above. The table below shows the movement from the originally published version. Further details can be found in note 33.

	General Fund Balance	Earmarked General Fund Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	General Reserve	Total Usable Reserves	Total Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance as at 1 April 2020 as originally published	3,854	11,859	0	300	772	16,785	81,418	98,203
Restatement Adjustment						-	2,516	-
Restated balance as at 1 April 2020	3,854	11,859	0	300	772	1,685	78,902	95,687
Movement in reserves during 2020/21								
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(2,307)	-	-	-	-	(2,307)	(16,510)	(18,817)
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations <i>Note 5</i>	13,985	-	0	(76)	-	13,909	(13,909)	-
Net Increase/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	11,678	-	0	(76)	-	11,602	(30,419)	(18,817)
Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves <i>Note 6</i>	(11,678)	11,477	-	-	202	-	-	-
Increase/Decrease in Year	0	11,477	0	(76)	202	11,602	(30,419)	(18,817)
Balance as at 31 March 2021 carried forward	3,854	23,336	0	224	974	13,287	48,483	76,870

	General Fund Balance	Earmarked General Fund Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	General Reserve	Total Usable Reserves	Total Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance at 31 March 2019	3,854	9,228	1,892	349	852	16,175	68,098	84,273
Movement in reserves during 2019/20								
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	516	-	-	0	-	516	10,898	11,414
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations <i>Note 5</i>	2,035	-	(1,892)	(49)	-	94	(94)	-
Net Increase/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	2,551	-	(1,892)	(49)	-	610	10,804	11,414
Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves <i>Note 6</i>	(2,551)	2,631	-	-	(80)	-	-	-
Increase/Decrease in Year	-	2,631	(1,892)	(49)	(80)	610	10,804	11,414
Balance as at 31 March 2020 carried forward	3,854	11,859	0	300	772	16,785	78,902	95,687

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Authorities raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations, generally this will be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

	2020/21			Revised 2019/20
	Gross Expenditure £000	Gross Income £000	Net Expenditure £000	Net Expenditure £000
Chief Executive, PA's & Directors	583	-	583	589
Communications, Strategy & Policy	1,769	(364)	1,405	1,461
Human Resources & Organisation Development	544	(14)	530	615
Strategic Finance & Property	5,495	(1,111)	4,384	4,407
Democratic & Legal Services	1,813	(469)	1,344	1,533
Housing & Health	4,649	(1,616)	3,033	2,794
Planning & Building Control	3,273	(1,434)	1,839	1,611
Operations	14,181	(8,113)	6,068	5,575
Shared Revenues & Benefits Service	34,052	(33,042)	1,010	1,190
Shared Business & Technology Services	1,912	(124)	1,788	2,032
NET COST OF SERVICES			21,984	21,807
Payments of precepts to parishes			4,782	4,182
Gain on disposal of non current (fixed) assets			(138)	(1,371)
OTHER OPERATING EXPENDITURE			4,644	2,811
Interest payable and similar charges			206	662
Net Interest on the net defined benefit liability & remeasurements of the defined benefit liability for long term employee benefits			564	851
Interest receivable and similar income			(1,086)	(1,239)
Income from investment properties (Note 10)			(882)	(956)
Direct expenditure incurred on investment properties (Note 10)			125	179
Changes in Fair Value of Investment Properties			6,422	1,003
FINANCING AND INVESTMENT EXPENDITURE			5,349	500
Recognised capital grants and contributions			(6,373)	(2,700)
Council tax income			(15,457)	(14,465)
Non domestic rates			7,411	(2,937)
Non service related government grants			(15,251)	(5,532)
TAXATION AND NON-SPECIFIC GRANT INCOME (Note 29)			(29,670)	(25,634)
(SURPLUS) / DEFICIT ON PROVISION OF SERVICES			2,307	(516)
(Surplus) or Deficit on revaluation of Fixed assets			4,017	1,322
Remeasurements of the net defined benefit liability (Note 33)			12,016	(12,747)
ITEMS THAT WILL NOT BE RECLASSIFIED TO THE (SURPLUS) OR DEFICIT ON PROVISION OF SERVICES			16,033	(11,425)
(Surplus) / Deficit on revaluation of financial instruments (Note 12)			477	527
ITEMS THAT MAY BE RECLASSIFIED TO THE (SURPLUS) OR DEFICIT ON PROVISION OF SERVICES			477	527
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE			16,510	(10,898)
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE			18,817	(11,415)

All operations arise from continuing activities.

I certify that the Balance Sheet represents a true and fair view of the Councils financial position as of 31 March 2021

BALANCE SHEET

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Council.

		31 March '21		Revised 31 March '20
		£000	£000	£000
Property, Plant & Equipment	Note 7			
- Other land and buildings		43,871		46,774
- Vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment		1,817		2,151
- Infrastructure assets		1,764		1,995
- Community assets		3,293		2,965
- Surplus assets		2,410		2,571
- Assets under Construction		31,243		5,740
			84,398	
Investment Properties	Note 10	9,070		15,486
Intangible Assets	Note 11	616	9,686	785
			94,084	78,467
Long Term Investments	Note 12	20,923		21,408
Long Term Debtors	Note 15	5,187	26,110	2,483
TOTAL LONG TERM ASSETS			120,194	102,358
Assets Held For Sale	Note 17	-		255
Short Term Investments	Note 12	4,702		21,921
Short Term Debtors	Note 15	19,297		10,098
Cash and Cash Equivalents	Note 16	8,906		15,688
CURRENT ASSETS			32,905	47,962
Provisions	Note 19	(604)		(401)
Short Term Creditors	Note 18	(23,300)		(20,414)
CURRENT LIABILITIES			(23,904)	(20,815)
Provisions	Note 19	(3,158)		(2,115)
Long Term Borrowing	Note 12	(1,522)		(1,522)
Net Pension Liability	Note 33	(37,484)		(24,126)
Grant Receipts in Advance	Note 29	(2,489)		(1,997)
- Capital				
- Revenue		(7,672)		(4,058)
LONG TERM LIABILITIES			(52,325)	(33,818)
NET ASSETS			76,870	95,687
USABLE RESERVES				
- General Fund	Note 20	3,854		3,854
- General Reserve	Note 20	974		772
- Earmarked Reserves	Note 6	23,336		11,859
- Capital Receipts Reserve	Note 20	-		-
- Capital grants Unapplied	Note 20	224		300
			28,388	16,785
UNUSABLE RESERVES				
- Revaluation Reserve	Note 21	15,983		21,355
- Financial Instrument Revaluation Reserve	Note 21	925		1,403
- Pensions Reserve	Note 21	(37,488)		(24,126)
- Capital Adjustment Account	Note 21	78,111		79,327
- Deferred Capital Receipts	Note 21	147		148
- Collection Fund Adjustment Account	Note 21	(8,874)		997
- Short-term Accumulating Compensated Absences Account	Note 21	(322)		(202)
			48,482	78,902
TOTAL RESERVES			76,870	95,687

THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the authority during the reporting period.

	2020/21		2019/20
	£000	£000	£000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash Inflows			
Council Tax receipts	(11,079)		(10,706)
NNDR Receipts	(8,960)		(14,687)
DWP grants for benefits	(26,960)		(28,483)
Other Government grants	(81,585)		(8,365)
Cash received for goods and services	(9,557)		(15,940)
Interest received	(1,141)		(1,260)
Cash inflows generated from operating activities	(139,282)		(79,441)
Cash Out Flows			
Cash paid to and on behalf of employees	15,427		14,647
Housing Benefit paid out	26,317		28,499
Other operating cash payments	65,999		18,649
Precepts paid to other authorities	4,782		4,182
Interest paid	397		660
Cash outflows generated from operating activities	112,922		66,637
Net Cash Inflow from operating activities		(26,360)	(12,804)
INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
- Purchase of property plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	31,288		10,280
- Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	(422)		(1,588)
- Capital grants	(6,572)		(2,495)
- Proceeds from short-term and long-term investments	(17,704)		(4,791)
Net cash outflow from investing activities		6,590	1,406
FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
- Cash Payments for the reduction of the outstanding liabilities relating to finance leases (Principal)	300		302
- Other payments for financing activities	26,252		10,385
Net cash outflow from financing activities		26,552	10,687
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		6,782	(711)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		(15,688)	(14,977)
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		(8,906)	(15,688)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Accounting Policies

i. The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2020/21 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2021. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Council to prepare the Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Council Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 and the Service Reporting Code of Practice (SeRCOP) 2020/21, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and statutory guidance issued under section 12 of the 2003 Act. The accounting convention adopted in the Statement of Accounts is principally historical cost, modified by the revaluation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments.

ii. The Code requires that local authorities prepare their accounts on a going concern basis, as they can only be discontinued under statutory prescription. For these reasons, the Council does not consider that there is material uncertainty in respect of its ability to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future.

The Council has made projections of its cash balances and reserves up until the end of March 2024 (The financial year end following the signing of the accounts) and has concluded that these also demonstrate that the accounts can be prepared on a Going Concern basis.

The cashflow estimates show a forecast balance of over £10m at the end of March 2024. The budget that was agreed by Council in March 2022 showed a forecast General Fund balance of £3.9m and £19.m in earmarked reserves at the end of March 2023, and £3.9m General Fund and £14.7m in earmarked reserves at the end of March 2024. The balance at the end of March 2024 will fall between these two values and is significantly in excess of the adequate level of General Fund reserves determined by the Council's Chief Finance Officer (as determined when setting the 2022/23 budget and in accordance with s25 of the Local Government Act 2003).

iii. Accruals of Income & Expenditure

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

- Income from the provision of services in the form of sales, fees, charges and rents is recognised and accounted for in the period to which they relate.
- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees, transport related, premises related and supplies and services related expenditure) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made, with the exception of quarterly utility payments where no actual apportionment is made for bills spanning two financial years.
- Interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- Where income and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Provision is made for doubtful debts and known uncollectable debts are written off in accordance with the Council's agreed policy.

iv. 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 investments that mature in no more than three weeks or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value, and are used to meet short term liquidity requirements. 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.

v. Prior Period Adjustments, Changes in Accounting Policies and Estimates and Errors

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

Changes in accounting policies are only made when required by proper accounting practices or the change provides more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions, other events and conditions on the Council's financial position or financial performance. Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively (unless stated otherwise) by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period as if the new policy had always been applied.

Prior Year Adjustments

A number of prior year adjustments have been identified during the audit of the 2020/21 accounts. The core statements and notes have been updated to reflect these changes. Further details can be found in the relevant notes, as detailed below:

Note 2 - Expenditure and Funding Analysis

Note 7 - Property, Plant and Equipment

Note 32 - Leases

Note 33 - Pension Scheme

vi. Charges to Revenue for Non - Current Assets (Property, Plant and Equipment and Intangible Assets)

Services, support services and trading accounts are debited with the following amounts to record the cost of holding fixed 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 fixed assets attributable to the service.

The Council is not required to raise council tax to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisations. Depreciation, revaluation, impairment losses and amortisations are therefore transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

vii. Employee Benefits

Benefits Payable during Employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave, and non-monetary benefits (e.g. cars) for current employees and are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Council. An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlements and flexi time earned by employees but not taken before the year-end which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the salary rates applicable in the following accounting year, being the period in which the employee takes the benefit. The accrual is charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement so that holiday benefits are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

Post Employment Benefits (Pensions)

The Council participates in one scheme, the Local Government Pension Scheme, which is a defined benefit final salary scheme administered by Hertfordshire County Council.

The liabilities of the Hertfordshire County Council pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit 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 future earnings for current employees.

Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate of 2.5%. The discount rate has been determined as the long term government bond yield plus an allowance for the average difference between the yield on corporate bonds and government bonds. This difference in yields is a result of the difference in the risk of default. This approach has been adopted as government bonds have a long enough term to match the term of the liabilities whereas corporate bonds have shorter terms.

The assets of Hertfordshire County Council pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:

- quoted securities – current bid price;
- unquoted securities – professional estimate;
- unit trust and managed fund investments (including property) – current bid price and disclosed in line with the requirements of IAS19.

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

- 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 / gain – the increase / decrease in liabilities arising from current year decisions whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years - debited / credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Non Distributed Costs;
- interest cost – the expected increase in the present value of liabilities during the year as they move one year closer to being paid – debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement;
- expected return on assets – the annual investment return on the pension fund assets attributable to the Council, based on an average of the expected long-term return, credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement;

- gains or losses on settlements and curtailments – the result of actions to relieve the Council of liabilities or events that reduce the expected future service or accrual of benefits of employees – debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Non Distributed Costs;
- 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 – debited to the Pensions Reserve;
- contributions paid to the 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 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.

In line with the requirements of the Code the past service contribution is no longer a current revenue item but is included as part of the payments to the pension fund (in accordance with pension scheme regulations) and is treated as a cash flow item which reduces the pensions liability. This is also in line with the requirements of the Code.

Further information can be found in Hertfordshire County Council's Pension Fund's Annual Report which is available upon request from LPP, Hertfordshire County Council, Post point CHO 033, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DQ.

viii. Events after the Balance Sheet Date

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

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

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

ix. Government grants and contributions - revenue and capital

Grants and contributions relating to capital and revenue expenditure are accounted for on an accruals basis and recognised in the accounts when there is reasonable assurance that the Council will comply with any conditions attached to the payments, and the grants or contributions will be received.

The grant or contribution is recognised immediately within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as income, except to the extent that the grant or contribution has a condition relating to the initial recognition that the Council has not satisfied.

Monies received as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as a liability within the Grants Receipts in Advance Account. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (attributable revenue grants and contributions) or Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income (non-ring fenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

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 expenditure.

Revenue grants specific to service provision are shown against the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. General grants allocated by central government directly to local authorities as additional revenue funding which are non- ring fenced are credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

x. Minimum revenue provision

In accordance with current legislation the minimum revenue provision (MRP) for the redemption of debt is required to be calculated on a prudent basis having regard to guidelines set out for application of the prudential code. Following the disposal of the Council's Housing stock the Council has a negative capital financing requirement and so the calculated MRP is nil.

xi. Overheads and support services

As the Council does not include the recharge of overheads and support services in how they monitor and manage financial performance they are no longer included in the year end accounts

xii. Provision for bad debt

The value of receivables (debtors) shown on the Balance Sheet is adjusted for doubtful debts. The level of bad debt provision is reviewed annually. Uncollectable debts are written off against the provision. The following methods are used:

Trade Accounts Receivable & Housing Benefits Overpayments - Age and Collectability

National Non Domestic Rates - Currently 100% of outstanding arrears

Council Tax - 0.46% against the net debit due reviewed against sums written off and opening yearly balances

xiii. Revenue expenditure funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS)

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 is made which reverses out the amounts charged so that there is no impact on the level of council tax.

xiv. Capital receipts

Capital Receipts arise from the sale of non-current assets (Property, Plant and Equipment and Investment Properties). Further to the introduction of the Prudential Capital Finance System on 1 April 2004, capital receipts are all deemed to be “usable” and are held within the Capital Receipts Reserve.

Prior to this date, in accordance with Government legislation, a proportion of certain receipts had to be “set aside” and are retained within the Capital Adjustment Account as provision for the repayment of debt.

xv. VAT

Income and expenditure excludes any amounts related to VAT, as all VAT collected is payable to HM Revenues & Customs and in most circumstances all VAT paid is recoverable from them. VAT has been included in the income and expenditure accounts only to the extent that it is irrecoverable.

xvi. Tax Income (Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates (NDR)

Non Domestic Rates (NDR)

The Council collects, administers and distributes Non Domestic Rates (NDR) for its area based on local rateable values determined by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). The tax liability is then calculated applying a business rate which is set and uniformly applied on a national basis. In 2013/14, the administration of NDR changed following the introduction of a Business Rates Retention Scheme which aims to give Councils greater incentive to grow businesses in their locality. This regime also increased the financial risk and opportunities for local authorities, with income becoming more volatile and difficult to predict.

The regime provides for local authorities to retain a proportion of the total collectable rates due in proportion of their relevant statutory share. The proportion for East Hert is 40%, the remainder being distributed to Hertfordshire County Council (10%) and Central Government (50%).

As part of the regime the Government set up a system of 'Top ups', 'Tariffs' and 'Safety Nets' that were introduced to ensure that Councils were guaranteed a minimum level of retained NDR income, thus providing some financial certainty under the new scheme. In addition to the local management of business rates, authorities are expected to finance appeals made in respect of rateable values as defined by VOA and the financial impact of uncollected business rate income as at 31 March 2021. Authorities are required to make a provision for these assets and liabilities in their accounts.

The accounting arrangements for the Non Domestic Rates are summarised as follows:

- the Council's element of Retained Business Rate income, Tariffs, Top Up and Safety net is included in the CI&E Statement based on the relevant regulations.
- the NDR Collection Fund is prepared on an agency arrangement basis. Relevant proportions of the accounts Surplus/Deficit/taxpayer's Arrears and Provisions are allocated to the relevant Preceptors and Government and accounted for as Debtors/ Creditors in the Billing Authority's Accounts
- the council's cashflow statement only includes the council's share of council tax, net cash collected and precepts paid.

Council Tax

The Council as billing authority acts as agent with regards to the collection and distribution of Council Tax on behalf of itself, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Police and Town and Parish Councils. In line with these agency arrangements, and in order to reflect the risks and rewards within the Council, the following transactions are included:

- the Council's Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement includes only the statutory precept under regulation.
- a debtor/creditor to reflect the difference between the various preceptors share of cash collected in the year and cash paid to the preceptors on account in line with the appropriate regulations will be included in the Council's balance sheet.
- the council's cashflow statement only includes the council's share of council tax, net cash collected and precepts paid

xvii. Interests in Other Entities

The Council has set up a wholly owned subsidiary called Millstream Property Investments Ltd, which has the principal activity of acquiring, developing and refurbishing properties. The Company's accounts are consolidated into the Council's accounts and the consolidated accounts are included in the Council's Statement of Accounts.

Additionally, the Council also has an interest in Hertfordshire Building Control Limited, a company which is equally owned by seven Hertfordshire authorities.

2. Expenditure and Funding Analysis

The object of the Expenditure and Funding Analysis is to demonstrate to Council Taxpayers how the funding available to the authority (ie government grants, rents, council tax and business rates) for the year has been used in providing services in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by authorities in accordance with general accepted accounting practices. The Expenditure and Funding Analysis also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the Council's services. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

2020/21	Net Expenditure chargeable to the General Fund balance £000	Adjustments between Funding & Accounting basis £000	Net Expenditure in CIES £000
Chief Executive, PA's & Directors	381	202	583
Communications, Strategy & Policy	1,226	179	1,405
Human Resources & Organisation Development	459	71	530
Strategic Finance & Property	3,461	923	4,384
Legal & Democratic Services	1,217	127	1,344
Housing & Health	2,512	521	3,033
Planning & Building Control	1,565	274	1,839
Operations	4,503	1,565	6,068
Shared revenues & Benefits Service	529	481	1,010
Shared Business & Technology Services	1,784	4	1,788
Net cost of services	17,637	4,347	21,984
Other income and Expenditure	(29,240)	9,563	(19,677)
(Surplus) or Deficit on Provision of Services	(11,603)	13,910	2,307
Operating General Fund balance at 1 April 2020	16,785		
Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	11,603		
Closing General Fund Balance at 31 March 2021	28,388		

2019/20	Net Expenditure chargeable to the General Fund balance £000	Adjustments between Funding & Accounting basis £000	Net Expenditure in CIES £000
Chief Executive, PA's & Directors	388	201	589
Communications, Strategy & Policy	1,024	437	1,461
Human Resources & Organisation Development	514	101	615
Strategic Finance & Property	3,474	933	4,407
Legal & Democratic Services	1,381	152	1,533
Housing & Health	2,301	493	2,794
Planning & Building Control	1,269	342	1,611
Operations	3,413	2,162	5,575
Shared revenues & Benefits Service	573	617	1,190
Shared Business & Technology Services	2,029	3	2,032
Net cost of services	16,366	5,441	21,807
Other income and Expenditure	(16,976)	(5,347)	(22,323)
(Surplus) or Deficit on Provision of Services	(610)	94	(516)
Operating General Fund balance at 1 April 2019	16,175		
Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	610		
Closing General Fund Balance at 31 March 2020	16,785		

Adjustment to EFA and EFA notes

The error was identified when producing the 2020/21 accounts and adjusted at this stage. It appears that the figures for the IAS19 adjustment were not correctly input into the Note to EFA due to human error. The inconsistencies between the EFA and Note to EFA were also identified and corrected. The error doesn't affect any years prior to 2019/20.

The comparative figures for 2019/20 have been restated within the table on the previous page. The restatement is following a review of the prior year accounts which identified an error in the prior year figures in the EFA in relation to the adjustment made in 19/20 for IAS 19 and to correct inconsistencies between the EFA and Note to EFA, The below table sets out the resulting changes in the Note.

	Original 2019/20 £000's	Restated 2019/20 £000's	Change (+ increase/ - decrease) £000's
Adjustments between Funding & Accounting basis column			
Other income and expenditure	(19,666)	(22,323)	(2,657)
(Surplus)/Deficit on provision of services	2,141	(516)	(2,657)
Net Expenditure in CIES column			
Other income and expenditure	(2,690)	(5,347)	(2,657)
(Surplus)/Deficit on provision of services	2,751	94	(2,657)

The note to EFA is also updated to show consistency with the Expenditure and Funding Analysis above.

This error does not have a balance sheet impact and so no third balance sheet is required.

Note to the Expenditure and Funding Analysis - Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis

2020/21

Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts

	Adjustments for Capital Purposes (Note 1) £000	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments (Note2) £000	Other Differences (Note 3) £000	Total Adjustments £000
Chief Executive, PA's & Directors	154	43	5	202
Communications, Strategy & Policy	43	126	10	179
Human Resources & Organisation Development	22	46	3	71
Strategic Finance & Property	746	162	15	923
Legal & Democratic Services	32	87	8	127
Housing & Health	229	268	24	521
Planning & Building Control	55	202	17	274
Operations	1,387	170	8	1,565
Shared Revenues & Benefits Service	64	387	30	481
Shared Business & Technology Services	4	0	0	4
Net cost of services	2,736	1,491	120	4,347
Other income and expenditure from the Funding Analysis	(164)	(203)	9,930	9,563
Difference between General Fund (surplus) or deficit and Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement (surplus) or deficit	2,572	1,288	10,050	13,910

2019/20

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Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts

	Adjustments for Capital Purposes (Note 1) £000	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments (Note2) £000	Other Differences (Note 3) £000	Total Adjustments £000
Chief Executive, PA's & Directors	134	64	3	201
Communications, Strategy & Policy	177	253	7	437
Human Resources & Organisation Development	22	78	1	101
Strategic Finance & Property	666	257	10	933
Legal & Democratic Services	24	123	5	152
Housing & Health	207	272	14	493
Planning & Building Control	47	283	12	342
Operations	1,881	273	8	2,162
Shared Revenues & Benefits Service	53	548	16	617
Shared Business & Technology Services	3	-	0	3
Net cost of services	3,214	2,151	76	5,441
Other income and expenditure from the Funding Analysis	(5,008)	156	(495)	(5,347)
Difference between General Fund (surplus) or deficit and Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement (surplus) or deficit	(1,794)	2,307	(419)	94

Note 1 – Adjustments for Capital Purposes

Adjustments for capital purposes for this column add 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 asset;
- Financing and investment income and expenditure – the statutory charges for capital financing 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 received in the year to those receivable without conditions or for which 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 were satisfied in the year.

Note 2 – Net change for the pensions' adjustments

Net change for the removal of pension contributions and the addition of IAS19 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 services costs;
- For Financing and investment income and expenditure – the net interest on the defined benefit liability is charged to the CIES.

Note 3 – Other Differences

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

- 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.

3. Accounting Standards Issued not yet adopted

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) requires the Council to disclose information relating to accounting standards that have been issued but have not yet been adopted that could have a material impact on the accounts.

For this disclosure the standards introduced by the 2021/22 Code are:

- Definition of a Business: Amendments to IFRS 3 Business Combinations.
- Interest Rate Benchmark Reform: Amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39 and IFRS7.
- Interest Rate Benchmark Reform - Phase 2: Amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39, IFRS7, IFRS 4 and IFRS 16.

The Code requires implementation from 1 April 2021 and therefore there is no impact on the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts.

4. 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 that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account professional advice (e.g. actuarial advice), historical experience, current trends and other relevant information. Items included within the Council's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2021 for which there is a risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming year are as follows:

Pension Liability

The value of the pension liability as at 31st March 2021 is £37.5m. This liability depends on a number of factors, including discount rates, changes in retirement age, mortality rates and expected return on pension's assets. These are determined on an actuarial basis by Hymans Robertson, the actuaries for the Hertfordshire pension fund.

Change in assumptions at 31 March 2020	Approximate % increase to Employer liability	Approximate monetary amount (£m)
0.5% decrease in Real Discount Rate	9%	15,571
0.5% increase in the Salary Increase Rate	1%	1,315
0.5% increase in the Pension Increase Rate	8%	13,948

The figures in the table above give an indication of the potential impact that a change in assumptions could represent to the value of the pension liability. The figures represent key factors taken in isolation and are only indicative of the estimated impact as the assumptions interact in complex ways. The approach taken is consistent with that adopted to derive the IAS19 figures as per note 33.

Property, Plant and Equipment

The Council's assets are shown in the accounts at either Fair Value, Fair Value (Existing Use) or Market Value (dependent on the class of asset. Further information can be found in Note 7). The valuations are carried out by our internal asset management team in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Valuation professional standards and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). These valuations are arrived at using recent comparable transactions and for specialised properties using depreciated replacement cost methodology.

The tables below show the 31 March 2021 value of the assets in the Statement of Accounts, the impact a 5% increase or decrease in asset value would have on the Balance Sheet and the depreciation charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure statement.

	31/03/2021	-5%		5%	
	Value	Movement	Value	Movement	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Other Land & Buildings	43,871	41,677	(2,194)	46,065	2,194
Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equip.	20,578	19,549	(1,029)	21,607	1,029
Infrastructure	8,560	8,132	(428)	8,988	428
Community Assets	3,384	3,215	(169)	3,553	169
Surplus Assets	2,410	2,290	(121)	2,531	121
	78,803	74,863	(3,940)	82,743	3,940

Depreciation

	31/03/2021	-5%		5%	
	Value	Movement	Value	Movement	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Other Land & Buildings	853	810	(43)	896	43
Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equip.	531	504	(27)	558	27
Infrastructure	251	238	(13)	264	13
	1,635	1,553	(82)	1,717	82

Investment Properties

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, based on the amount at which the asset could be exchanged between knowledgeable parties at arm's-length. The Council's investment property has been valued as at 31 December 2020 (with a statement of professional opinion given that there has been no material change up to 31 March 2021) by the Council's Estates and Asset Manager, Anna Osborne (MRICS) and Principal Assets and Estates Surveyor Lucy Smith (MRICS) in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

Non Domestic Rates – Provision for outstanding appeals

Since the Retained Business Rate scheme was introduced on 1st April 2013 Local Authorities have assumed the liability for refunding business rate payers who successfully appeal against the rateable value of their property.

Appeals against the rateable value of a property are lodged by the rate payer with the Valuation Office Agency, who provides information of all the appeals that have been lodged to the Council.

An estimate of the potential impact of successful appeals has been calculated using analysis provided from Inform (a member of the Institute of Rating, Revenues and Valuation) and local knowledge.

The carrying amount of the provision at 31 March 2021 is £11.2m, of which the Council's share of £4.477 is reflected in the accounts. Higher success rates of appeals could result in a need for a larger provision. An increase of 5% would change the required provision by £560k affecting the surplus/deficit distribution to the Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Central Government.

Debtors - As at 31 March 2021 the authority had a balance of short term debtors of £21.7m. A review of the age and collectability of the debts outstanding has resulted in a bad debt provision of £2.5m. If collection rates were to deteriorate then an additional provision would be required.

5. Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations

2020/21

Adjustments involving the Capital Adjustment Account:

Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:

Charges for depreciation of non current assets	1,635	-	-	(1,635)
Revaluation / Impairment on Property Plant and Equipment	437	-	-	(437)
Movements in the market value of Investment Properties	6,422	-	-	(6,422)
Amortisation of intangible assets	416	-	-	(416)
Capital grants and contributions applied	(6,373)	-	-	6,373
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	248	-	-	(248)
Revenue grants written down to the Capital Adjustment Account	-	-	-	-
Disposal of non current assets	284	-	-	(284)
Disposal of investment Properties	-	-	-	-

Insertion of items not debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:

Statutory adjustment relating to capital element of principal repayment for finance lease	-	-	-	-
Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund	-	-	-	-

Adjustments involving the Capital Grants Unapplied Account:

Capital grants and contributions unapplied credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	-	-	-	-
Application of grants to capital financing transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account	-	-	(76)	76

Adjustments involving the Capital Receipts Reserve:

Transfer of cash sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(422)	422	-	-
Use of Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	-	(422)	-	422

Adjustments involving the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve:

Statutory adjustment relating to capital element of principal payment for finance lease	1	-	-	(1)
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Adjustments involving the Pensions Reserve:

Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (see Note 33)	3,939	-	-	(3,939)
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(2,593)	-	-	2,593

Adjustments involving the Collection Fund Adjustment Account:

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	9,871	-	-	(9,871)
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Adjustment involving the Accumulated Absences Account

Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	120	-	-	(120)
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Total Adjustments	13,985	0	(76)	(13,909)
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2019/20 comparative figure

	Usable Reserves			
	General Fund balance £000	Capital Receipts Reserve £000	Capital Grants Unapplied £000	Movement in Unusable Reserves £000
Adjustments involving the Capital Adjustment Account:				
Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:				
Charges for depreciation of non current assets	1,558	-	-	(1,558)
Revaluation / Impairment on Property Plant and Equipment	885	-	-	(885)
Movements in the market value of Investment Properties	1,003	-	-	(1,003)
Amortisation of intangible assets	419	-	-	(419)
Capital grants and contributions applied	(2,700)	-	-	2,700
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	351	-	-	(351)
Revenue grants written down to the Capital Adjustment Account	-	-	-	-
Disposal of non current assets	217	-	-	(217)
Disposal of investment Properties	-	-	-	-
Insertion of items not debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:				
Statutory adjustment relating to capital element of principal repayment for finance lease	-	-	-	-
Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund	-	-	-	-
Adjustments involving the Capital Grants Unapplied Account:				
Capital grants and contributions unapplied credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	-	-	-	-
Application of grants to capital financing transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account	-	-	(49)	49
Adjustments involving the Capital Receipts Reserve:				
Transfer of cash sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(1,588)	1,588	-	-
Use of Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	-	(3,480)	-	3,480
Adjustments involving the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve:				
Statutory adjustment relating to capital element of principal payment for finance lease	2	-	-	(2)
Adjustments involving the Pensions Reserve:				
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (see Note 33)	4,763	-	-	(4,763)
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(2,456)	-	-	2,456
Adjustments involving the Collection Fund Adjustment Account:				
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	(495)	-	-	495
Adjustment involving the Accumulated Absences Account				
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	76	-	-	(76)
Total Adjustments	2,035	(1,892)	(49)	(94)

6. Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves

Amounts appropriated to / from reserves are distinguished from service expenditure disclosed in the Statement of Accounts. Reserves include earmarked reserves set aside for specific policy purposes and balances which represent resources set aside for purposes such as general contingencies and cashflow management.

This note sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund in earmarked reserves to provide funding for future expenditure plans and the amounts posted back from earmarked reserves to meet General Fund expenditure in 2020/21.

	Balance 1 April 2019 £000	Transfers Out/(In) 2019/20 £000	Balance 31 March 2020 £000	Transfers Out 2020/21 £000	Transfers In 2020/21 £000	Balance 31 March 2021 £000
Interest Equalisation Reserve	(1,636)	(149)	(1,785)	-	(195)	(1,980)
Insurance Fund	(943)	8	(935)	27	-	(908)
Emergency Planning Reserve	(36)	-	(36)	-	-	(36)
LDF/Green Belt Reserve	(62)	-	(62)	-	-	(62)
Housing Condition Survey Reserve	(90)	-	(90)	-	-	(90)
Council Elections Reserve	(73)	73	-	-	(28)	(28)
Sinking fund - Leisure Utilities / Pension Reserve	(228)	-	(228)	-	-	(228)
Performance Reward Grant Reserve	(10)	-	(10)	-	-	(10)
Waste Recycling Income Volatility Reserve	(103)	-	(103)	-	-	(103)
Footbridge Reserve	(150)	-	(150)	-	-	(150)
DCLG Preventing Repossessions	(18)	-	(18)	-	-	(18)
New Homes Bonus Priority Spend	(4,692)	99	(4,593)	127	(1,602)	(6,068)
Collection Fund Reserve	-	(2,554)	(2,554)	591	-	(1,963)
DEFRA Flood Support	(4)	-	(4)	-	-	(4)
Neighbourhood Planning	(14)	(50)	(64)	-	-	(64)
IER	(55)	(51)	(106)	-	-	(106)
MTFP Transition Funding Reserve	(730)	57	(673)	260	-	(413)
Flexible Homelessness Grant	(230)	(124)	(354)	-	-	(354)
Preventing Homelessness New Burdens Reserve	(31)	-	(31)	-	-	(31)
Healthy Lifestyle Promotions Reserve	(33)	-	(33)	-	-	(33)
Land Charges New Burdens	(30)	-	(30)	-	-	(30)
HB Subsidy Volatility Reserve	(60)	60	-	-	(50)	(50)
Section 31 NNDR	-	-	-	-	(10,607)	(10,607)
Total	(9,228)	(2,631)	(11,859)	1,005	(12,482)	(23,336)

Interest Equalisation Reserve	This reserve was established to assist the Council in managing the financial implications of adverse interest rate fluctuations. A further £195k has been added to this reserve in 2020/21
Insurance Fund	Its purpose is to support the Council's insurance and risk management process in anticipation of setting up a self-insurance fund in some areas to reduce future insurance premiums. £27k was utilised in 2020/21 to match expenditure.
Emergency Planning Reserve	The reserve was set up to support the work of an Emergency Planning Officer Group that has been established within the Council. There was no call on it in 2020/21.
Local Development Framework / Green Belt Reserve	This reserve was established in 2008/09 to smooth expenditure over the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). There has been no call on the reserve in 2020/21.
Housing Condition Survey Reserve Council Elections Reserve	This reserve was established to fund House Condition Surveys. There has been no movement on the reserve in 2020/21. Established to smooth the cost of Elections over the MTFP. £28k was added to the reserve in 2020/21 to fund the cost of future elections.
Sinking Fund – Leisure Utilities and Pension	Further to the Council awarding a new leisure contract to Sports and Leisure Management from January 2009, the Council provided guarantees in respect of utilities and employers pension costs. There was no call on it in 2020/21.
Performance Reward Grant Reserve	The Council received revenue grant funding in respect of the Local Area Agreement (Performance Reward Grant) in 2009/10. There was no call on the reserve in 2020/21.
Waste Recycling Income Volatility Reserve	The reserve has been established to manage income volatility in recycling income. There has been no movement on this reserve in 2020/21.
Footbridge Reserve	The Council's MTFP included setting aside £50k a year from 2010/11 to 2012/13 in order to meet any potential maintenance costs or liabilities that may arise relating to the footbridge over the River Stort. There was no call on the reserve 2020/21.
DCL Preventing Repossessions	This reserve was established from unspent Government Grant monies. There were no appropriations in 2020/21.

New Homes Bonus Priority Spend	This reserve was established from unspent New Homes Bonus monies received from DCLG and the 2014/15 GF underspend. Over the years, further amounts of New Homes Bonus monies have been transferred to this reserve and £172k was appropriated in 2020/21 to fund various items.
Collection Fund Reserve	As a result of a Council decision in January 2014, a Government Funding Risk Reserve was established to smooth the effect on the Council of income volatility following the new NDR funding regime. This was subsequently renamed the Collection Fund Reserve. £2,554k was added to the reserve in 2019/20 from additional s31 grants and NDR growth to help smooth future fluctuations. No movement on this reserve in 2020/21.
DEFA Flood Support for Local Businesses	This reserve was established from the unspent element of a DEFRA grant received to enable the Council to support local businesses to repair damage following the flooding in 2013/14. There has been no call on this in 2020/21.
Neighbourhood Planning Grant	Created in 2014/15 from unspent Neighbourhood Planning grant received from MHCLG to fund future spend. There has been no call on this reserve in 2020/21.
IER Grant	This reserve was created from unspent grant monies received from the Cabinet Office to fund the costs of additional work involved in the Individual Electoral Registration Scheme. Further unspent grant monies were added to the reserve in 2019/20. There has been no call on this reserve in 2020/21.
MTFP Transition Funding Reserve	A new reserve established in 2016/17 from the Transition Grant awarded by MHCLG as part of the 2016/17 financial settlement. £260k has been utilised in 2020/21 to fund expenditure.
Flexible Homelessness Grant	Established from unspent Government Grant monies in 2017/18 specifically to prevent and deal with homelessness. Further unspent grant monies have been added in 2019/20. No call on this reserve in 2021.
Preventing Homelessness New Burdens	A new reserve set up in 2017/18 from unspent Government Grant to deal with Homelessness. There was no call on this in 2020/21.
Healthy Lifestyle Promotions	A new reserve created in 2018/19 from unspent grant monies received to promote healthy living. There has been no call on this in 2020/21.
Land Charges New Burdens	This reserve was created from unused government grant received to cover costs of transferring the local land charges register to HM Land Registry. There has been no call on this in 2020/21.
HB Subsidy Volatility Reserve	This reserve was created in 2018/19 to manage the financial implications of fluctuations in Housing Benefit subsidy. £50k was added to this reserve in 2020/21.
NNDR Section 31 Reserve	A new reserve created in 2020/21 from Section 31 grants received in 2020/21 but for use in 2021/22 to fund NNDR Collection Fund transactions.

7. Property, Plant & Equipment

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

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of Property, Plant and Equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Council and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (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. Assets are then carried in the Balance Sheet using the following measurement bases:

- Operational non-specialised property – fair value based on existing use value. The multi-storey car parks and surface car parks have been valued using the Existing Use Valuation method on the basis of income & expenditure, profit information;
- Operational specialised property (inc leisure centres and Hertford theatre) – depreciated replacement cost (DRC).;
- Community assets – nominal value or historical cost;
- Infrastructure and all other assets – depreciated historical cost;
- Surplus assets - fair value, estimated at highest and best use from a market participant's perspective.

In the event of a future disposal the market value at that time may realise more or less than the carrying value. Since April 2016 the Council has revalued its assets on an annual basis (formerly four year rolling basis). 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.

The Valuations were carried out by the Council's Estates and Asset Manager, Anna Osborne (MRICS) and Principal Assets and Estates Surveyor Lucy Smith (MRICS) on the basis of standards of professional practice set out in the guidance below:

- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Valuation - Professional Standards ('The red Book')
- International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)
- Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting ('The CIPFA Code')

The valuer has arrived at their opinion of Fair Value, Fair Value (Existing Use) and Market Value from referring to recent comparable transactions. For Specialised properties the Fair value (Existing Use) has been derived using Depreciated Replacement Cost methodology.

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

- 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. The current asset values used in the accounts are based upon a certificate issued by the Council's Asset & Estates Manager, Anna Osborne MRICS and Lucy Smith MRICS as at 31 March 2021. Property, plant and equipment are classified in the Balance Sheet in line with current Accounting Codes of Practice.

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.

Disposals

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

The gain or loss on disposal is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of fixed assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are transferred from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Capital Adjustment Account (the carrying amount of the asset) and the usable Capital Receipts Reserve (the disposal proceeds).

Depreciation

All Property, Plant and Equipment, other than freehold land and Community Assets (with two exceptions being recreational facilities with a building element) are depreciated on a straight line basis over the period of the assets useful economic life. The following periods are used:

Freehold Land	No depreciation
Council Buildings	20 to 60 years
Infrastructure	10 to 20 years
Equipment, Furniture and Fittings	5 to 20 years
Community Assets	No depreciation (30 years for exceptions)
Non-operational assets	40 to 60 years
Enhancement to Leased Properties	10 to 25 years
Plant	20 to 35 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 are depreciated separately.

Componentisation

In line with accounting requirements the Council considers the identification of individual asset components on a prospective basis following either the enhancement of an asset or its revaluation. The Council has determined that it will adopt a de-minimis value of £1m for individual assets.

Prior year Adjustment

In 2020/21, there was an error in the presentation of Other Land and Buildings due to an oversight when the council changed the accounting policy in 2016 (i.e., all other land and buildings and surplus assets are revalued annually in contrast with a four-year rolling basis).

Both the gross cost of other land and buildings and accumulated depreciation and impairment are overstated by £30.899 million as of 31 March 2020 and £29.273 million as of 1 April 2019. Since these two components net out, the overall balance of property, plant and equipment is not misstated. However, the PPE note has been updated as noted below to reflect the correct balances.

In line with the above, the relevant rows in the note such as 'accumulated depreciation written out' and 'impairment (reversal) recognised in the service' should also be adjusted to arrive at a balance of nil.

The following changes were made:

Property, plant and equipment (other land and buildings)	Restated figure (£)*	Adjustment (£)	Figure previously reported (£)
Cost or valuation			
As at 1/4/2019	£48,357,000	(£29,273,000)	£77,630,000
Additions	366,000	0	366,000
Disposals	(217,000)	0	(217,000)
Revaluations	(£847,000)	(£741,000)	(£106,000)
Impairment (reversal) recognised in the service	(£885,000)	(£885,000)	£0
Total as at 31/3/2020	£46,774,000	(£30,899,000)	£77,673,000
Depreciation and impairment			
As at 1/4/2019	£0	(£29,273,000)	£29,273,000
Charge for year	741,000	0	741,000
Acc depreciation w/o on revaluation	(£741,000)	(£741,000)	£0
Impairment (reversal) recognised in the service	£0	(£885,000)	£885,000
Total as at 31/3/2020	£0	(£30,899,000)	£30,899,000

The table on the following page have been updated to correct the error.

Property, Plant & Equipment

Cost or Valuation	Other Land & Buildings (restated) £000	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equip. £000	Community Assets £000	Surplus Assets £000	Assets Under Construction £000	Total Property, Plant & Equipmen £000
2019/20						
As at 01/04/2019	48,357	20,015	2,843	2,546	1,345	75,106
Additions	366	366	213	124	4,395	5,464
Disposals	(217)	0	-	-	-	(217)
Reclassifications	0	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	(847)	-	-	(99)	-	(946)
Impairment (reversal) recognised in the service	(885)	-	-	-	-	(885)
Total as at 31/03/2020	46,774	20,381	3,056	2,571	5,740	78,522
2020/21						
As at 01/04/2020	46,774	20,381	3,056	2,571	5,740	78,522
Additions	2,768	197	328	3	25,003	28,299
Disposals	(29)	-	-	-	-	(29)
Reclassifications	(500)	-	-	-	500	-
Revaluations	(5,142)	-	-	(164)	-	(5,306)
Total as at 31/03/2021	43,871	20,578	3,384	2,410	31,243	101,486
Depreciation & Impairment						
2019/20						
As at 01/04/2019	0	17,666	91	-	-	17,757
Charge for Year	741	564	-	-	-	1,305
Acc depreciation w/o on revaluation	(741)	-	-	-	-	(741)
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment (reversal) recognised in the service	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total as at 31/03/2020	0	18,230	91	0	0	18,321
2020/21						
As at 01/04/2020	0	18,230	91	0	0	18,321
Charge for Year	853	531	-	-	-	1,384
Acc depreciation w/o on revaluation	- 853.00	-	-	-	-	(853)
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment (reversal) recognised in the service	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total as at 31/03/2021	0	18,761	91	0	0	18,852
Net Book Value						
Balance Sheet as at 31/03/20	46,774	2,151	2,965	2,571	5,740	60,201
Balance Sheet as at 31/03/21	43,871	1,817	3,293	2,410	31,243	82,634

Infrastructure Assets - Policy

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;

Infrastructure assets are measured at depreciated historical cost and depreciation is charged on a straight-line basis, which is 10 to 20 years dependant on the asset.

The government has issued a statutory instrument as an amendment to the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 (Regulation 30M) which considers the treatment of the amount to be derecognised where there is replacement expenditure. It allows that where a local authority in England replaces a component of an infrastructure asset, for the purposes of determining the carrying amount to be derecognised in respect of that component, the authority is able to determine that the amount to be derecognised is nil.

In accordance with the amendment to the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 (Regulation 30M), 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.

In accordance with the temporary relief offered by the 'Update to the Code and Specifications for Future Codes For infrastructure Assets' - November 2022. 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.

As a result the information of the above the presentation of the net book value of infrastructure assets is shown in the tables below.

	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000
Net book value (modified historical cost) as at 1st April	2,241	1,995
Additions	7	20
Derecognition	-	-
Depreciation	(253)	(251)
Impairment	-	-
Other movements in cost	-	-
Net book value (modified historical cost) as at 31 March	1,995	1,764

	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000
Infrastructure assets	1,995	1,764
Other PPE assets	60,201	82,634
Total PPE assets	62,196	84,398

Reconciliation of Additions in the year to Capital Spend

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Additions in the year (as above)	28,299	5,464
Intangible assets	247	339
Investment Properties	5	2,893
	28,551	8,696
plus REFCUS (not included in note 7)	248	352
Third Party Loan (Long Term Debtor)	2,705	1,451
Total Capital Spend	31,504	10,499

The authority has determined in accordance with Regulation [30M England or 24L Wales] 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.

8. Analysis of Fixed Assets

	31 March '21	31 March '20
	Number	Number
Council Dwellings - Hostels	3	2
- Houses	2	2
Council Offices - Freehold	2	2
- Leasehold	0	0
Service Centre - Leasehold	1	1
Cash Offices	2	2
Off-Street Car Parks (incl. Leasehold)	35	35
Swimming Pools (including 3 joint-use pools)	5	5
Parks and Recreation Grounds/Open spaces	188 HA	188 HA
Public Halls/Community Centres (incl leasehold)	9	9
Commercial Property Rented Out	56 Units	56 Units
Land Awaiting Development	1 HA	1 HA
Public Convenience	3	3

9. Heritage Assets

In line with the 2012 Code and FRS 30, the Council has identified a number of assets that meet the definition of a heritage asset and are being preserved in trust for future generations because of their cultural, environmental or historical associations.

The Council's policy is to maintain Heritage assets in order to preserve them for future generations because of their cultural and historical associations. The Council does not consider that a commercial value can be placed upon these assets and its policy is, therefore, not to disclose on the balance sheet. They continue to be included within community assets with a nominal value. The assets are insured in order to protect the Council's interest in the event of damage or destruction.

The Heritage assets held within Community assets at a nominal sum are as follows; there is no value held for these assets.

- The Castle Wall (ancient flint), Hertford
- Scott's Grotto, Ware
- Monument, remains of Church of St Mary's, Old Cross
- Community land Obelisk, Bishop's Stortford
- Flowing River Sculpture, Bishop's Stortford
- Evolution sculpture at Hartham Common
- Hertford Theatre Wall Bronze Resin Sculpture
- Civic Regalia
- Oil Painting of Wallfields, Hertford
- Chainsaw sculpture Pishiobury Park, Sawbridgeworth

10. Investment Properties

Investment properties are those that are used solely to earn rentals and/or for capital appreciation.

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, based on the amount at which the asset could be exchanged between knowledgeable parties at arm's-length. 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.

Rents 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.

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

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Rental income from investment property	(882)	(956)
Direct operating expenses arising from investment property	125	179
Net gain	(757)	(777)

There are no restrictions on the Council's ability to realise the value inherent in its investment property or on the Council's right to the remittance of income and the proceeds of disposal. The Council has no contractual obligations to purchase, construct, enhance or develop investment property. In some cases, the Council has repairing obligations which are met through revenue expenditure.

Authorities shall account for investment property in accordance with IAS 40 Investment Property and should be valued to 'Fair Value'.

Investment property is recognised at cost, including transaction costs but excluding operational components (PPE) where these can be measured reliably. Following recognition investment property is revalued on a fair value basis reflecting market state and circumstances on a given date.

The objective of this measurement approach is to estimate the price at which an orderly transaction to sell the asset or to transfer the liability would take place between market participants at the measurement date under the current market conditions.

The following table summarises the movement through additions and re-classification of investment properties over the year:

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Balance at start of the year	15,486	13,596
Additions: Not transferred through re-classification	5	2,893
Additions: Transferred through re-classification	-	-
Disposals : Transferred through re-classification	-	0
Net gains / (losses) from fair value adjustments	(6,421)	(1,003)
Balance at end of the year	9,070	15,486

In addition to arriving at the fair values for the assets, IFRS 13 seeks to increase consistency and comparability within the valuation process which has been achieved through a 'fair value hierarchy'.

Fair Value Hierarchy

All the Council's investment properties have been value assessed as Level 2 on the fair value hierarchy for valuation purposes.

Valuation Techniques Used to Determine Level 2 Values for Investment Property

The fair value of investment property has been based on the market approach using current market conditions and recent sales prices, existing lease terms and rentals and other relevant information for similar assets in the local authority area. Market conditions for these asset types are such that the level of observable inputs are significant leading to the properties being categorised at Level 2 in the fair value hierarchy.

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

Highest and Best Use

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

Valuation Process for Investment Properties

The Council's investment property has been valued as at 31 December 2020 (with a statement of professional opinion given that there has been no material change up to 31 March 2021) by the Council's Estates and Asset Manager, Anna Osborne (MRICS) and Principal Assets and Estates Surveyor Lucy Smith (MRICS) in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

11. Intangible Assets

Expenditure on non-monetary assets that do not have physical substance but are controlled by the Council as a result of past events (e.g. software licences) is capitalised when it is expected that future economic benefits or service potential will flow from the intangible asset to the Council. In addition, the Council has agreed that all software will be treated as intangible assets.

Intangible assets are measured initially at cost. Amounts are only revalued where the fair value of the assets held by the Council can be determined by reference to an active market. In practice, no intangible asset held by the Council meets this criterion, and they are therefore carried at amortised cost. The depreciable amount of an intangible asset is amortised over its useful life to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where expenditure on intangible assets qualifies as capital expenditure for statutory purposes, amortisation is not permitted to have an impact on the General Fund Balance. This is therefore reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account.

The Authority accounts for its software as intangible assets, to the extent that the software is not an integral part of a particular IT system and accounted for as part of the hardware item of Property, Plant and Equipment.

All software is given a finite useful life, based on assessments of the period that the software is expected to be of use to the Authority. The useful life assigned to the major software applications used by the Authority is 5 years. The movement on Intangible Asset balances during the year is as follows:

	Software £000	2020/21 Other Intangible £000	Total £000	Software £000	2019/20 Other Intangible £000	Total £000
Balance at start of year:						
Gross carrying amounts	5,667	-	5,667	5,328	-	5,328
Accumulated amortisation	(4,882)	-	(4,882)	(4,463)	-	(4,463)
Net carrying amount at start of year	785	-	785	865	-	865
Additions:						
Purchases	247	-	247	339	-	339
Amortisation for the period	(416)	-	(416)	(419)	-	(419)
Net carrying amount at end of year	616	-	616	785	-	785
Comprising:						
Gross carrying amounts	5,914	-	5,914	5,667	-	5,667
Accumulated amortisation	(5,298)	-	(5,298)	(4,882)	-	(4,882)
	616	-	616	785	-	785

12. Financial Instruments

Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities 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 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 authority has, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal repayable (plus accrued interest); and interest charged to the CIES is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

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 (ie where the cash flows do not take the form of a basic debt instrument).

Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost

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

Soft Loans

The Code requires that a discounted interest rate be recognised as a reduction in the fair value of the asset. Potential Council loans falling within this category relate to an assisted car purchase scheme and a cycle scheme. The Council currently has no loans under its assisted car purchase scheme and the amount advanced under the cycle scheme is considered immaterial.

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 Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Expected Credit Loss Model

The authority recognises expected credit losses on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost [or where relevant FVOCI], either on a 12-month or lifetime basis. The expected credit loss model also applies to lease receivables and contract assets. Only lifetime losses are recognised for trade receivables (debtors) held by the 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 or 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.

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income

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 Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when the asset is disposed of. 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.

Financial Guarantees

The Code includes a requirement for financial guarantees to be recognised at fair value and charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (amortised over the life of the guarantee). The levels of liability assessed at March 2021 are regarded as non material and therefore the accounting requirement has not been followed in respect of these guarantees. The Council has determined to set aside a reserve against potential liabilities under these guarantees as set out in Note 6 to the Notes to the Core Statements.

No other financial guarantees were identified in 2020/21.

Financial Instruments Balances

	Non-Current		Current	
	31 March '21	31 March '20	31 March '21	31 March '20
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Financial Assets				
Investments				
At amortised cost - principal amount	-	-	4,700	21,850
- accrued interest	-	-	2	71
Fair Value through other comprehensive income - designated equity instruments	20,923	21,222	-	-
- accrued interest	-	186	-	-
Total Investments	20,923	21,408	4,702	21,921
Cash & Cash Equivalents				
At amortised cost - principal amount	-	-	8,900	15,683
At amortised cost - accrued interest	-	-	6	5
Total Cash & Cash Equivalents	-	-	8,906	15,688
Debtors				
Financial Assets at amortised cost	5,187	2,483	19,297	10,098
Less Non Financial Instruments Assets	-	-	9,154	(2,223)
Total Debtors	5,187	2,483	10,143	7,875
Total Financial Assets	26,110	23,891	23,751	45,484
Financial liabilities				
Borrowing				
At amortised cost	(1,500)	(1,500)	0	(6,000)
At amortised cost - accrued interest	(22)	(22)	0	(191)
Creditors	-	-	23,300	(14,223)
Non Financial instruments Liabilities	-	-	9,470	6,458
Total Financial liabilities	(1,522)	(1,522)	(13,830)	(13,956)

See also Notes 35 and 36 to the Core Statements. (Investments and Borrowings)

The portion of long-term liabilities and investments due to be settled within 12 months of the Balance Sheet date are presented in the Balance Sheet under 'current liabilities' or 'current assets'. This would include accrued interest on long term liabilities and investments that are payable/receivable in 2020/21.

Financial Assets are fair value through other comprehensive income are measured at fair value on a recurring basis. The valuation techniques used to measure them maximise the use of relevant observable inputs and minimise the use of unobservable inputs and are categorised as follows:

Level 1 – quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the Council can access at the measurement date

Level 2 – inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly

Level 3 – unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

Recurring fair value measurements	Input level in fair value hierarchy	Valuation technique used to measure fair value	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Property Funds	Level 1	Unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical shares	20,427	20,899
Balance at end of the year			20,427	20,899

Transfers between Levels of the Fair Value Hierarchy

There were no transfers between input levels 1 and 2 during the year

The Fair Values of Financial Assets and Financial Liabilities that are not measured at Fair Value (but for which Fair Value disclosures are required)

Except for the financial assets carried at fair value (described in the table above), all other financial liabilities and financial assets represented by loans and receivables and long term debtors and creditors are carried on the balance sheet at amortised cost. Their fair value can be assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that take place over the remaining life of the instruments (Level 2), using the following assumptions:

- For loans from the PWLB payable, premature repayment rates from the PWLB have been applied to provide the fair value under PWLB debt redemption procedures. As the Debt Management Office provides a transparent approach allowing the exit cost to be calculated without undertaking a repayment or transfer it is appropriate to disclose the exit price.
- For non-PWLB loans payable, PWLB premature repayment rates have been applied to provide the fair value under PWLB debt redemption procedures;
- For loans receivable prevailing benchmark market rates have been used to provide the fair value;
- No early repayment or impairment is recognised;
- Where an instrument has a maturity of less than 12 months or is a trade or other receivable the fair value is taken to be the carrying amount or the billed amount;

Financial Liabilities - fair value

	Input level in fair value hierarchy	Valuation technique used to measure fair value	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Long Term Borrowing	Level 2	premature repayment rates	4,706	5,430
Balance at end of the year			4,706	5,430

Financial Instrument Revaluation Reserve

For financial instruments, there is a reserve to help manage the accounting requirements, the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve. This records unrealised revaluation gains/losses arising from holding available-for-sale investments and any unrealised losses that have not arisen from impairment of the assets. The table below sets out the transactions for the year:

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Balance at 1 April	1,402	1,929
Upward revaluation of investments	(477)	(527)
Downward revaluation of investments not charged to the Surplus/Deficit on the provision of Services	-	-
Accumulated Gains on assets sold and maturing assets written out to CI&E as part of Other Investment Income	-	-
	925	1,402

13. Financial Instruments Gains / Losses

The gains and losses recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account in relation to financial instruments are made up as follows:

	2020/21		2019/20	
	Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services £000	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure £000	Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services £000	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure £000
Net (gains) / losses on				
Financial Assets measured at fair value through profit or loss	-	-	-	-
Financial assets measured at amortised cost	-	-	-	-
Investments in equity instruments designated at fair value through other comprehensive income	-	477	-	527
Financial liabilities measured at fair value through profit or loss	-	-	-	-
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	-	-	-	-
Total net (gains)/losses	-	477	-	527
Interest Revenue				
Financial Assets measured at amortised cost	(171)	-	(391)	-
Other financial assets measured at fair value through other comprehensive income	(772)	-	(770)	-
Total interest revenue	(943)	-	(1,161)	-
Interest Expense				
Fee income:				
Financial assets or financial liabilities that are not at fair value through profit or loss	130	0	102	0
Fee expense:				
Financial assets or financial liabilities that are not at fair value through profit or loss	206	0	660	0
Total interest expense	336	-	762	-

14. Fair Value of Assets and Liabilities carried at Amortised Cost

Financial assets (represented by lending and receivables) and financial liabilities (represented by borrowings) are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost. Their fair value can be assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that will take place over the remaining term of the instrument, using the following assumptions:

- Link Asset Services has provided the Fair Value Calculation for the loans and investments.
- No early repayment or impairment is recognised.
- The fair value of trade and other receivables is taken to be the invoiced or billed amount
- Where the instrument will mature in the next 12 months, carrying amount is assumed to approximate to fair value.

The fair values are calculated as follows:

	31st March 2021		31st March 2020	
	Carrying Amount £000	Fair Value £000	Carrying Amount £000	Fair Value £000
Financial Liabilities	24,231	27,438	15,478	19,573

	31st March 2021		31st March 2020	
	Carrying Amount £000	Fair Value £000	Carrying Amount £000	Fair Value £000
Loans and Receivables	49,862	49,365	69,375	68,866

For financial liabilities, the fair value is more than the carrying amount because the Council's portfolio of loans comprises fixed rate loans where the interest rate payable is higher than the rates available for similar loans at the Balance Sheet date. The commitment to pay interest above current market rates increases the amount that the Council would have to pay if the lender requested or agreed to early repayment of the loans.

The fair value is greater than the carrying amount due to the Council's investment in Property Funds. The Fund value per unit, less the exit fee, is higher than price paid.

15. Debtors

Short Term Debtors

	31 March '21 £000	31 March '20 £000
Central government bodies	6,980	1,967
Other local authorities	2,939	622
Bodies external to general government (ie all other bodies)	11,825	9,340
Bad debt provision	(2,447)	(1,831)
	19,297	10,098

Long Term Debtors

	31 March '21 £000	31 March '20 £000
Bodies external to general government (ie all other bodies)	5,187	2,483
	5,187	2,483

16. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	31 March '21 £000	31 March '20 £000
Short-term deposits with banks	8,906	15,688
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	8,906	15,688

17. Assets Held for Sale

The Council had one asset held for sale as at 31 March 2020, as a result of a compulsory purchase order. There were no assets held for sale as at 31/03/2021.

	31 March '21 £000	31 March '20 £000
Assets Held for Sale		
Additions	0	255
	0	255

18. Creditors

Short Term Creditors

	31 March '21 £000	31 March '20 £000
Central government bodies	16,926	9,535
Other local authorities	955	3,482
Bodies external to general government (ie all other bodies)	5,419	7,397
	23,300	20,414

19. Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Authority 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 Authority 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 authority 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.

The provisions held for Non Domestic Rate appeals, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates bad debts are charged as an expense to the relevant collection fund in the first instance. This charge either reduces the Council's surplus or increases the deficit due from the collection fund. These amounts are included in the Taxation and Non-specific Grant income section on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

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 the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

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

Proper provision has been made for various liabilities which will be incurred but for which it is uncertain as to the amounts or the dates on which they arise. The provisions required cover a range of activities with the most significant being in respect of Non Domestic Rates Valuation Appeals.

	Short Term		Long Term	
	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Balance at 1 April	401	1,493	2,115	2140
Additions	2,754	0	1,043	
Amounts used	(440)	(1,884)		(25)
Transferred	(2,111)	792	-	-
Balance at 31 March	604	401	3,158	2,115

20. Usable Reserves

Movements in the Council's usable reserves are detailed in the Movement in Reserves Statement, Note 5 Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations and Note 6 Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves.

21. Unusable Reserves

	31 March '21 £000	31 March '20 £000
Revaluation Reserve	15,983	21,355
Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve	925	1,403
Capital Adjustment Account	78,111	79,327
Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve	147	148
Pensions Reserve	(37,488)	(21,610)
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	(8,874)	997
Accumulated Absences Account	(322)	(202)
Total Unusable Reserves	48,482	81,418

Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment and Intangible Assets. 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.

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Balance at 1 April		21,355
2019/20 Adjustment	-	603
Downward revaluation of assets	(4,017)	(1,927)
Downward revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services		
Surplus or deficit on revaluation of non-current assets not posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services		(1,324)
Difference between fair value depreciation and historical cost depreciation		(371)
Amount written off to the capital adjustment account		(984)
Balance at 31 March	15,983	21,355

Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve

The Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve contains the gains/losses made by the Council arising from increases/decreases in the value of its investments that have quoted market prices or otherwise do not have fixed or determinable payments. The balance is reduced when investments with accumulated gains are revalued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost or disposed of and the gains are realised.

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Balance at 1 April		1,403
Upward revaluation of investments		1,929
Downward revaluation of investments not charged to the Surplus/Deficit on the provision of Services	(478)	(526)
	(478)	(526)
Accumulated gains on assets sold and maturing assets written out to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Other Investment Income		-
Balance at 31 March	925	1,403

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 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. Note 5 provides details of the source of all transactions posted to the Account, apart from those involving the Revaluation Reserve.

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Balance at 1 April		77,069
Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or		
· Charges for depreciation of non current assets	(1,635)	(1,558)
· Charges for depreciation on revalued assets	370	337
· Movements in the market value of investment properties	(6,422)	(1,003)
· Revaluation/Impairment on Property, Plant and Equipment	(436)	(885)
· Amortisation of intangible assets	(416)	(419)
· Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	(248)	(352)
· Revenue grants written down to the Capital Adjustment Account	6,373	2,700
· Disposal of non-current assets	(284)	(217)
· Adjusting amounts written out of Revaluation Reserve	984	125.00
		(1,714)
Capital financing applied in the year:		
· Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expend	422	3,481
· Capital grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	76	49
· Application of grants to capital financing from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	-	-
· Statutory adjustment for the capital element of finance lease repayments - Refuse trucks	-	-
· Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund	-	0
		498
Balance at 31 March	78,111	79,327

Pensions Reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Council accounts for post employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Council makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pension Reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Council has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Balance at 1 April	(24,126)	(34,568)
Actuarial gains or (losses) on pensions assets and liabilities	(12,016)	12,747
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Surplus	(3,945)	(4,763)
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in	2,599	2,458
Balance at 31 March	(37,488)	(24,126)

Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve

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

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Balance at 1 April	148	150
Transfer to the General Fund for the capital element of finance lease payments	(1)	(2)
Balance at 31 March	147	148

Collection Fund Adjustment Account

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

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Balance at 1 April	997	502
Amount by which council tax income credited to the Comprehensive Income and	(9,871)	495
Balance at 31 March	(8,874)	997

Accumulated Absences Account

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the General Fund Balance from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year e.g. annual leave entitlement carried forward at 31 March. Statutory arrangements require that the impact on the General Fund Balance is neutralised by transfers to or from the Account.

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Balance at 1 April	(202)	(126)
Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of the preceding year	202	126
Amounts accrued at the end of the current year	(322)	(202)
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(120)	(76)
Balance at 31 March	(322)	(202)

22. Nature of Expenses Disclosure

	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
Employee Benefits Expenses	16,329	16,178
Other Service Expenses	23,002	20,941
Housing Benefits Transfer Payments	26,317	28,499
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	2,750	3,228
Precepts and levies	4,782	4,182
Interest payments	206	662
Changes in fair value of Investment Properties	6,422	1,003
Net interest on the net defined benefit liability & remeasurement of the defined benefit liability for long term employee benefits	564	851
Total Expenditure	80,372	75,544
Fees charges and other service income	(12,535)	(17,860)
Government grants	(49,887)	(35,488)
Interest and investment income	(1,086)	(1,239)
Income from council tax and non-domestic rates	(8,046)	(17,402)
Gain on disposal of non current assets	(138)	(1,371)
Recognised capital grants and contributions	(6,373)	(2,700)
Total Income	(78,065)	(76,060)
(Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services	2,307	(516)

23. Jointly Controlled Operations

The Council operates four services under a 'Jointly Controlled Operation' arrangement:

- Revenues and Benefits Service, with Stevenage Borough Council which commenced on 1st August 2011
- Business and Technology Services, with Stevenage Borough Council, which commenced on 1 August 2013
- Waste and Street Cleansing Service, with North Herts District Council, which commenced on 8 May 2018 and
- Hertfordshire CCTV partnership, with Stevenage Borough Council, North Hertfordshire Council, East Hertfordshire Council and Hertsmeire Borough Council. Each member of the arrangement accounts for their share of the asset, liabilities and cash flows of the CCTV in their own accounts. This is considered de minimis and not included in the table below.

The Council is lead authority for the Revenues and Benefits shared service and Stevenage is lead for the Business and Technology service and North Herts is lead for the Waste and Street Cleansing service. All three arrangements are governed by separate Joint Partnership Boards comprising of Council officers. Each authority has equal representation on both Boards. These Boards report to each Authority's Executive Committee. The Revenues and Benefits Shared Service also operates a joint Committee with equal numbers of Councillors from both Authorities to scrutinise the operational management of the service.

In line with the Accounting Code of Practice this arrangement is accounted for as a jointly controlled operation. A jointly controlled operation uses the assets and resources of the two partner councils without the establishment of a separate legal entity. Under these arrangements each council accounts separately for its own transactions including use of assets, liabilities, income, expenditure and cash flows.

This note sets out details of the income & expenditure of the joint arrangements and the apportionments between the councils in accordance with the agreement entered into. For information purposes only and where relevant, other notes to the accounts show amounts relating to these arrangements.

	2020/21			2019/20		
	Waste and Street Cleansing Service £000	Business & Technical Service £000	Revenues & Benefits Service £000	Waste and Street Cleansing Service £000	Business & Technical Service £000	Revenues & Benefits Service £000
Expenditure						
Employees	412	1,617	3,528	462	1,658	3,222
Transport Related Expenses	23	21	13	35	25	18
Supplies and Services	17	1,366	195	15	1,432	215
Support Services	-	412	1,030	-	449	877
Total Expenditure	452	3,416	4,766	512	3,115	4,332
Income						
Stevenage Borough Council	-	1,267	2,140	-	1,620	1,909
East Herts District Council	213	2,149	2,626	246	1,944	2,423
North Herts District Council	239	-	-	266	-	-
Total Income	452	3,416	4,766	512	3,564	4,332
Net Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-

The contribution made by the Council has been incorporated into the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the Net Costs of Service.

Additionally the Council partnered with six local authorities across Hertfordshire to create a new fully integrated building control service, which was launched in August 2016. An additional local authority joined in 2019, so eight local authorities have equal control. The Council holds 13% of the share capital (£8) and is represented on the board. The company aims to provide a more flexible and efficient response to building control issues across the county. In 2016/17 the Council made a loan to the company of £107k, which is held under Long Term Debtors on the balance sheet.

24. External Audit Costs

This note discloses the amounts that East Herts Council has paid to its external auditors for work carried out in performing statutory functions and in providing any additional services.

In 2020/21 East Herts Council incurred the following fees relating to external audit and inspection:

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Fees payable to Ernst & Young with regard to external audit services carried out by the appointed auditor	44	40
Rebate from the PSAA in respect of audit fees*	0	(5)
Fees payable to Ernst & Young for the certification of grant claims and returns	26	6
Prior Year additional fees	25	8
	95	49

*PSAA - Public Sector Audit Appointments

25. Members Allowances

The total payments made to elected Members of East Herts Council, under its Members' Allowance Scheme for the year ending 31 March, was as follows:

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Basic Allowances	269	267
Special Responsibility Allowances	129	127
Travel and Subsistence expenses	1	17
	399	411

A full disclosure of payments is available on the Council's website.

26. Officer Emoluments

The number of employees, excluding senior officers disclosed in note 28, whose remuneration, was £50,000 or more in bands of £5,000 were:

Remuneration Band	Number of Employees	
	2020/21 Total	2019/20 Total
£50,000 to £54,999	6	6
£55,000 to £59,999	3	7
£60,000 to £64,999	4	-
£65,000 to £69,999	1	3
£70,000 to £74,999	1	2
£75,000 to £79,999	-	1
£80,000 to £84,999	-	-
£85,000 to £89,999	-	-
£90,000 to £94,999	-	-
£95,000 to £99,999	-	2

The 2019/20 figures include senior officers disclosed in note 28

27. Exit Packages

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

Exit package cost band (including special payments)	Number of Redundancies		Number of other departures		Total number of exit packages by cost band		Total cost of exit packages in each band	
	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20
£							£	£
0-20,000	6	2	-	-	6	2	47,729	9,410
20,001-40,000	1	-	-	-	1	-	21,792	-
40,001-60,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
60,001-80,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
80,001-100,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
100,001-150,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	7	2	-	-	7	2	69,521	9,410

28. Senior Officer Remuneration

An additional disclosure is required for Senior Officer's Remuneration (the Chief Executive and those reporting directly to the Chief Executive) included in Note 26, whose salary is more than £50,000 per year:

	Salary (inc expense allowance) £	Expenses Allowances £	Compensation for Loss of Office £	Total Remuneration excluding pension contributions £	Pension Contributions £	Total Remuneration including pension contributions £
2020/21						
Chief Executive	121,858	243	-	122,101	23,375	145,476
Deputy Chief Executive	102,500	3	-	102,503	19,475	121,978
Head of Revenues & Benefits Shared Service	81,331	-	-	81,331	15,453	96,784
Head of HR & Organisational Development	75,947	24	-	75,971	14,430	90,401
Interim Head of Strategic Finance & Property (left end Sept 20)	87,710	-	-	87,710	-	87,710
Head of Strategic Finance & Property (started 14 Sept 20)	41,218	-	-	41,218	7,831	49,049
Head of Communications, Strategy & Policy	72,134	-	-	72,134	13,705	85,839
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	76,266	355	-	76,621	14,490	91,111
Head of Housing & Health	73,994	80	-	74,074	14,059	88,133
Head of Operations	68,555	-	-	68,555	-	68,555
Head of Planning & Building Control	66,834	-	-	66,834	12,698	79,532
2019/20						
Chief Executive (started 03/06/2019)	98,667	274	-	98,941	18,873	117,814
Chief Executive (left 31/05/2019)	25,223	1,312	-	26,535	3,677	30,212
Deputy Chief Executive	98,098	-	-	98,098	18,473	116,571
Head of Revenues & Benefits Shared Service	77,225	-	-	77,225	14,661	91,886
Head of HR & Organisational Development	73,398	-	-	73,398	13,927	87,325
Interim Head of Strategic Finance & Property (started 31/12/2019)	52,805	-	-	52,805	-	52,805
Head of Strategic Finance & Property (left 31/12/2019)	59,822	-	-	59,822	11,388	71,210
Head of Communications, Strategy & Policy	69,317	-	-	69,317	13,170	82,487
Head of Legal & Democratic Services (started 03/02/2020)	11,813	-	-	11,813	2,245	14,058
Head of Legal & Democratic Services (left 17/11/2019)	55,286	-	-	55,286	10,255	65,541
Head of Housing & Health	68,864	-	-	68,864	13,004	81,868
Head of Operations (returned from maternity leave 02/09/2019)	39,683	-	-	39,683	-	39,683
Head of Planning & Building Control	51,747	0	0	51,747	9,769	61,516

29. Grant Income

The Council credited the following grants, contributions and donations to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in 2020/21:

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Credited to Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income		
Council Tax	15,457	14,465
Non-Domestic Rates	- 7,411	2,937
New Homes Bonus	2,832	2,616
Other Capital Grants	6,373	2,700
Sec 31 Business Rate Support **	10,608	2,899
Other Revenue Grants	1,811	17
	29,670	25,634
Credited to Services		
<u>Grants</u>		
DWP	27,192	29,068
DCLG	6,940	775
LAA	-	16
Cabinet Office	13	51
DEFRA	1	20
Sports England	311	-
HMRC	109	-
Herfordshire Community NHS Trust	2	-
Home Office	42	-
Office of National Statistics	1	-
Rural Protection Agency	12	-
Department of Education	12	26
	34,635	29,956
<u>Other Contributions</u>		
Contributions from Other Authorities*	2,810	3,129
Income from Other Bodies	677	699
	3,487	3,828

* includes the contribution from Stevenage Borough Council for the Shared Revenues and Benefits Service

** Sec 31 Business Rate Support Grant has increased in 2020/21 to compensate for the loss of business rate income as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.

The Council has received a number of grants and contributions that have yet to be recognised as income as they have conditions attached to them that will require the monies to be returned to the funding body if not used for the purpose provided. The balances at year end are as follows:

Grants Receipts in Advance		
Capital		
Other Capital Grants	74	47
Developer Contributions	2,415	1,950
	2,489	1,997
Revenue		
Developer Contributions	4,220	3,929
Other Revenue Grants	3,452	129
	7,672	4,058

30. Related Party Transactions

A related party transaction is the transfer of assets or liabilities or the performance of services by, to or for a related party irrespective of whether a charge is made.

Related parties to this authority would include:

Central government; local authorities and other bodies precepting or levying demands on the Council Tax; its members; its chief officers; and its pension fund. Members of close family, or the same household of an individual identified as a related party are also assumed to be related parties.

All significant material transactions with related parties, such as parish precepts, precepts, pension fund contributions etc, have been disclosed in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The UK government exerts significant influence through legislation and grant funding, which has been disclosed in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Three senior officers of the Council held a position of director at Millstream Property Investments Ltd. The Council advanced loans to this company totalling £2.708m during 2020/21

A senior officer of the Council held a position of Director at Hertfordshire CCTV Partnership Ltd. The Council paid this company £7k during 2020/21

A senior officer of the Council held a position of vice chair of the trustees at Scotts Grotto Trust in Ware which received funding of £19k during 2020/21.

A number of District Council members are also members of Town and Parish Councils that receive funding from this Council. Precept payments are disclosed in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Any grants made to these bodies were made with proper consideration of declarations of interest.

Hertfordshire County Council is a related party in respect of various transactions including pension's contributions and precepts. Additionally they act as the "accountable body" for the Hertfordshire Local Area agreement.

Shown in the Balance Sheet are totals for debtors and creditors which represent amounts due to or from related parties. The principal year end balances with related parties included in these totals are shown within Notes 15 & 18.

31. Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	(18,548)	(23,079)
Prior year adjustment	(922)	
Capital investment		
Property, Plant & Equipment	2,965	733
Infrastructure	19	8
Community Assets	329	213
Investment Property	5	2,893
Intangible Assets	247	339
Assets Under Construction	25,003	4,394
Revenue Expenditure Funded from capital under Statute	248	352
Third Party Loan	2,706	1,451
Surplus	3	124
Assets Held For Sale	0	255
Sources of finance		
Capital receipts	(422)	(3,481)
Government grants and other contributions	(6,449)	(2,750)
Sums set aside from Revenue:		
Direct revenue contributions		
Loan/ finance lease principal repayments		
Closing Capital Financing Requirement*	5,184	(18,548)
Explanation of movements in year		
Increase in underlying need to borrowing (unsupported by government financial assistance)	(23,732)	4,531
Decrease in Surplus in Capital Resource *	(23,732)	4,531

* East Herts has moved from a negative Capital Financing Requirement which represented a surplus in capital resources, to a positive Capital Financing Requirement and an underlying need to borrow.

32. 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.

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

The Council as a Lessor

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.

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 are accounted for using the policies applied generally to such assets, subject to depreciation being charged over the lease term if this is shorter than the asset's estimated useful life (where ownership of the asset does not transfer to the Council at the end of the lease period). Depreciation is applied in the year of acquisition.

The Council is not required to raise council tax to cover depreciation, impairment and gains and losses on revaluation arising on leased assets. Any such costs that have been charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services are not proper charges to the General Fund. Such amounts are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account and reported in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Operating Leases

Rents paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefiting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment. Charges are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease.

The Council as a Lessor

Finance Leases

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

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property – applied to write down the lease debtor (together with any premiums received), and
- finance income (credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

The gain credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on disposal is not permitted by statute to increase the General Fund Balance and is required to be treated as a capital receipt. Where a premium has been received, this is posted out of the General Fund Balance to the Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Where the amount due in relation to the lease asset is to be settled by the payment of rentals in future financial years, this is posted out of the General Fund Balance to the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When the future rentals are received, the element for the capital receipt for the disposal of the asset is used to write down the lease debtor. At this point, the deferred capital receipts are transferred to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

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.

Finance leases

As at 31 March 2021, the Council did not hold any leases that fell into the category of a finance lease.

Council as a lessee

Operating leases

The Council leases the Buntingford Service Centre.

The future minimum lease payments due under non-cancellable leases in future years are:

	31 March '21 £000	31 March '20 £000
Not later than one year	210	210
Later than one year and not later than five years	840	840
Later than five years	420	630
	1,470	1,680

The expenditure charged to Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement during the year in relation to these leases was:

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Minimum lease payments	210	210
Lease payments receivable	-	-
	210	210

Council as a lessor

Finance leases

The Council leases out Pindars Lodge.

Following the introduction of IFRS 1 and this asset's transfer from an operating lease to finance lease, a lease term of 50 years from March 1997 was set.

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

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Finance lease debtor as at 31 March	145	147
Unearned finance income	203	215
Gross investment in lease as at 31 March	348	362

The gross investment in the lease which are the minimum lease payments, will be received over

	Gross investment in lease 31 March '21 £000	Gross investment in lease 31 March '220 £000
Not later than 1 year	14	14
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	56	56
Later than 5 years	293	307
	363	377

Operating Leases

The council receives income from a variety of properties ranging from Industrial and Commercial ground leases, to a small number of commercial premises including shops and other miscellaneous properties. Each is subject to individual agreements and reviews. The terms are dependent upon a number of criteria; the corporate priorities of the Council, options that are available, historic and legal agreements.

The future minimum lease payments receivable under non-cancellable leases in future years

	31 March '21 £000	31 March '20 £000
Not later than one year	1,505	1,624
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	4,326	5,200
Later than 5 years	57,434	59,395

Operating Leases - Prior Year Adjustment

In 2020/21, a difference was identified between the remaining lease period per the operating leases listing used to compile the accounts and underlying lease agreement which resulted in an understatement in the disclosure of future minimum lease payments receivable under non-cancellable leases in future years. The following impact were noted:

	Understatement of 19/20 figures
Not later than one year	2,614
Later than one year and not later than five years	185,482
Later than five years	22,601,563
Minimum lease payments	22,789,659

The revised figures of the disclosure are as follows:

	31 March 20 £'000	31 March 20 Restated £'000	Adjustment (£)
Not later than one year	1,622,000	1,624,614	2,614
Later than one year and not later than five years	5,015,000	5,200,482	185,482
Later than five years	36,793,000	59,394,563	22,601,563
Total	43,430,000	66,219,659	22,789,659

33. Pension Scheme

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

The Council participates in the Local Government Pension Scheme which is administered by Hertfordshire County Council. This is a funded defined benefit scheme which means that the Council and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pensions liabilities with investment assets in the long term. Under the Scheme members' retirement benefits are not affected by the Fund's performance.

Pension contributions are based on rates determined by the Fund's professionally qualified actuary based on triennial reviews. The most recent review was undertaken in January 2020.

Transactions Relating to Post Employment benefits

The Council recognises the cost of retirement benefits in the Net Cost of Services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions.

However, the charge the Council is required to make against council tax is based on the cash payable in the year, the real cost of retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement. The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the General Fund balance via the Movement in Reserves during the year.

In 2017, Hertfordshire Building Control (HBC) began participation in the Hertfordshire Pension Fund. The pension fund assets were allocated to HBC solely from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) rather than from each of the seven originating councils, due to human error by the actuary, Hyman's Robertson. Therefore from this date, asset shares will have been understated for HCC and overstated for the seven originating councils, including East Hertfordshire District Council. The prior period adjustment allows for the allocation of assets from East Hertfordshire District Council to Hertfordshire Building Control to be correctly included in the net pension liability and pension reserve. Whilst the transfer of HBC took place in 2017, the first IAS19 accounting reports to be affected were those at 31 March 2020, following the 31 March 2019 formal valuation.

The effect that this has had on the Council's balance sheet, Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account and Movement in Reserves Statement for 2019/20 can be seen below.

	31 March 20 £'000	31 March 20 Restated £'000	Difference £'000
BS - Pension Liability	-21,610.00	-24,126.00	-2,516.00
BS - Pension Reserve	21,610.00	24,126.00	2,516.00
CIES – Remeasurements of the net defined benefit liability (Note 33)	-15,263.00	-12,747.00	2,516.00
MIRS – Total Comprehensive income and expenditure line	13,930.00	11,414.00	-2,516.00

	2020/21 £000	Revised 2019/20 £000
Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement:		
<i>Service Cost comprising:</i>		
Current service cost	3,381	4,088
Past Service Cost	-	(176)
<i>Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure</i>		
Net Interest Expense	564	851
Total post employment benefit charged to surplus or deficit on the provision of services	3,945	4,763
<i>Other post employment benefit credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement</i>		
<i>Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability comprising:</i>		
Return on plan assets (excluding the amount included in net interest expense)	20,582	4,139
Actuarial gains/(losses) arising on changes in demographic assumptions	(32,138)	(3,366)
Actuarial gains/(losses) arising on changes in financial assumptions	(1,956)	(10,984)
Other actuarial gains or losses	1,496	(2,536)
Total post employment benefits charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(12,016)	(12,747)
Movement in Reserve Statement		
Reversal of net charges made to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services for post employment benefits in accordance with the code	(3,945)	(4,763)
<i>Actual amount charges against the general fund balance for pensions in the year:</i>		
Employers contributions payable to scheme	2,599	2,457

Pensions Assets and Liabilities recognised in the Balance Sheet

	2020/21 £000	Revised 2019/20 £000
Opening Fair Value of scheme assets	107,197	111,549
Interest income	2,452	2,665
Remeasurement gain/(loss):		
Other actuarial gains or losses		(1,371)
Return on plan assets, excluding the amount included in the net interest expense	20,582	(4,139)
Contributions from employer	2,599	2,457
contributions from employees into the scheme	686	636
Benefits paid	(4,175)	(4,600)
31 March	129,341	107,197

Reconciliation of present value of scheme liabilities

Balance at 1 April	131,323	146,116
Current service cost	3,381	4,088
Past service cost	-	(176)
Interest cost	3,016	3,516
Contributions by scheme participants	686	636
<i>Remeasurment (gain) and losses:</i>	0	
Actuarial gains/(losses) arising on changes in demographic assumptions	32,138	(3,366)
Actuarial gains/(losses) arising on changes in financial assumptions	1,956	(10,984)
Other acutarial gains or losses	(1,496)	(3,907)
Benefits paid	(4,175)	(4,600)
31 March	166,829	131,323

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Scheme history		
Present value of the defined benefit obligation	(166,829)	(131,323)
Fair value of assets	129,341	107,197
(Deficit) in the scheme	(37,488)	(24,126)

Impact on the net worth of the Council

Statutory arrangements for funding the deficit means that the financial position of the Council remains healthy as:

- the deficit on the Local government scheme will be made good by increased contributions over the remaining working life of employees(i.e. before payments fall due), as assessed by the scheme actuary.
- finance is only required to be raised to cover discretionary benefits when the pensions are actually paid.

The total contributions expected to be made to the pension scheme by the Council in the year to 31 March 2022 is £2.618m (£2.476m to 31 March 2021).

A full breakdown of the Fund's assets including the prior financial year comparator is detailed below:

Asset Category	Period Ended 31 March 2021				Period Ended 31 March 2020			
	Quoted prices in active markets	Quoted prices not in active markets	Total	% of Total Assets	Quoted prices in active markets	Quoted prices not in active markets	Total	% of Total Assets
	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000	£000	%
Equity Securities								
Consumer	1,148	-	1,148	1	2,046	-	2,046	2
Manufacturing	1,013	-	1,013	1	1,634	-	1,634	2
Energy & Utilities	0	-	-	0	-	-	-	0
Financial Institutions	828	-	828	1	1,571	-	1,571	1
Health & Care	512	-	512	0	965	-	965	1
Information Technology	2,947	-	2,947	2	3,672	-	3,672	3
Other	115	-	115	-	176	-	176	-
Debt Securities								
Corporate Bonds (investment grade)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Corporate Bonds (non investment grade)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UK Government	6,622	-	6,622	5	-	-	-	-
Other	-	2,949	2,949	2	-	2,778	2,778	3
Private Equity	-	7,768	7,768	6	-	5,735	5,735	5
Real Estate							-	
UK Property	-	7,151	7,151	6	-	3,241	3,241	3
Overseas Property	-	5,956	5,956	5	-	6,397	6,397	6
Investment Funds & Unit Trusts:							-	
Equities	59,452	-	59,452	47	33,348	-	33,348	31
Bonds	20,898	-	20,898	16	35,145	-	35,145	33
Commodities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Infrastructure	-	54	54	-	-	99	99	-
Other	1,196	7,038	8,234	6	904	7,285	8,189	8
Derivatives							-	
Foreign Exchange	-	(51)	(51)	0	-	(113)	113	0
Cash and Cash Equivalents	3,638	-	3,638	3	2,315	-	2,315	2
TOTALS	98,369	30,865	129,233	100	81,775	25,422	107,196	100

Basis for estimating assets and liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, etc. The Hertfordshire County Council Fund liabilities have been assessed by Hymans Robertson LLP, an independent firm of actuaries, estimates for the Hertfordshire County Council Fund being based on the latest full valuation of the scheme as at January 2020.

The principal assumptions used by the actuary have been:

	31 March '21	31 March '20
Long-term expected rate of return on assets in the scheme:		
Equity investments	2.5%	2.5%
Bonds	2.5%	2.5%
Property	2.5%	2.5%
Cash	2.5%	2.5%
Mortality assumptions:		
Longevity at 65 for current pensioners:		
Men	22.1 years	21.9 years
Women	24.5 years	24.1 years
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners:		
Men	23.2 years	22.8 years
Women	26.2 years	25.5 years
Rate of inflation/ Pension increase	2.9%	1.9%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.3%	2.3%
Expected Return on Assets	3.0%	3.0%
Discount Rate	2.0%	2.3%
Take up option to convert annual pensions into retirement lump sum for pre April 2008 service	50%	50%
Take up option to convert annual pensions into retirement lump sum for post April 2008 service	75%	75%

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. The sensitivity analysis on the following page have been determined based on reasonably possible changes of the assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period and assumes at each change that the assumption analysed changes while all the others 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 ie. on an actuarial basis using the projected cost method. The methods and types of assumptions used in preparing the sensitivity analysis did not change from those used in the previous period

Change in assumptions as at 31 March 2021:	Approximate % increase to Employer Liability
	%
Longevity (increase or decrease in 1 year)	3-5%
0.5% decrease in real discount rate	9%
0.5% increase in the salary increase rate	1%
0.5% increase in the Pension increase rate	8%

Impact on the Council's Cashflow

The objectives of the scheme is to keep employer contributions at as constant a rate as possible. The Council has agreed a strategy with the schemes actuary, Hymans Robertson LLP, to achieve a funding level of 100% over the next 25 years. Funding levels are monitored on an annual basis.

34. Nature and Extent of Risks arising from Financial Instruments

Key Risks

The Council's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks. The key risks are:

- ▣ **Credit risk** the possibility that other parties might fail to pay amounts due to the Council;
- ▣ **Liquidity risk** the possibility that the Council might not have funds available to meet its commitments to make payments;
- ▣ **Re-financing risk** the possibility that the Council might be requiring to renew a financial instrument on maturity at disadvantageous interest rates or terms;
- ▣ **Market risk** the possibility that financial loss might arise for the Council as a result of changes in such measures as interest rates or stock market movements.

The Council's management of treasury risks actively works to minimise the Council's exposure to the unpredictability of financial markets and to protect and maximise (given the identified level of risk) the financial resources available to fund services. The Council in the annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement provides written principles for overall risk management, as well as written policies (covering specific areas, such as interest rate risk, credit risk and the investment of surplus cash.

1 Credit Risk

Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions, as well as credit exposures to the Council's customers.

This risk is minimised through the Annual Investment Strategy, which requires that deposits are not made with financial institutions unless they meet identified minimum credit criteria, in accordance with the Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's Credit Ratings Services. The Annual Investment Strategy also considers maximum amounts and time limits with a financial institution located in each category.

This Council uses the creditworthiness service provided by Capita Asset Services. This service uses a sophisticated modelling approach with credit ratings from all three rating agencies - Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's, forming the core element. However, it does not rely solely on the current credit ratings of counterparties but also uses the following as overlays:

- Credit watches and credit outlooks from credit rating agencies
- CDS spreads to give early warning of likely changes in credit ratings;
- Sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries.

The full Investment Strategy for 2020/21 was approved by Full Council on 3rd March 2020 and is available on the Council's website.

Customers for goods and services are assessed, taking into account their financial position, past experience and other factors, with individual credit limits being set in accordance with internal ratings in accordance with parameters set by the Council.

The Authority's maximum exposure to credit risk in relation to its investments in financial institutions cannot be assessed generally as the risk of any institution failing to make interest payments or repay the principal sum will be specific to each individual institution. Recent experience has shown that it is rare for such entities to be unable to meet their commitments. A risk of irrecoverability applies to all of the Authority's deposits, but there was no evidence at the 31 March 2021 that this was likely to crystallise.

No credit limits were exceeded during the reporting period and the Council does not expect any losses from non-performance by any of its counterparties in relation to deposits and bonds.

Accounts Receivable

The Council does not generally allow credit facilities to customers in relationship to debts. The past due amount can be analysed by age as follows: (see policy xii)

	31 March '21 £000	31 March '20 £000
Less than three months	1,650	2,051
Three months to one year	352	850
More than one year	444	1,768
	2,446	4,669

The Council pursues all debts in line with its established debt recovery policy.

2 Liquidity Risk

The Council manages its liquidity position through the risk management procedures above (setting and approval of prudential indicators and the approval of the treasury and investment strategy reports, as well as through a comprehensive cash flow management system, as required by the CIPFA Code of Practice. This seeks to ensure that cash is available when needed.

The Council has ready access to borrowings from the money markets to cover any day to day cash flow need, and the PWLB and money markets for access to longer term funds. The Council is also required to provide a balanced budget through the Local Government Finance Act 1992, which ensures sufficient monies are raised to cover annual expenditure. There is therefore no significant risk that it will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments under financial instruments.

See investment and Borrowing Note 12

3 Refinancing and Maturity Risk

The Council maintains a debt and investment portfolio. Whilst the cash flow procedures above are considered against the refinancing risk procedures, longer-term risk to the Council relates to managing the exposure to replacing financial instruments as they mature. This risk relates to both the maturing of longer term financial liabilities and longer term financial assets.

The approved treasury indicator limits for the maturity structure of debt and the limits placed on investments placed for greater than one year in duration are the key parameters used to address this risk. The Council approved treasury and investment strategies address the main risks and the central treasury team address the operational risks within the approved parameters. This includes:

- monitoring the maturity profile of financial liabilities and amending the profile through either new borrowing or the rescheduling of the existing debt; and
- monitoring the maturity profile of investments to ensure sufficient liquidity is available for the Council's day to day cash flow needs, and the spread of longer term investments provide stability of maturities and returns in relation to the longer term cash flow needs.

4 Market Risk

Interest rate risk

The Council is exposed to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments.

Movements in interest rates have a complex impact on the Council, depending on how variable and fixed interest rates move across differing financial instrument periods. For instance, a rise in variable and fixed interest rates would have the following effects:

- Borrowings at variable rates – the interest expense charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise;
- Borrowings at fixed rates – the fair value of the borrowing will fall (no impact on revenue balances);
- Investments at variable rates – the interest income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise; and
- Investments at fixed rates – the fair value of the assets will fall (no impact on revenue balances).

Borrowings are not carried at fair value on the balance sheet, so nominal gains and losses on fixed rate impact on the Income and Expenditure Account. However, changes in interest payable and receivable on variable rate borrowings and investments will be posted to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and affect the General Fund Balance. Movements in the fair value of fixed rate investments will be reflected in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

The Council has a number of strategies for managing interest rate risk. The Annual Treasury Management Strategy draws together Council's prudential and treasury indicators and its expected treasury operations, including an expectation of interest rate movements. From this Strategy a treasury indicator is set which provides maximum limits for fixed and variable interest rates exposure. The treasury team will monitor market and forecast interest rates within the year to adjust exposures appropriately. For instance during periods of falling interest rates, and where economic circumstances make it favourable, fixed rate investments may be taken for longer periods to secure better long term returns, similarly the drawing of longer term fixed rates borrowing would be postponed.

With low interest rates generally prevailing, the Council has an interest equalisation reserve that assists in managing interest rate fluctuations in the medium term. The balance as at 31 March 2021 is £1.98m.

Based on the current Treasury Management position at 31 March 2021, if interest rates had been 1% higher with all other variables held constant, the financial effect would be:

	£000
Increase in interest payable on variable rate borrowings	no variable borrowings
Increase in interest receivable on variable rate investments	371
Increase in government grant receivable for financing costs	de minimus
Surplus on the Provision of Services	de minimus

Impact on Comprehensive I & E Statement

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

5 Price Risk

The Council, does not generally invest in equity shares or marketable bonds.

However, it does hold units in property funds to the value of £20m. Whilst these holdings are generally illiquid, the Council is exposed to losses arising from movements in the price of the units.

To limit its exposure to price movements the council has set a property fund investment limit of £20m, at the time of investment.

These units are all classified as Available-for-Sale, meaning that all movements in price will impact on gains and losses recognised in the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve. A general shift of 5% in the general price of shares (positive or negative) would thus have resulted in a £1m gain or loss being recognised in the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve.

6 Foreign Exchange Risk

The Council has no financial assets or liabilities denominated in foreign currencies and thus has no exposure to risk arising from movements in exchange rates.

The Council also has no shareholdings or insurance investment fund, therefore has no exposure to any further risks.

35. Capital Commitments

At 31 March 2021, the authority has entered into a number of contracts for the construction or enhancement of property, plant and equipment, these include the major commitments, listed below. The major commitments are:

- **Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre – £24.7m** (*This figure includes £13.8m spend to 31/03/2021*)

- **Hartham Leisure Centre – £11.1m** (*This figure includes £1.2m spend to 31/03/2021*)

- **Northgate End MSCP – £22.7m** (*This figure includes £11.7m spend to 31/03/2021*)

- **Old River Lane – £23.4m** (*This figure includes £2.3m spend to 31/03/2021*)

36. Contingent Liability

The Council has identified one contingent liability which may give rise to future costs.

Following the Municipal Mutual Insurance Scheme Arrangement being triggered the Council has paid a total levy of £34,478 as at 31 March 2020. A contingent liability of around £103,435 remains in respect of potential further exposure against existing claims. Further claims could be notified.

Given the level of General Reserves held by the Council and the uncertainty of the value of the potential liabilities identified it has not been considered appropriate to make specific financial provision within the accounts at this stage.

37. Post Balance Sheet Event

There are no post balance sheet events as at 17 February 2023

THE COLLECTION FUND

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

		2020/21			2019/20		
		£000 Council	£000 NDR	£000 Total	£000 Council	£000 NDR	£000 Total
Income collectable from Council Taxpayers	Note 2	114,820	-	114,820	109,322	-	109,322
S31 S13A(1)/(c) transfer from General Fund		520	-	520	-	-	-
Income collectable from Business Ratepayers	Note 3	-	23,143	23,143	-	42,670	42,670
Total Income		115,340	23,143	138,483	109,322	42,670	151,992
Council Tax Precepts and Demands							
Hertfordshire County Council		86,651	-	86,651	82,578	-	82,578
East Herts Council		15,449	-	15,449	14,449	-	14,449
Hertfordshire Police		12,132	-	12,132	11,416	-	11,416
Business Rates Shares:							
Payments to Government		-	21,442	21,442	-	10,653	10,653
Payments to Hertfordshire County Council		-	4,288	4,288	-	17,046	17,046
Payment to East Herts Council		-	17,153	17,153	-	14,915	14,915
Charges to Collection Fund							
Costs of Collection		-	199	199	-	199	199
Bad Debt Provision - Increase:							
Council Tax		1,020	-	1,020	722		722
Non Domestic Rates		-	1,239	1,239	-	302	302
Non Domestic Rates Appeals Provision	Note 4	-	1,693	1,693	-	(1,910)	(1,910)
Transitional Protection Payment		-	(135)	(135)	-	(268)	(268)
Distribution of prior years' Fund balance		745	1,916	2,661	593	171	764
Total Expenditure		115,997	47,795	163,792	109,758	41,108	150,866
In year Movement in Fund		657	24,652	25,309	436	(1,562)	(1,126)
Balance as at 1 April		(634)	(2,552)	(3,186)	(1,070)	(990)	(2,060)
Balance as at 31 March		23	22,100	22,123	(634)	(2,552)	(3,186)
Allocated to :							
East Herts Council		2	8,872	8,874	(63)	(934)	(997)
Hertfordshire Police		3		3	(69)		(69)
Hertfordshire County Council		18	2,019	2,037	(502)	(775)	(1,277)
Government		-	11,209	11,209	-	(843)	(843)
Total		23	22,100	22,123	(634)	(2,552)	(3,186)

NOTES TO THE COLLECTION FUND INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

1. General

The Collection Fund is an agent's statement that reflects the statutory obligation for billing authorities to maintain a separate Collection Fund.

The statement shows the transactions of the billing authority in relation to the collection from taxpayers and distribution to local authorities and Government of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates.

There is no requirement for a separate Collection Fund Balance sheet, as the assets and liabilities of the fund belong to the various bodies and Government.

In 2013/14 the local government finance regime was revised with the introduction of the Retained Business Rates scheme. The main aim of the scheme is to give Council's a greater incentive to grow businesses in the district. It does, however, also increase the financial risk to the Council due to non collection and the volatility of the NDR tax base.

The retained income scheme allows the Council to retain a proportion of the total NDR income received. The Council's share is 40% with the remainder being split between Hertfordshire County Council (10%) and Government (50%).

2. Council Tax

The Council's tax base i.e. the number of chargeable dwellings in each valuation band (adjusted for dwellings where discounts apply) converted to an equivalent number of Band D dwellings, is calculated as follows:-

The tax base for 2020/21 was approved at Full Council on 18 December 2019 and was calculated as follows:

Estimated no. of taxable properties			
Band	after effect of discounts	Ratio	Band D Equivalent dwellings
Disa A	0.00	5/9	0.00
A	573.35	6/9	382.23
B	4,072.93	7/9	3,167.83
C	12,360.78	8/9	10,987.36
D	14,062.73	9/9	14,062.73
E	10,335.62	11/9	12,632.42
F	7,165.88	13/9	10,350.72
G	5,307.92	15/9	8,846.53
H	761.85	18/9	1,523.70
	54,641.06		61,953.52
Estimated collection rate			98.9%
2020/21 Estimated Council Tax base			61,272.0
Council Tax Collection			£000
2020/21 estimated Council Tax due			114,232
61272 x £1,864.34 (average band D charge)			
2020/21 Council Tax income			115,340
Surplus			(1,108)

3. Income from Business Ratepayers

The Council collects non-domestic rates for its area which are based on local rateable values provided by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) multiplied by a uniform rate (which for 2020/21 was 51.2p (2019/20 50.4p).

The total amount less certain reliefs and allowances is distributed to East Herts Council (40%), Hertfordshire County Council (10%) and Central Government (50%).

When the Retained Business Rates scheme was introduced, the Government set a baseline for each authority identifying the funding required. In order to ensure that each authority receives their base line amount, a top up or tariff amount is applied to each local authority.

East Herts is a tariff authority, which means that it doesn't keep its entire share but is subject to pay a tariff (£15.853m in 2020/21) to Central Government which is when used to fund 'top up' authorities.

The business rates retention scheme provides the opportunity for local authorities to share in the benefits of growth in the rates tax base i.e. provides an incentive for economic development and regeneration. Any income retained from growth is subject to a levy of 50%. Conversely if any Council suffers a significant drop in NNDR due to the loss of one or more major businesses, or a large number of smaller businesses, or a greater than expected loss from revaluations, then a safety net of 92.5% of the baseline applies. At the year end the total non-domestic rateable value was £117 million (£117 million for 2019/20).

4. Provisions

The Collection Fund account includes provisions for bad debts on arrears based on past years experience and the current years collection rate.

	2020/21			2019/20		
	£000 Council Tax	£000 NDR	£000 Total	£000 Council Tax	£000 NDR	£000 Total
Balance at 1 April	(2,241)	(1,478)	(3,719)	(1,832)	(1,358)	(3,190)
Additional provisions made in year	(1,020)	(1,239)	(2,259)	(722)	(302)	(1,024)
Provision applied	140	133	273	313	182	495
Balance at 31 March	(3,121)	(2,584)	(5,705)	(2,241)	(1,478)	(3,719)

In addition, a provision has been made for NDR appeals against the rateable valuations assessed and determined by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) which have not been settled by 31 March 2021.

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Balance at 1 April	(7,083)	(8,993)
Change in provisions made	(2,133)	1,413
Provision applied in year	440	497
Balance at 31 March	(8,776)	(7,083)

Group Accounts

Introduction

In order to provide a full picture of the economic and financial activities of the Council, and its exposure to risk, the accounting statements of its subsidiary are consolidated with those of the Council. The resulting Group Accounts are presented in addition to the Council's single entity accounts. They include the core accounting statements, similar in presentation and purpose to the Council's accounts, and any explanatory notes considered necessary to explain material movements from the single entity accounts. Where no notes are given, users of the accounts should refer to the notes in the single entity accounts.

Group accounts have been prepared under the requirements of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, consolidating any subsidiary over which the Council exercises control or influence.

Millstream Property Investments Ltd, is a wholly owned company formed in February 2018 by the Council. There are no minority shareholders and no restrictions on the Council's ability to access or use the assets or settle the liabilities of the group. Millstream Property Investments Ltd was created to acquire, develop and refurbish homes to provide rental properties to tenants wishing to live in the private sector, but with the assurance that the accommodation is managed by a responsible landlord.

Millstream was not consolidated in 2018/19 as its activities for that year were not material to the Council's accounts

Accounting Policies

Millstream Property Investments Ltd has prepared its 2020/21 accounts using accounting policies consistent with those applied by the Council and no adjustments have been required to align accounting policies. Both entities have a financial year end of 31 March.

GROUP MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Council, analysed into usable reserves (ie those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce taxation) and other reserves.

	General Fund Balance	Earmarked General Fund Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	General Reserve	Total Usable Reserves	Total Unusable Reserves	Total Authority Reserves	Share of Reserves of Subsidiaries	Total Reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance at 31 March 2020	3,854	11,859	0	300	772	16,785	78,902	95,687	101	95,788
Movement in reserves during 2020/21										
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(2,184)	-	-	-	-	(2,184)	(16,510)	(18,694)	(65)	(18,759)
Tax expenses for Millstream Property Investment	29					29				29
Adjustments between group accounts and authority accounts	(152)	-	-	-	-	(152)		(152)	152	-
Net Increase/Decrease before Transfers										
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	13,985	-	-	(76)	-	13,909	(13,909)	-	-	-
Net Increase/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	11,678	-	0	(76)	-	11,602	(30,419)	(18,846)	87	(18,730)
Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(11,678)	11,477	-	-	202	-	-	-		
Increase/Decrease in Year	-	11,477	0	(76)	202	11,602	(30,419)	(18,846)	87	(18,730)
Balance as at 31 March 2021 carried forward	3,854	23,336	-	224	974	28,387	48,483	76,841	188	77,058

	General Fund Balance	Earmarked General Fund Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	General Reserve	Total Usable Reserves	Total Unusable Reserves	Total Authority Reserves	Share of Reserves of Subsidiaries	Total Reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance at 31 March 2019	3,854	9,228	1,892	349	852	16,175	68,098	84,273	69	84,342
Movement in reserves during 2019/20										
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	574	-	-	-	-	574	10,898	11,472	(21)	11,451
Tax expenses for Millstream Property Investment	-4					-4				-4
Adjustments between group accounts and authority accounts	(53)	-	-	-	-	(53)		(53)	53	-
Net Increase/Decrease before Transfers										
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	2,035	-	(1,892)	(49)	-	94	(94)	-	-	-
Net Increase/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	2,552	-	(1,892)	(49)	-	611	10,804	11,419	32	11,447
Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(2,552)	2,631	-	-	(80)	1.00	-	1.00	-	1.00
Increase/Decrease in Year	-	2,631	(1,892)	(49)	(80)	610	10,804	11,418	32	11,446
Balance as at 31 March 2020 carried forward	3,854	11,859	-	300	772	16,785	78,902	95,687	101	95,788

GROUP COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Authorities raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations, generally this will be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

	2020/21		2019/20	
	Gross Expenditure £000	Gross Income £000	Net Expenditure £000	Net Expenditure £000
Chief Executive, PA's & Directors	583	-	583	589
Communications, Strategy & Policy	1,769	(364)	1,405	1,461
Human Resources & Organisation Development	544	(14)	530	615
Strategic Finance & Property	5,495	(1,088)	4,407	4,417
Democratic & Legal Services	1,813	(469)	1,344	1,533
Housing & Health	4,649	(1,616)	3,033	2,794
Planning & Building Control	3,273	(1,434)	1,839	1,611
Operations	14,181	(8,113)	6,068	5,575
Shared Revenues & Benefits Service	34,052	(33,042)	1,010	1,190
Shared Business & Technology Services	1,912	(124)	1,788	2,032
NET COST OF SERVICES			22,007	21,817
Payments of precepts to parishes			4,782	4,182
Gain on disposal of non current (fixed) assets			(138)	(1,371)
OTHER OPERATING EXPENDITURE			4,644	2,811
Interest payable and similar charges			206	662
Net Interest on the net defined benefit liability & remeasurements of the defined benefit liability for long term employee benefits			564	851
Interest receivable and similar income			(995)	(1,189)
Income from investment properties		Note 1	(1,005)	(1,024)
Direct expenditure incurred on investment properties		Note 1	176	221
Changes in Fair Value of Investment Properties			6,316	980
FINANCING AND INVESTMENT EXPENDITURE			5,262	501
Recognised capital grants and contributions			(6,373)	(2,700)
Council tax income			(15,457)	(14,465)
Non domestic rates			7,411	(2,937)
Non service related government grants			(15,251)	(5,533)
TAXATION AND NON-SPECIFIC GRANT INCOME			(29,670)	(25,635)
(SURPLUS) / DEFICIT ON PROVISION OF SERVICES			2,244	(505)
Millstream Capital contribution			(49)	(40)
Tax expenses of subsidiaries			29	(4)
GROUP (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT			2,224	(549)
(Surplus) or Deficit on revaluation of PPE assets			4,017	1,322
Reclassification of Grant			-	-
Remeasurements of the net defined benefit liability			12,016	(12,747)
ITEMS THAT WILL NOT BE RECLASSIFIED TO THE (SURPLUS) OR DEFICIT ON PROVISION OF SERVICES			16,033	(11,425)
(Surplus) / Deficit on revaluation of financial instruments			477	527
ITEMS THAT MAY BE RECLASSIFIED TO THE (SURPLUS) OR DEFICIT ON PROVISION OF SERVICES			477	527
Millstream Other Operating Income			(4)	
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE			16,506	(10,898)
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE			18,730	(11,447)

All operations arise from continuing activities.

GROUP BALANCE SHEET

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Council.

		31 March '21	31 March '20
		£000	£000
Property, Plant & Equipment			
- Other land and buildings		43,871	46,774
- Vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment		1,817	2,151
- Infrastructure assets		1,764	1,995
- Community assets		3,293	2,965
- Surplus assets		2,410	2571
- Assets under Construction		31,243	5740
		84,398	
Investment Properties		14,232	17,835
Intangible Assets		616	785
		99,246	80,816
Long Term Investments		21,011	21,448
Long Term Debtors	Note 2	242	249
TOTAL LONG TERM ASSETS		120,498	102,513
Assets Held For Sale		-	255
Short Term Investments		4,702	21,921
Short Term Debtors	Note 2	19,181	10,037
Cash and Cash Equivalents		8,959	15,723
CURRENT ASSETS		32,842	47,936
Provisions		(604)	(401)
Short Term Creditors	Note 2	(23,310)	(20,427)
CURRENT LIABILITIES		(23,914)	(20,828)
Provisions		(3,201)	(2,130)
Long Term Borrowing		(1,522)	(1,522)
Long Term Creditors	Note 2	-	-
Net Pension Liability		(37,484)	(24,126)
Grant Receipts in Advance - Capital		(2,489)	(1,997)
- Revenue		(7,672)	(4,058)
LONG TERM LIABILITIES		(52,367)	(33,833)
NET ASSETS		77,058	95,788
USABLE RESERVES			
- General Fund		3,854	3,854
- General Reserve		974	772
- Earmarked Reserves		23,336	11,859
- Capital Receipts Reserve		-	
- Capital grants Unapplied		224	300
- Profit and Loss Reserve	Note 3	188	101
		28,576	16,886
UNUSABLE RESERVES			
- Revaluation Reserve		15,983	21,355
- Financial Instrument Revaluation Reserve		925	1,403
- Pensions Reserve		(37,488)	(24,126)
- Capital Adjustment Account		78,111	79,327
- Deferred Capital Receipts		147	148
- Collection Fund Adjustment Account		(8,874)	997
- Short-term Accumulating Compensated Absences Account		(322)	(202)
		48,483	78,902
TOTAL RESERVES		77,058	95,788

GROUP CASH FLOW STATEMENT

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the authority during the reporting period.

	2020/21	2019/20
	£000	£000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Cash Inflows		
Council Tax receipts	(11,079)	(10,706)
NNDR Receipts	(8,960)	(14,687)
DWP grants for benefits	(26,960)	(28,483)
Other Government grants	(81,585)	(8,365)
Cash received for goods and services	(9,690)	(16,012)
Interest received	(1,050)	(1,260)
Cash inflows generated from operating activities	(139,324)	(79,513)
Cash Out Flows		
Cash paid to and on behalf of employees	15,427	14,647
Housing Benefit paid out	26,317	28,499
Other operating cash payments	66,114	18,702
Precepts paid to other authorities	4,782	4,182
Interest paid	306	660
Cash outflows generated from operating activities	112,946	66,690
Net Cash Inflow from operating activities	(26,378)	(12,823)
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
- Purchase of property plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	31,288	11,731
- Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	(422)	(1,588)
- Capital grants	(6,572)	(2,495)
- Proceeds from short-term and long-term investments	(17,704)	(4,791)
Net cash inflow from investing activities	6,590	2,857
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
- Cash Payments for the reduction of the outstanding liabilities relating to finance leases (Principal)	300	302
- Other payments for financing activities	26,252	8,934
Net cash outflow from financing activities	26,552	9,236
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	6,764	(730)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	(15,723)	(14,993)
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	(8,959)	(15,723)

Note 1 - Investment Property

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

	31 March '21			31 March '20		
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
	East Herts District Council	Millstream Property Investments Ltd	Group total	East Herts District Council	Millstream Property Investments Ltd	Group total
Income from investment property	882	123	1,005	956	69	1,025
Direct expenditure arising from investment property	(125)	(48)	(173)	(179)	(43)	(222)

The following table summarises the movement through additions and re-classification of investment properties for the group over the year:

	EHDC		Millstream		Group	
	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Balance at start of the year	15,486	13,596	2,349	875	17,835	14,471
Additions: Not transferred through re-classification	5	2,893	2,708	1,451	2,713	4,344
Additions: Transferred through re-classification	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals : Transferred through re-classification	-	0	-	0	-	0
Net gains / (losses) from fair value adjustments	(6,421)	(1,003)	106	23	(6,315)	(980)
Balance at end of the year	9,070	15,486	5,162	2,349	14,232	17,835

Note 2 - Debtors and Creditors

The effect of transactions between the Council and its subsidiary Millstream Property Investments Ltd are eliminated in Group Accounts, therefore debtors and creditors between these parties have been excluded.

Note 3 - Financial Instruments

IFRS 9 requirement is to consider whether loans are made under market terms, especially those made between related parties.

During the year Millstream Property Investments Ltd received loans from its parent company East Herts Council deemed at below market rate as there was no interest charged.

The below market element amounting to £48,712 has been recognised in the reserves statement as a capital contribution.

	31 March '21 £000
Opening balance at 31 March 2020	101
Profit or loss for 2020/21	38
Capital contribution	49
Closing balance at 31 March 2020	188

	31 March '20 £000
Opening balance at 31 March 2019	69
Profit or loss for 2019/20	(8)
Capital contribution	40
Closing balance at 31 March 2020	101

Note 4 - External Audit Costs

This note discloses the amounts that Millstream Property Investments has paid to its external auditors for work carried out in performing statutory functions and in providing any additional services

In 2020/21 Millstream Property Investments incurred the following fees relating to external audit and inspection:

	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000
Fees payable to Ensors with regard to external audit	8	8
	8	8

Note 5 - Summary of Financial Position of Subsidiary

Millstream Property Investments Ltd has been consolidated in the group accounts as a 100% owned subsidiary. The summary of financial position of the company is shown below:

Statement of comprehensive income and expenditure	31 March 2021 £000	31 March 2020 £000
Revenue	123	69
Cost of sales	(21)	(23)
Gross profit	102	46
Administrative expenses	(51)	(29)
Other operating income	4	-
Operating profit	55	17
Interest payable	(94)	(52)
Other gains losses	106	23
Profit/(Loss) on ordinary activities before taxation	67	(12)
Tax on profit/(loss)	(29)	4
Profit/(Loss) and total comprehensive income for the financial year	38	(8)

Statement of financial position	31 March 2021 £000	31 March 2020 £000
Non current assets		
Investment properties	5,162	2,349
Current assets		
Trade debtor	3	2
Cash and Cash equivalents	53	35
Total Assets	5,218	2,386
Current liabilities		
Trade creditor	129	75
Non current liabilities		
Loans	4,858	2,196
Provision for liabilities	43	14
Total liabilities	5,030	2,285
Net Assets/Liabilities	188	101
Equity		
Share capital	0	0
Retained earnings	188	101
Total equity	188	101

GLOSSARY OF FINANCIAL TERMS

Accounting Policies

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

- Recognising;
- Measuring bases;
- Presenting.

Accruals

Accruals The concept that Income & Expenditure are recognised as they are earned or incurred, not as money is received or paid.

Accumulated Absences

Accumulated Absences Holiday entitlements (or any form of leave such as time off in lieu) earned by employees but not taken before the year end which can be carried forward into the following year.

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
- the actuarial assumptions have changed

Amortisation

The term used to refer to the charging of the value of a transaction or asset (usually related to intangible fixed assets) to the Income and Expenditure Account over a period of time, reflecting the value to the authority; similar to the depreciation charge for tangible fixed assets.

Asset

An item having value measurable in monetary terms. Assets can either be defined as fixed or current. A fixed asset has use and value for more than one year whereas a current asset (eg stocks or short term debtors) can readily be converted into cash.

Capital Expenditure

Capital Expenditure Expenditure on the acquisition of a fixed asset or works which have a long term value to the Council, either directly to the Council or indirectly in the form of grants to other bodies.

Capital Financing Requirement

It measures an authority's underlying need to borrow or finance by other long term liabilities for a capital purpose.

Capital Receipts

The proceeds from the disposal of land and other assets. Proportions of capital receipts can be used to finance new capital expenditure, within rules set down by government, but they cannot be used for revenue purposes.

CIPFA

CIPFA Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The principal accountancy body dealing with local government finance.

Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (The Code)

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

Community Assets

Assets that a local authority intends to hold indefinitely, 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 principle that the accounting treatment of like items within an accounting period and from one period to the next is the same.

Contingent Asset

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

Contingent Liability

A contingent liability is a possible liability arising from past events whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one or more uncertain events not wholly within the local authority's control.

Creditor

An amount owed by the Council for work done, goods received, or services provided within the accounting period and for which payments has not been made at the Balance Sheet date.

Current Service Cost (Pensions)

The increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year.

Curtailment

For a defined benefit scheme, an event that reduces the expected years of future service of present employees or reduces for a number of employees the accrual of defined benefits for some or all of their future service.

Curtailments include:

- Termination of employees' services earlier than expected, for example as a result of closing a factory or discontinuing a segment of a business;
- Termination of, or amendment to the terms of, a defined benefit scheme so that some or all future service by current employees will no longer qualify for benefits or will qualify only for reduced benefits.

Debtor

Sums of money due to the Council but not yet received at the Balance Sheet date.

Deficit

An excess of expenditure over income (or liabilities over assets).

Defined Benefit Scheme

A pension or other retirement benefit scheme other than a defined contribution scheme. Usually, the scheme rules define the benefits independently of the contributions payable, and the benefits are not directly related to the investments of the scheme. The scheme may be funded or unfunded (including notionally funded).

Depreciation

Charges reflecting the decline in the value (not cost) of assets as a result of their usage or ageing.

DEFRA

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

DWP

Department for Work & Pensions.

Expected Rate of Return on Pensions Assets

For a funded defined benefit scheme, the average rate of return, including both income and changes in fair value but net of scheme expenses, expected over the remaining life of the related obligation on the actual assets held by the scheme.

Earmarked reserve

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

Financial Instruments

Any document with monetary value. For example, securities such as bonds and stocks which have value and may be traded in exchange for money.

Finance Lease

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

Government Grants

Assistance by government and inter-government agencies and similar bodies, whether local, national or international, towards either revenue or capital expenditure incurred in providing local services.

International Financial Reporting Standards

International Financial Reporting Standards cover specific aspects of accounting practice and set out the correct accounting treatment. Compliance with them is mandatory.

Impairment

This is a reduction in value of a fixed asset as shown in the balance sheet to reflect its true value

Infrastructure Assets

Expenditure on works of construction or improvement but which have no tangible value, such as construction or improvement to highways and footpaths.

Intangible Asset

Non-financial fixed assets that do not have physical substance but are identifiable and are controlled by the authority through custom or legal rights e.g. computer software.

Interest Cost (pensions)

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

Investments (non-pensions fund)

A long term investment is one that is intended to be 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, other than those in relation to the pension fund, that do not meet the above criteria should be classified as current assets.

Investment properties

Property that is used solely to earn rentals and/or for capital appreciation.

LAA

Local Area Agreement.

Liquid resources

Current asset investments that are readily disposal by the authority without disrupting its business.

MHCLG

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly DCLG - Department for Communities and Local Government).

MTFP

Medium Term Financial Plan.

NDR

Non Domestic Rates.

Operating Lease

A lease whereby the ownership of the fixed asset remains with the lessor.

Past Service Cost

The increase / decrease in liabilities arising from current year decisions whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years.

Revenue Expenditure

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

REFCUS (Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute)

Capital expenditure which is allowable under statute to be funded from capital resources but which does not fall within the definition of a fixed asset. An example is a grant made to another party to finance capital investment.

Surplus

An excess of income over expenditure (or assets over liabilities)

Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

1. Scope of Responsibility

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

In discharging this overall responsibility, East Herts Council is responsible for ensuring arrangements are in place for the good governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

East Herts 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 2016.

This statement explains how East Herts Council has complied with the Code and also meets the requirements of Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of a statement on internal control.

2. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

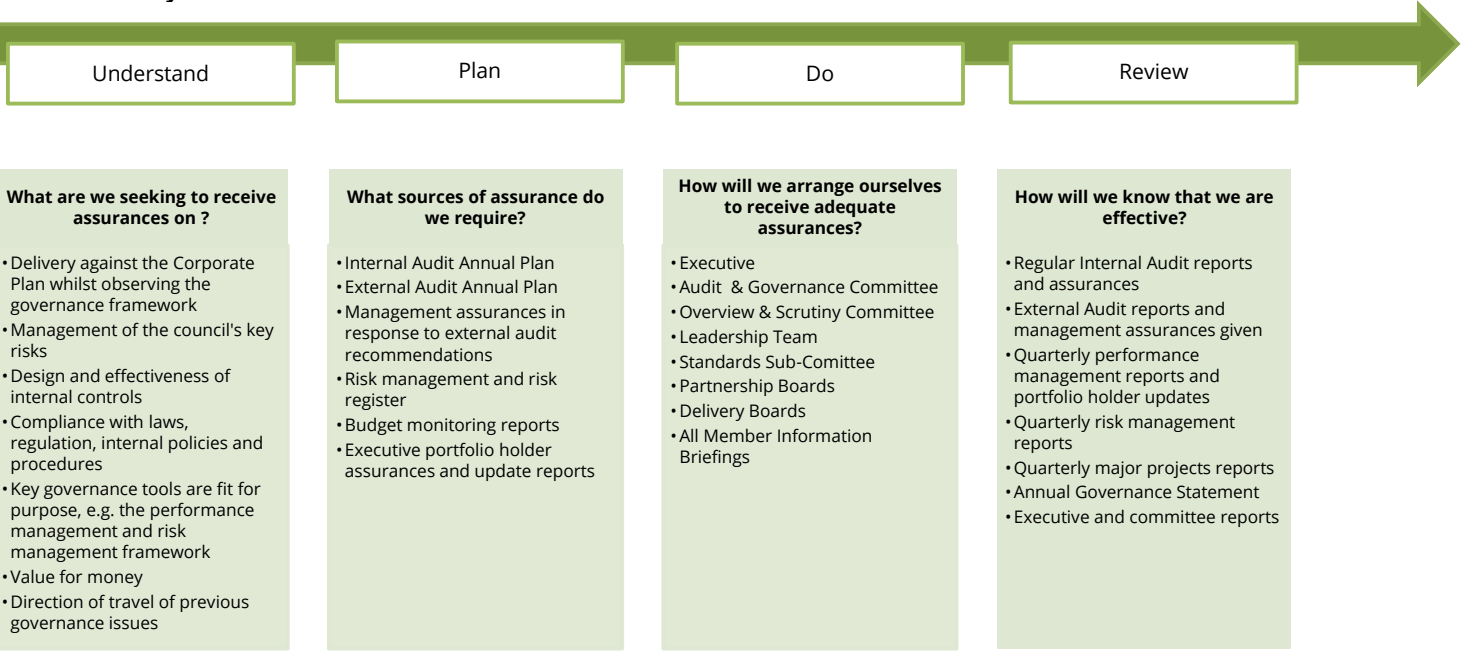
The governance framework comprises the cultures, values and systems and processes by which the Council is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate cost-effective services and value for money. The overall aim is to ensure that:

- resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities;
- there is sound and inclusive decision making; and
- there is clear accountability for the use of those resources in order to achieve desired outcomes for service users and communities.

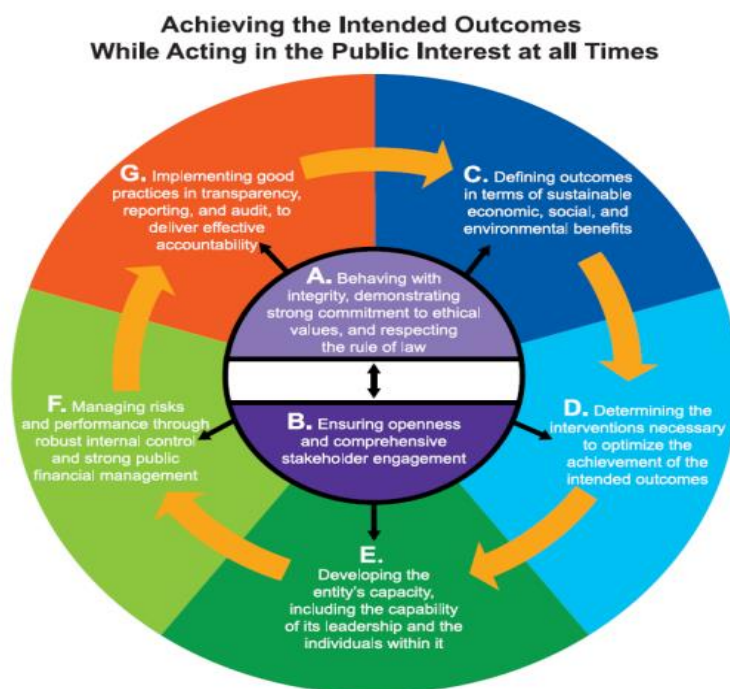
The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable assessment/assurances of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of East Herts 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 East Herts Council for the year ended 31 March 2021 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

3. Assurance Cycle



4. The Governance Framework



Source: CIPFA 2016

Principles of good governance	Sub-principles and behaviours and actions that demonstrate good	East Herts Council's Compliance & Supporting Evidence
A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law Local government organisations are accountable not only for how much they spend, but also for how they use the resources under their stewardship. This includes accountability for outputs, both positive and negative, and for the outcomes they have achieved. In addition, they have an overarching responsibility to serve the public interest in adhering to the requirements of legislation and government policies. It is essential that, as a whole, they can demonstrate the appropriateness of all their actions and have mechanisms in place to encourage and enforce adherence to ethical values and to respect the rule of law.	Behaving with integrity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring Members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the organisation Ensuring Members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the organisation and its staff and that they are communicated and understood. These should build on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles) Leading by example and using these standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codes of conduct for Members and Officers Members sign an individual commitment to comply with the Code Induction for new Members on the Code of Conduct and staff on standards of behaviour expected Performance appraisals Related party transaction declarations Action taken on Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) complaints Corporate Plan sets operating direction and organisational values approved by the Council Member Code of Conduct is based on Nolan Principles Corporate objectives cascaded down into Service Plans Corporate Plan and Service Plan objectives reflected in individual appraisal goals Members trained on and familiar with code of conduct requirements Declarations are made at, and recorded, at meetings Meetings conducted according to values Standards Sub-Committee in effective operation including delivering training sessions to others to be proactive in communicating positive messages about good conduct Requirement for elected Members to be specifically trained before serving on Planning and/or Licensing Committees

Principles of good governance	Sub-principles and behaviours and actions that demonstrate good	East Herts Council's Compliance & Supporting Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes which are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-fraud and anti-corruption policies are working effectively Up-to-date register of interests (Members and staff) Related Party Transactions completed annually Up-to-date register of gifts and hospitality Whistleblowing policies are in place, up to date and protect individuals raising concerns Whistleblowing policy has been made available to members of the public, employees, partners and contractors Complaints policy in place and reported upon annually to Executive All policies are managed through corporate performance management system to ensure effective and timely review with communication of changes and provision of training as appropriate Policies are published online to demonstrate openness and transparency Changes/improvements as a result of complaints received and acted upon and reported in annual report to Members Members and officers code of conduct refers to a requirement to declare interests Minutes show declarations of interest were sought and appropriate declarations made Relevant recommendations from LGO incorporated into future working practices and procedures Legal implications identified in all Executive and committee reports
	Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the organisation's ethical standards and performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good ethical governance is championed by Members, particularly through Executive, the Standards Sub-Committee, the Monitoring Officer and Leadership Team Audit & Governance Committee takes the lead in overseeing and promoting good governance Clear mechanisms in place for reporting / referral to Monitoring Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the organisation's culture and operation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of ethical awareness training including thorough Code of Conduct training Standards Sub-Committee takes the lead in promoting this
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and maintaining robust policies and procedures which place emphasis on agreed ethical values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appraisal process in place Procurement policy and approach include good governance and ethical conduct Requirement to declare conflicts of interest Robust processes with checks and balances to ensure that procurement is undertaken in accordance with the principles of transparency, fairness and equal treatment.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the organisation are required to act with integrity and in compliance with high ethical standards expected by the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership Guidelines and reviews Procurement Strategy showing commitment to local businesses and SMEs Adhering to Bribery and Anti-Corruption policies as required by the Council Ensuring confidentiality of information throughout the process Data protection requirements specifically built into contract specification
	Respecting the rule of law <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring Members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of the law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constitution Statutory guidance and provisions are followed These are assessed through internal and external audit Audit & Governance Committee oversee this Legal implications identified in all Executive and committee reports

Principles of good governance	Sub-principles and behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice	East Herts Council's Compliance & Supporting Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating the conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders and Members are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job description/specifications Compliance with CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (CIPFA, 2016). The Council's arrangements conform to these governance requirements with the CFO reporting directly to the Chief Executive Legal implications identified in all Executive and committee reports The Monitoring Officer routinely attends Leadership Team meetings. The CFO routinely attends Leadership Team. In addition, the CFO has access to (and regularly attends) the Audit & Governance Committee and to the internal and external auditors. In performing the role, the CFO is able to bring influence to bear on all material decisions of the Council through advice and guidance on all corporate reports. As part of that role, the CFO leads on the budget monitoring reports, financial strategy reports and is able to promote to the organisation the delivery of good financial management. In discharging this role, the CFO is supported by a team of officers, including a deputy, and these arrangements ensure that the CFO has adequate resources to support the design and maintenance of sound financial governance arrangements.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Striving to optimise the use of the full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive reports / decision making reports all document legal advice / implications Where appropriate, make use of general power of competence e.g. Millstream or the power to charge for discretionary services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring Officer takes lead role in ethical governance and ensuring compliance with the law Decision making process incorporates this Legal team provide in-house advice and guidance Statutory teams familiar with and operating effectively to deliver on their statutory duties
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective anti-fraud and anti-corruption policies and procedures are in place and are regularly updated and incorporated into all contracts Assurance mapping exercise to be completed by Internal Audit will improve likelihood of detection Grievance and disciplinary code for officers Monitoring Officer at senior level within the organisation Mature and experienced Standards Sub-Committee 360 appraisal of managers acts as an additional layer of challenge Annual appraisal review assesses competencies and behaviours.
B Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement Local government is run for the public good; organisations therefore should ensure openness in their activities. Clear, trusted channels of communication and consultation should be used to engage effectively with all groups of stakeholders, such as individual citizens and service users, as well as institutional stakeholders	Openness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation's commitment to openness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly performance reports to record performance against Corporate Plan Freedom of Information publication scheme Information Governance Team input to all FOI request to ensure that Data Protection Information Charter Compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and Data Transparency web pages Website publishes clear and accessible information Public inspection of accounts Annual publication of accounts Public consultation on new policies and individual development applications. Webcasting of all Committee meetings during the pandemic.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making decisions that are open about actions, plans, use of resources, forecasts, outputs and outcomes. The presumption is for openness. If that is not the case, a justification for the reasoning for keeping a decision confidential should be provided in accordance with rules governing e.g. exemptions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record of decision making and supporting materials Publish decisions by Members and Officers in accordance with the Constitution, Scheme of Delegation, Financial Procedure Rules and Contract Procedure Rules. Forward Plan promotes community interest in democracy by publishing report schedule

Principles of good governance	Sub-principles and behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice	East Herts Council's Compliance & Supporting Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing clear reasoning and evidence for decisions in both public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about the criteria, rationale and considerations used. In due course, ensuring that the impact and consequences of those decisions are clear Using formal and informal consultation and engagement to determine the most appropriate and effective interventions/ courses of action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision making protocols Report template including requirement to obtain professional advice in key areas Meeting reports show details of advice given Discussion between Members and officers on the information needs of Members to support decision making Committee work programmes Agreement on the information that will be provided and timescales Calendar of dates for submitting, publishing and distributing timely reports is adhered to Community Engagement Strategy Annual budget consultation Consultation on Master Plan options All Member Information sessions Online consultation exercises
	<p>Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively engaging with institutional stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes for each stakeholder relationship are clear so that outcomes are achieved successfully and sustainably Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively Ensuring that partnerships are based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust a shared commitment to change a culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners and that the added value of partnership working is explicit <p>Engaging stakeholders effectively, including individual citizens and service users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a clear policy on the type of issues that the organisation will meaningfully consult with or involve individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service (or other) provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes. Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that Members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Strategy and specific communications strategies for major projects Local ward Member communication networks Specific consultation with underrepresented groups through Equalities Strategy Community Engagement Strategy Statement of Community Involvement for District Plan Online databases of residents who register to be kept informed / consulted about matters e.g. planning policy Significant partnership working e.g. Harlow & Gilston Garden Town, Hertfordshire Growth board Shared services for Revenues & Benefits, ICT, Waste and Recycling Services, Building Control, CCTV and Equalities. The Council is also part of the Hertfordshire Emergency Resilience Partnership. Shared services for Revenues & Benefits, ICT, Waste and Recycling Services, Building Control, CCTV and Equalities. Joint Committee/Joint Member Boards/Officer Boards as appropriate with a shared commitment to improvement, cost reduction and value for money Open culture of challenge between partners to seek improvement Online record of public consultations Feedback reports on public consultations Consultation responses included in relevant Executive reports e.g. budget Service user satisfaction surveys Communications Strategy Monitoring reports on the effectiveness of our communications output including regular reports on the effectiveness of East Herts Council's Social Media Usage Communications and media training for Members and Senior Leadership Team

Principles of good governance	Sub-principles and behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice	East Herts Council's Compliance & Supporting Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications Strategy Community Engagement Strategy Resident Satisfaction Survey as part of budget consultation Themed consultation exercises
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing effective feedback mechanisms in order to demonstrate how their views have been taken into account 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback included online in response to consultations Reports to Executive include feedback on consultation e.g. budget report Extensive use of East Herts Council's social media to interact with communities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Equalities Objectives Equalities Policy and Action Plan Consultation with specific underrepresented groups within our community
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking account of the interests of future generations of tax payers and service users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Plan Executive / Scrutiny reports Strategic Housing Needs Assessment Harlow & Gilston Garden Town
C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits The long-term nature and impact of many of local government's responsibilities mean that it should define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should further the authority's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users, and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available.	Defining outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having a clear vision which is an agreed formal statement of the organisation's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provides the basis for the organisation's overall strategy, planning and other decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Plan Published performance indicators MTFP and Capital Programme to fund ambitions Commercial Strategy development Performance management report Pentana performance management system Statement of organisational values
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for, stakeholders including citizens and service users. It could be immediately or over the course of a year or longer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of Community engagement Consultation strategy Service plans
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly budget reports Quarterly performance monitoring reports Medium Term Financial Plan Capital Programme Commercial Strategy development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk management report Risk management training Risk assessments for specific projects External Audit report giving assurance that proper arrangements have been made to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of the resources available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service plans Performance indicators Executive reports identify issues of competing community demands How your Council Tax is Spent information issued with annual Council Tax bills
	Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions when taking decisions about service provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital programme Medium Term Financial Plan Treasury management strategy Corporate Plan Commercial Strategy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking a longer-term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between the organisation's intended outcomes and short-term factors such as the political cycle or financial constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate plan with four year time horizon Medium Term Financial Plan Reports on decision making Mandatory training (e.g. for the Development Management Committee)

Principles of good governance	Sub-principles and behaviours and actions that demonstrate good governance in practice	East Herts Council's Compliance & Supporting Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determining the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation and community engagement strategy Consultation and community engagement diary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring fair access to services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer service strategy 24/7 Website offering online services Transparency webpages Clear policies explaining the Council's processes and what customers can expect from the Council e.g. housing allocations
D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions. Determining the right mix of these courses of action is a critically important strategic choice that local government has to make to ensure intended outcomes are achieved. They need robust decisionmaking mechanisms to ensure that their defined outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best trade-off between the various types of resource inputs while still enabling effective and efficient operations.	Determining interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and including the risks associated with those options. Therefore ensuring best value is achieved however services are provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options appraisals within key decision reports All Executive reports available for consideration at Overview & Scrutiny Reports to Audit & Governance Committee Legal, Financial and HR implications considered as part of every decision and evidenced within committee reports Individual risk assessment on larger projects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering feedback from citizens and service users when making decisions about service improvements or where services are no longer required in order to prioritise competing demands within limited resources available including people, skills, land and assets and bearing in mind future impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation outcomes incorporated within key Executive / Council reports Specific consultation part of the annual budgeting process Complaints process
	Planning interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calendar of meetings Annual work programmes for Audit & Governance and Overview & Scrutiny Committees Executive Forward Plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication strategy East Herts Together
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively including shared risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk management report Risk identified within Executive reports Risk register for specific projects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering outputs can be adapted to changing circumstances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report cycles allow flexibility to respond to changing priorities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) as part of the planning process in order to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Plan KPIs in place Service plan KPIs established Financial performance regularly measured through quarterly budget meetings and report
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pentana is the Council's online performance management system Quarterly performance management reports
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing budgets in accordance with organisational objectives, strategies and the medium term financial plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear alignment between corporate objectives and resources Regular budget monitoring analysis and reporting across all Council Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informing medium and long term resource planning by drawing up realistic estimates of revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium Term Financial Plan Capital Strategy – reports to Executive / Audit and Governance Committee on performance / progress

Principles of good governance	Sub-principles and behaviours and actions that demonstrate good	East Herts Council's Compliance & Supporting Evidence
	Optimising achievement of intended outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the medium term financial plan integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual budget consultation Audit and Governance Committee Reports
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full and detailed budgeting exercise Internal and External Audit review
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the medium term financial strategy sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or responses to changes in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for outcomes to be achieved while optimising resource usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MTFP identifies plan for savings Transformation Programme in discovery phase of quantifying internal savings with a minimum target of £1 million of savings External auditor report gives assurance Quarterly budget reporting
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the achievement of 'social value' through service planning and commissioning. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 states that this is "the additional benefit to the community over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement strategy identifies social value Social value assessed as part of award process under procurement
E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	Developing the entity's capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing operations, performance use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assets Strategy Asset Management Group – regular review of assets Commercial Strategy being developed
<p>Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership, as well as people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mind-set, to operate efficiently and effectively and achieve their intended outcomes within the specified periods. A local government organisation must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole. Because both individuals and the environment in which an authority operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of the leadership of individual staff members. Leadership in local government entities is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity of communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how the authority's resources are allocated so that outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmarking LGA Peer Review on services External Audit Use of Resources Statement Local benchmarking exercise at Service level
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising the benefits of partnerships and collaborative working where added value can be achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant commitment to partnership working Joint working / shared services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of workforce development plan and strategy Commitment to apprenticeships
	Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate with each other regarding their respective roles early on in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constitution contains job descriptions for lead Members Officer Job descriptions Shared understanding of roles between Leader and CE Officer Member protocol

Principles of good governance	Sub-principles and behaviours and actions that demonstrate good	East Herts Council's Compliance & Supporting Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constitution Scheme of Delegation Financial Procedure Rules Individual reports for major projects set out decision making basis so that this is open and transparent, particularly for new projects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the Leader and the Chief Executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the Chief Executive leads the council in implementing strategy and managing the delivery of services and other outputs set by Members and each provides a check and a balance for each other's authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job description for Chief Executive Role profile for Leader in Constitution
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing the capabilities of Members and senior management to achieve effective shared leadership and to enable the organisation to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, political and environmental changes and risks by: ensuring Members and staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged ensuring Members and officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis ensuring personal, organisational and system-wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from governance weaknesses both internal and external 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular meetings between Executive and Leadership Team Senior Leadership Training & Development - ensuring Members and staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged Induction programme for both staff and Members Annual staff appraisal Annual training programme for Members Commitment to apprenticeships including those at a higher level and support for appropriate professional qualifications Bespoke training at committees including presentations by service departments to Audit and Governance Committee Community Leadership is discussed and led by Portfolio Holder and Executive Advisory Group Member support through Democratic Services Member training programme Officer training e.g. professional training, continuing professional development, management and leadership training Internal Audit reports on governance to Audit and Governance Committee Workforce monitoring reports to Executive through Portfolio Holder

Principles of good governance	Sub-principles and behaviours and actions that demonstrate good	East Herts Council's Compliance & Supporting Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement Strategy Residents' satisfaction survey Regular user satisfaction surveys The Council also has a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) - a document that sets out what consultation will take place when the Council is developing and reviewing its planning policy documents (including the District Plan) and when determining planning applications.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish member attendance records Annual training plan Participation in appropriate Peer Reviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual performance appraisals and probationary appraisals Staff development plan within appraisal process Capability procedure Sickness procedure Routine Service Team Meetings and 1:1 Meetings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conditions of Service Health and Safety policies Employee Assistance Programme – Confidential Helpline Mental Health First Aiders Workplace Health Scheme Monthly Programme Council policies which support employees e.g. bereavement
F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision-making activities. A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery, and accountability. It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny is in place as a key part of accountable decision-making, policy making and review. A positive working culture that accepts, promotes and encourages constructive challenge is critical to successful scrutiny and successful delivery. Importantly, this culture does not happen automatically, it requires repeated public commitment from those in authority.	Managing risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk management specifically reported to Executive and Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis Risk assessments on larger projects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk management strategy and policy Annual internal audit plan Risk management within individual project plans e.g. elections, Crematorium. Emergency plan and Business Continuity Plan and the review of risks specific to emergencies such as the Covid-19 pandemic Regular exercises to test the Emergency Plan, Business Continuity Plan ,Disaster Recovery and Cyber Security
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risks assigned with responsible owners Named officers for e.g. Health and Safety, Data Protection, Emergency Planning, Business Continuity
	Managing performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departmental service plans which are reviewed regularly Senior Leadership ownership of specific Corporate Plan outcomes. Performance monitoring CIPFA Benchmarking Transparency pages on website Report format strengthening consideration of implications
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring service delivery effectively including planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the organisation's financial, social and environmental position and outlook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report template to Executive / Committees includes specific sections for analysis, options, risk, finance, and other relevant considerations Agendas published at least 5 days in advance Decision notices and minutes published after meetings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place which encourages constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made thereby enhancing the organisation's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constitution defines roles and responsibilities of Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Audit and Governance Committee Annual work programmes for those committees Regular training sessions for committee members pertinent to that committee and the wider business and functions of the council

Principles of good governance	Sub-principles and behaviours and actions that demonstrate good	East Herts Council's Compliance & Supporting Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing members and senior management with regular reports on service delivery plans and on progress towards outcome achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual timetable / calendar of meetings Work programmes / forward plan for Executive and Committees Senior Leadership ownership of specific Corporate Plan outcomes. Annual Budget and Tax Setting report to Executive
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring there is consistency between specification stages (such as budgets) and post implementation reporting (e.g. financial statements) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Procedure Rules Annual accounts and Statement of Accounts External auditor reports
	Robust internal control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving the objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Audit Plan Regular reports from Internal Audit to Audit and Governance Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluating and monitoring the authority's risk management and internal control on a regular basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly risk management reports Risk management training for Members and officers Internal Audit Review of Effectiveness Annual Governance Statement External Audit Annual Report
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy Whistleblowing policy Shared Anti-Fraud Service Acquisition and use of specialist data analysis software to detect fraud and corruption Regular reports to Audit and Governance Committee on counter fraud activity Shared Anti-Fraud Service fraud risk evaluation of all business grants applied for as a consequence of Covid-19
	Strong public financial management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control, including management of financial risks and controls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear links between Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan and subsequent reporting on outcomes Asset Management Strategy Embedded financial management process covering process from beginning to end Review of that process through External Audit
G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability Accountability is about ensuring that those making decisions and delivering services are answerable for them. Effective accountability is concerned not only with reporting on actions completed, but also ensuring that stakeholders are able to understand and respond as the organisation plans and carries out its activities in a transparent manner. Both external and internal audit contribute to effective accountability.	Implementing good practice in transparency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing and communicating reports for the public and other stakeholders in an understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of all reports and decisions on website Transparency pages on website Consistent, accessible, reporting style used with supporting evidence providing more detail for those who require it. Web pages give key information and ability to drill down to specific documents and background papers for those requiring detail. Annual performance report Regular internal audit reports to Audit and Governance Committee
	Implementing good practices in reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and the stewardship of its resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual performance report that supplements quarterly performance and budget reports Annual reports from External Auditor Value for money opinion Statement of Accounts Internal audit reports also comment on Value for Money implications where applicable

Principles of good governance	Sub-principles and behaviours and actions that demonstrate good	East Herts Council's Compliance & Supporting Evidence
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring Members and senior management own the results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly defined roles for Executive portfolio holder, Audit and Governance Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee Portfolio holders present reports at Executive Each portfolio holder has regular briefings with officers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in the Framework have been applied and publishing the results on this assessment including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (annual governance statement) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Governance Statement Assurance mapping exercise planned for 2021/22
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that the Framework is applied to jointly managed or shared service organisations as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared service legal agreements Annual Governance Statement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the performance information that accompanies the financial statements is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other similar organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmarking Quarterly performance reports to Executive and Overview & Scrutiny Committee including end of year performance.
	Assurance and effective accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to Members is in place which provides assurance with regard to governance arrangements and recommendations are acted upon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management comments / response is incorporated as part of the reports from both Internal and External Audit Annual Opinion on the Control Environment report from Internal Audit Compliance with CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2019) Compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards Annual review of effectiveness of internal audit reported to Audit and Governance Committee Annual Governance Statement Action Plan and follow up
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive report on outcomes and recommendations / action plan arising from review Self-challenging through entry for various awards and nomination as finalist in several
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Governance Statement Risk management report Performance report Requirement for performance information to management is specified in contract specification.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and that the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportionate governance arrangements in place for partnership working Service Level Agreements for some community grants ensuring that outcomes are measurable and delivered.

5. Review of Effectiveness

East Herts Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the Leadership Team, the Monitoring officer, the Chief Finance Officer (Head of Financial Services), and the Head of Business Services who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates. The following processes have been applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework:

Council

Council is responsible for approving the budget and policy framework, which includes the Corporate Plan and the Constitution.

Executive

Executive has approved the Council's performance management framework. Executive also approves the risk management policy and receives quarterly reports on risk management, performance monitoring and budget monitoring.

Audit and Governance Committee

This Committee undertakes the core functions of an Audit Committee and approves the annual Internal Audit Plan, receives quarterly monitoring reports updating them on progress against that plan. It also receives the external auditor's annual audit report, annual governance report, annual plan and grant claim certification report. It approves the risk management policy and receives quarterly reports on risk management. The Committee has lead oversight responsibility for corporate governance, risk management and other internal control issues. It also leads the cross Member scrutiny and consideration of the budget. The Audit & Governance Committee also reviews the Constitution.

Standards Sub-Committee

This Sub-Committee undertakes a proactive role in relation to the promotion of the ethical conduct framework. It has also published documents to inform the public about its role, the importance of good ethical conduct in the area, and the high standards of conduct evident in the District. A new framework for dealing with ethical governance has been adopted by the county and the district and borough councils in Hertfordshire in order to maintain a level of consistency across the geographical area, particularly in relation to twin-hatted Members. The Standards Sub-Committee has put in place arrangements for dealing with complaints, conduct investigations and hearing allegations.

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee reviews performance across all services delivered by the Council and partner organisations, and the impact they have on the District and its communities.

Chief Finance Officer (Head of Strategic Finance & Property)

The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) has been designated as the s151 Officer. That officer maintains the statutory powers to report to Executive or Council on any proposals, decision or omission that gives rise to any unlawful expenditure. The CFO also has clearly defined responsibilities for Risk Management, Internal Control, and systems and processes for financial administration and control, which are set out in the Financial Procedure Rules.

Monitoring Officer

The Head of Legal & Democratic Services has been designated as the Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer has the specific duty, contained within Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, to ensure that the Council, its officers, and its Elected Councillors, maintain the highest standards of conduct in all they do. The role of the Monitoring Officer is:

- To report on matters he/she believes are, or are likely to be, illegal or amount to maladministration;
- To be responsible for matters relating to the conduct of Councillors and officers; and
- To be responsible for monitoring and reviewing the operation of the Constitution, to ensure that the aims and principles of our Constitution are given full effect.

Internal Audit

The internal control system comprises the whole network of systems established within the Council to provide reasonable assurance that corporate objectives will be achieved, with particular reference to:

- The effectiveness of operations
- The economic and efficient use of resources
- Compliance with applicable policies, procedures, laws and regulations
- The safeguarding of assets and interests from losses of all kinds, including those arising from fraud, irregularity and corruption
- The integrity and reliability of information, accounts and data
- Effective monitoring systems and optimum use of performance management information

6. Governance Issues – Progress from last year

Key Improvement Area	Lead Officer	Update
<u>Full implementation of high priority recommendations related to IT</u> The implementation of some recommendations has had to be re-scheduled. Management is actively monitoring these issues and full implementation should be achieved during 2020/21	Helen Standen	Progress on network upgrade and upgrade to Windows 10 and Microsoft 365 has been delayed by COVID-19 and staff sickness. Due to a number of incidents and downtime an external review is being commissioned into the ICT strategy and whether the partnership is delivering the strategy effectively.
<u>Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act</u> Compliance with the Act is monitored by the Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office. During November 2019 an inspection of the Council's arrangements resulted in a critical assessment. The Council was not meeting legal requirements in several areas and was given a list of eight required actions.	James Ellis	Completed The Monitoring Officer has conducted a thorough overhaul of the Council's policy and procedures to address the required actions. New policies were reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 June 2020 and were adopted by the Executive at its meeting on 7 July 2020
<u>Information Governance</u> A review by Internal Audit has highlighted a need to improve some areas of information governance: - Lack of an adequate Information Asset Register - Information Management policies and procedures are out of date - Lack of a defined and enforced retention schedule - Lack of defined disposal and destruction procedures	James Ellis	Completed Information Asset Register, Retention Schedule and Policies updated and approved

7. Governance Issues

Key Improvement Area	Lead Officer	Update
Procurement The Procurement Strategy requires updating to reflect the new national procurement strategy and the enhanced profile of social value as well as reflecting net zero ambitions. The council should produce an annual procurement programme as well as a 3 year "procurement pipeline" in order that local businesses can see what opportunities are coming up and to encourage them to bid. The council requires a social value policy to inform potential bidders of the social value priorities of the council The council should produce an annual procurement report showing: savings or costs avoided; social value gained; contracts awarded to local businesses by size; contracts awarded to SMEs; and the contribution from procurement to net zero targets.	Steven Linnett	
Assurance Mapping The Audit & Governance Committee should have an assurance map of all the major financial systems within the council. This provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Factual high level summary of the state of assurance □ Enables better decision making, e.g. how better to use internal audit and other assurance providers against risk and where there are gaps □ Creates better evidence to support assurances provided to the Council on the state of internal control □ Supports public reports on governance and statement of internal control 	Steven Linnett / Simon Martin (SIAS)	The Shared Internal Audit Service Plan provides for all the major financial systems to be mapped to produce an assurance map during 2021/22. This will identify any gaps, any areas of over assurance where resources can be redirected and is a more effective than the traditional approach of auditing and testing controls every year with the same result that the system is satisfactory and there are no recommendations
Asset Strategy The asset strategy requires updating to ensure the council's strategy is up to date and meets best practice. The council would benefit from the establishment of a cross service officer group to discuss asset management issues and also review assets and identify assets for disposal	Steven Linnett	The cross service officer group is expected to be established and meet in quarter 2 of 2021/22
Commercial Strategy The council would benefit from a commercial strategy setting out its attitude to risk and expectations about return on investment and its attitude towards services that could be provided on a trading basis as well as services where spare capacity could be sold under the Local Authorities (Goods & Services) Act	Steven Linnett	This will be delivered as part of the Commercial work stream of the Transformation Programme
ICT Resilience An external review of the ICT Strategy and delivery vehicle has been commissioned by the partner councils and recommendations arising from that will need to be taken forwards	Helen Standen	

Key Improvement Area	Lead Officer	Update
Workforce Plan Following changes to working practices as a result of COVID 19 and anticipated changes from the Transformation Programme the council would benefit from a workforce plan that analyses its workforce and determines the steps it must take to prepare for future staffing needs. These future skill needs can be met by recruiting, by training or by outsourcing the work.	Simon O'Hear	

8. Certification

To the best of our knowledge, the governance arrangements, as defined above have been effectively operating during the year with the exception of those areas identified in Section 7. We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for the improvements that were identified during the review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Cllr Linda Heysey
Leader of the Council
Date: 5 April 2022

Richard Cassidy
Chief Executive
Date: 5 April 2022

Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Account

The Authority's Responsibilities

The Authority is required:

- To make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this authority, that officer is the Chief Financial Officer;
- To manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets;
- To approve the Statement of Accounts.

The Chief Financial Officers' Responsibilities

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the preparation of the authority's statement of accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code).

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, the Chief Financial Officer has:

- Selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- Complied with the local authority Code.

The Chief Financial Officer has also:

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

EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Certificate of Responsible Finance Officer

I certify that this Statement of Accounts presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority at the reporting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Signed

Date

Steven Linnett Bsc(Hons) FCPFA

Head of Strategic Finance and Property and Section 151 Officer
East Hertfordshire District Council

Signed

Date

Councillor M Pope

Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee