

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Statement of Accounts summarises the council's transactions for the financial year and its position at the end of the financial year. The council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, which require the accounts to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Government Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20 (The Code) supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS's), International Accounting Standards (IAS's) and statutory guidance.

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

The accounting policies of the council have as far as possible been developed to ensure that the accounts are understandable, relevant, free from material error or misstatement, reliable and comparable.

1.2 ACCOUNTING CONCEPTS

Except where specified in the Code, or in specific legislative requirements, it is the council's responsibility to select and regularly review its accounting policies, as appropriate.

These accounts are prepared in accordance with a number of fundamental accounting principles:

- Relevance
- Reliability
- Comparability
- Materiality

Additionally three further concepts play a pervasive role in the selection and application of accounting policies:

Accruals of Income and Expenditure

The financial statements, other than the cash flow statement, are prepared on an accruals basis, i.e. transactions are reflected in the accounts in the year in which the activity to which they relate takes place, not simply when cash payments are made or received. In particular:

- Fees, charges and rents due from customers are accounted for as income at the date the council provides the relevant goods or services, in accordance with the performance obligations in the contract and IFRS15 Revenue Contracts with Customers. These are fees and charges such as car parking fees, bereavement services fees, planning applications and building control

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

fees.

- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed – where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption, they are carried as Inventories on the Balance Sheet.
- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.
- Interest payable on borrowings and receivable on investments is accounted for on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- Where income and expenditure has been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where it is doubtful that debts will be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.
- All income and expenditure is credited and charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, unless it comprises capital receipts or capital expenditure.

Going Concern

The accounts are prepared on the assumption that the council will continue its operations for the foreseeable future. This means in particular that the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and Balance Sheet assume no intention to significantly curtail the scale of operations.

Primacy of legislative requirements

The council derives its powers from statute and its financial and accounting framework is closely controlled by primary and secondary legislation. Where legislative requirements and accounting principles conflict, legislative requirements take precedence.

1.3 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Benefits Payable during Employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within twelve months of the year-end. They include such benefits as salaries and wages, paid annual leave and paid sick leave 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 (or any form of leave, e.g. time off in lieu) 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

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

occurs.

Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the council to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy. They are charged on an accruals basis to the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when the council can no longer withdraw the offer of any benefits.

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

Post-Employment Benefits

Employees of the council are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme, administered by Gloucestershire County Council. The scheme provides defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees worked for the council, and is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme:

- The liabilities of the Gloucestershire pension scheme attributable to the council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method – i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc, and projections of earnings for current employees.
- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate based on the indicative rate of return on the adoption of the AA-rated corporate bond basis.
- The assets of the Gloucestershire pension fund attributable to the council are included in the balance sheet at their fair value on the following basis:
 - quoted securities – current bid value
 - unquoted securities – professional estimate of fair value
 - unitised securities – current bid price
 - property – market value.
- The change in the net pension liability is analysed into seven components:
 - Current service cost: the increase in liabilities as a result of the additional year of service earned - allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked.
 - Past service cost: the increase in liabilities arising from current year decisions whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years - charged to the Surplus or Deficit in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Non Distributed Costs.

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

- Interest cost on defined obligation: the expected increase in the present value of liabilities during the year as they move one year closer to being paid - charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- Interest income on plan assets: the annual investment return on the 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/losses on settlements: the result of actions to relieve the council of liabilities or events that reduce the expected future service or accrual of benefits of employees – charged to the Cost of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Non Distributed Costs.
- Measurement of the net defined benefit liability: changes in the net pension liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions – charged to the Pensions Reserve.
- Contributions paid to the Gloucestershire pension fund: cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund, in settlement of liabilities.

Statutory provisions limit the amount chargeable to council tax to that payable by the council to the pension fund 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 Pension Reserve to remove the notional charges and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with the cash paid to the pension fund and any amounts payable to the fund but unpaid at the year end.

The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the General Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

Discretionary Benefits

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

1.4 GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Grants and contributions received from the government and other organisations are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement unless any conditions attached to the grant or contribution have not been satisfied. For example conditions may be stipulated that specify that the grants or contributions are required to be consumed by the recipient as specified, or they must be returned to the transferor.

Amounts received as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried on the Balance Sheet as Revenue or Capital Grants Received in

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

Advance. When the conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (if ring-fenced) 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, so that they are available to fund capital expenditure. Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is credited to the Capital Grants Unapplied reserve. Where it has been applied it is credited to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Grants Unapplied reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

1.5 OVERHEADS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The authority operates and manages its overheads (including telephones and printing costs) and corporate and support services separately and expenditure relating to these activities is reported to key decision makers as separate activities. These overheads are not therefore apportioned to services within the general fund. Overhead charges between the General fund and Housing Revenue services, however, continue to apply.

1.6 COUNCIL TAX RECOGNITION

Council Tax receivable for the financial year is recognised in the Collection Fund, a separate statutory account maintained by billing authorities. The Fund is charged with the council tax requirements ('precepts and demands') set by the major preceptors and billing authority before the start of the year, leaving (after providing for uncollectable debts) a surplus or deficit, which is then distributed to the same authorities in future years in proportion to their precepts or demands.

The council tax income included in the council's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year represents its 'demand' for the year, plus its share of the collection fund surplus or deficit for the year, before any distribution. Because the amount of surplus or deficit that can be credited or charged to the council's general fund is governed by statute, and is limited to that declared at the start of the year, adjustments are made in the Movement in Reserves Statement to the collection fund adjustment account to reflect the difference between the surplus or deficit due for the year and that which can be released according to statute.

There is no statutory requirement for a separate collection fund balance sheet. Instead the fund balances (arrears, over/pre-payments, bad debts provision and accumulated surpluses or deficits) are distributed across the balance sheets of the billing authority and the major preceptors, in proportion to their precepts and demands. The council, as a billing authority, therefore accounts for council tax balances on an agency basis, showing only its share of the fund balances on its balance sheet.

1.7 NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES (NNDR) INCOME RECOGNITION

NNDR income is recognised in the same way as council tax described above, with the exception that the net income and surplus/deficit credited or charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is shared between the billing

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

authority, the county council and central government in statutory proportions. NNDR balances are also distributed across their balance sheets in the same proportions.

1.8 VAT

Income and expenditure excludes any amounts related to VAT, as all VAT collected is payable to HM Revenue and Customs and all VAT paid is recoverable from them.

1.9 NON-CURRENT ASSETS - RECOGNITION OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

The council recognises non-current assets when expenditure is incurred on assets:

- held for use in the production or supply of goods or services, rental to others, or for administrative purposes
- expected to be used for more than one financial period
- where it is expected that the future economic benefits associated with the asset will flow to the council
- where the cost can be measured reliably.

The initial cost of an asset is recognised to be:

- Purchase price, construction cost, minimum lease payments or equivalent including import duties and non-refundable purchase taxes, after deducting trade discounts and rebates.
- Costs associated with bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner required by management.
- Any costs of dismantling and removing an existing asset and restoring the site on which it is located.

The cost of an asset acquired other than by purchase or construction is deemed to be its fair value, except where an asset is acquired via an exchange it is deemed to be the carrying amount of the asset given up by the council.

Donated assets are measured initially at fair value. The difference between their fair values and any consideration paid is credited to the Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, unless the donation has been made conditionally. Until conditions are satisfied, the gain is held in a Donated Assets Reserve account. Where gains are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Subsequent 'enhancement' expenditure is treated as capital expenditure when it is considered it will increase the value of the asset or its useful life or increase the extent to which the council can use the asset.

De Minimis policy - expenditure below £10,000 (excluding VAT) is not treated as capital expenditure except where the sum of identical assets purchased exceeds this figure, as is the case with waste collection bins and caddies.

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

Capital assets are held on the Balance Sheet as Non-Current Assets.

1.10 NON-CURRENT ASSETS - PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the provision of services, for rental to others, or for administrative or other operational purposes on a continuing basis are classified as Property, Plant and Equipment. Such assets are categorised as Council Dwellings, Other Land and Buildings, Vehicles Plant and Equipment, Infrastructure, Community Assets, Surplus Assets and Assets Under Construction.

Infrastructure assets are inalienable assets, expenditure on which is only recoverable by continued use of the asset and there is no prospect for sale or alternative use. Examples include footpaths, cycle tracks, bridges, street furniture and drainage systems.

Community Assets are assets that the authority intends to hold in perpetuity, have no determinable useful lives and which may have restrictions on their disposal. Examples include parks, gardens, cemeteries land, allotments and open spaces used for recreation.

Surplus Assets are assets which are not being used to deliver services or for administrative purposes but which do not meet the definition of Investment properties or Assets Held for Sale.

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of Property, Plant and Equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it yields benefits to the council for more than one financial year and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. This excludes expenditure on routine repairs and maintenance, which is charged directly to service revenue accounts when it is incurred.

Measurement

PPE assets are initially measured at cost, comprising all expenditure that is directly attributable to bringing the asset into working condition for its intended use. The council does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred whilst assets are under construction.

The assets are then carried on the Balance Sheet using the following measurement bases:

- Dwellings – Current value, using the basis of existing use value for social housing (EUV-SH)
- Other Land and Buildings – Current value, using the basis of existing use value (EUV) where an active market exists or Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC), where there is no active market for the asset or it is specialised
- Infrastructure – depreciated historic cost
- Community assets – historic cost (where known). The cost of many of the council's parks, gardens and open spaces is not known and they are therefore

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

shown at Nil value. The Code offers the option for authorities to measure community assets at valuation, which is the requirement for Heritage assets. The council has so far not adopted to change its accounting policy in this way as it does not currently have the management information to make reasonable valuation estimates of community assets.

- Assets under construction – historic cost
- Surplus Assets – Current value, using the Fair Value basis (see paragraph 1.19 *Fair Value Measurement*).
- In the case of assets that have short useful lives or low values (or both) i.e. Vehicles, Plant and Equipment, depreciated historic cost is used as a proxy for current value.

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at Current value are re-valued where there have been material changes during the year, and as a minimum every five years.

Where there is an upward revaluation, the carrying value is increased and the gain credited to the Revaluation Reserve. This is reflected in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as a revaluation gain, included in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. Exceptionally, gains are credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services (and not the Revaluation Reserve) where a revaluation loss or impairment in respect of that asset was previously charged to a service revenue account (adjusted for the depreciation that would have been charged had the revaluation or impairment losses not occurred).

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

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

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

Impairment

PPE assets are assessed at the end of each year for evidence of impairment. Where evidence exists and the effect is considered 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 difference.

Where there are revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve the impairment loss is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains).

Where there are no gains in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance to meet the impairment loss, the remaining loss is written down against the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

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

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all Property, Plant and Equipment assets with a determinable finite useful life, by writing down the carrying value of the asset in the Balance Sheet over the remaining periods expected to benefit from their use. Assets not depreciated are those without a determinable finite useful life (land and Community and Heritage assets), assets that are not yet available for use (assets under construction) and assets reclassified as Held for Sale.

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

- Council dwellings – straight-line allocation over each significant component's estimated useful life
- Other buildings, Vehicles, Plant, Furniture and Equipment, Infrastructure, Surplus assets – straight-line allocation over the asset's estimated useful life.

Newly acquired assets are depreciated from the year following that in which they were acquired, although assets in the course of construction are not depreciated until they are brought into use.

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

Assets disposed of during the year are depreciated in the year of disposal or in the case of assets reclassified as Held for Sale, in the year they were reclassified.

Componentisation

Where a *material* item of Property Plant and Equipment has components whose cost is *significant* in relation to the total cost of that item, *and* which have different estimated useful lives and/or depreciation methods, they are identified as separate assets and depreciated separately.

The council's current Componentisation Policy for non-dwelling assets defines a material item as an individual building exceeding a gross book value of 1% of the Other Land and Buildings value which for 2020/21 is £1,421m. A significant individual component as one which exceeds 20% of the gross replacement cost of that building. Significant components are identified as separate assets and separately depreciated if their estimated useful lives are considered significantly different to the 'host' building or other components. 'Material' buildings are considered for componentisation whenever such a building is acquired, enhanced, or revalued after 1 April 2010.

With effect from 1st April 2017 separate building components (including the 'host' or residual building) have been identified for dwellings where their current replacement cost and useful lives can be estimated reliably.

1.11 NON-CURRENT ASSETS - HERITAGE ASSETS

Assets with historical, artistic, scientific or technological qualities held principally for their contribution to knowledge or culture.

The council's collections of heritage assets are accounted for as follows:

Ceramics, Art, Regalia and Silverware, Furniture, Textiles, Ephemera, other collectables

These are reported in the Balance Sheet at their current insurance valuation, which is based on market values.

Statues and Monuments

These are reported in the Balance Sheet at their current insurance valuation, which is based on historic or replacement cost.

Archaeology

The council cannot obtain reliable cost or valuation information for its archaeological collection. This is because of the diverse nature of the assets held and lack of comparable market values. Consequently the council does not recognise these assets on its balance sheet.

The insurance valuations are updated for inflation on an annual basis, with gains credited to the Revaluation Reserve. The council has deemed that all the heritage assets have indeterminate lives, hence it does not consider it appropriate to charge depreciation.

The carrying amounts of heritage assets are reviewed where there is evidence of impairment. Any impairment is recognised and measured in accordance with the council's policy on impairment for Property, Plant and Equipment. Occasionally the council will dispose of heritage assets. These are accounted for in accordance with the council's policy on disposals and assets held for sale.

1.12 NON-CURRENT ASSETS - INVESTMENT PROPERTY

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

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value (see paragraph 1.19 *Fair Value Measurement*). Properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually unless their carrying value can be demonstrated to be not materially different to fair value at the balance sheet date. 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. Such gains and losses, however, are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the General Fund Balance and are therefore reversed out in the Movement in Reserves Statement and credited to the

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

Capital Adjustment Account and (for any sale proceeds greater than £10,000) the Capital Receipts Reserve.

Rentals received in relation to investment properties are credited to the Financing and Investment Income line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

1.13 NON-CURRENT ASSETS - INTANGIBLE ASSETS

Expenditure on assets that do not have physical substance and which are controlled by the entity through custody or legal rights (e.g. software licences), is capitalised when it will bring benefits to the council for more than one financial year. Internally generated assets are capitalised where it can be demonstrated that the project is technically feasible, is intended to be completed (with adequate resources being available), where the council will be able to generate future economic benefits or deliver service potential by being able to sell or use the asset, and where the expenditure during the development phase can be reliably measured.

Intangible assets are measured at cost, which is amortised over the estimated useful life of the asset to the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, to reflect the pattern of consumption of benefits. Estimated remaining useful lives are reviewed annually and an asset is tested for impairment whenever there is an indication that the asset might be impaired – any losses recognised are charged to the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Any gain or loss arising on the disposal or cessation of use of an intangible asset is credited or charged to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Amortisation, impairment losses and disposal gains and losses are not permitted to have an impact on the General Fund Balance, so they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and charged or credited to the Capital Adjustment Account with any sale proceeds greater than £10,000 credited to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

1.14 NON-CURRENT ASSETS – DISPOSALS AND ASSETS HELD FOR SALE

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an Asset Held for Sale. Assets are classified as held for sale where the asset is available for immediate sale in its present condition and where the sale is highly probable i.e. the asset has been advertised for sale and a buyer sought and the completion of the sale is expected within twelve months of the balance sheet date. Dwellings sold under Right to Buy are deemed to become surplus on the day that the transfer to the tenant takes place (completion of the sale), and are therefore considered operational until they are sold.

Except when carried at (depreciated) historic cost, an asset is revalued immediately before its reclassification as Held for Sale, using its existing category's measurement basis. Following reclassification assets are measured at the lower of their carrying values and fair values less costs to sell. Any subsequent gains in value are first used to reverse any losses previously charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and thereafter recognised in the Revaluation Reserve. Losses in value are charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services (even when there is a balance held for that asset

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

in the Revaluation Reserve).

Depreciation is not charged on Assets Held for Sale, except in the year in which they were classified as held for sale.

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

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

Amounts received from a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. A proportion of receipts relating to Housing Revenue Account (HRA) disposals, as specified by statutory regulations, is payable to the Government. The balance of receipts is required to be credited to the Usable Capital Receipts Reserve, and can then only be used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the council's underlying need to borrow (the Capital Financing Requirement). Receipts are appropriated to the Reserve from the General Fund Balance in the Movement of Reserves Statement.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Such amounts are therefore appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

1.15 REVENUE EXPENDITURE FUNDED FROM CAPITAL UNDER STATUTE (REFCUS)

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but does not result in the creation of non-current assets is charged to the relevant service revenue account in the year. To the extent the council has determined to meet the cost of this expenditure from capital resources (borrowing, capital receipts or grants) a transfer to the Capital Adjustment Account via the Movement in Reserves Statement reverses out the amounts charged to the General Fund Balance so there is no impact on the level of council tax.

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

1.16 CHARGES TO REVENUE FOR NON-CURRENT ASSETS

Service revenue accounts, support services and trading accounts are charged with the following amounts to record the real cost of holding assets during the year:

- Depreciation of property, plant and equipment used by the relevant service
- Amortisation of intangible assets used by the service
- Revaluation and impairment losses, where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which the losses can be charged.

The council cannot raise council tax to cover depreciation, amortisation or revaluation and impairment losses. It is, however, required to make an annual provision (known as Minimum Revenue Provision or MRP) from revenue towards reducing its overall borrowing requirement, equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis by the council in accordance with statutory guidance. The above charges to the General Fund are therefore reversed out of the General Fund Balance and replaced by a MRP contribution to the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement of Reserves Statement.

1.17 LEASES

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

Defining a Finance Lease

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. This is likely to apply if some or all of the following situations are met:

- If the lessee will gain ownership of the asset at the end of the lease term (e.g. in the case of hire purchase)
- If the lessee has an option to purchase the asset at a sufficiently favourable price that it is reasonably certain, at the inception of the lease, that it will be exercised
- If the lease term is for the major part of the economic life of the asset, even if title is not transferred. The economic life of the asset is deemed to be consistent with the useful life of the asset in the depreciation policy. The council recognises the major part to be 75% of the life of the asset, unless on an individual case basis this would not give a true representation of the substance of the transaction
- At the inception of the lease, the present value of the minimum lease payments amounts to at least substantially all of the fair value of the

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

leased asset. The present value of the minimum lease payments is calculated by discounting at the rate inherent in the lease. If this rate cannot be determined the incremental borrowing rate applicable for that year is used. The council recognises “substantially all” to mean 90% of the value of the asset. In some circumstances, a level of 75% is used if the council believes that using this level will give a result that better reflects the underlying transaction

- The leased assets are of such a specialised nature that only the lessee can use them without major modifications
- If the lessee cancels the lease, the lessor’s losses associated with the cancellation are borne by the lessee
- Gains or losses from the fluctuation in the fair value of the residual accrue to the lessee (e.g. in the form of a rent rebate equalling most of the sales proceeds at the end of the lease)
- The lessee has the ability to continue the lease for a secondary period at a rent that is substantially lower than market rent.

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

Lessee Accounting for a finance lease

Where the council is leasing an asset (for example as a tenant) that is deemed a finance lease, it will recognise that asset within its asset register, and account for that asset as though it were an owned asset.

The initial recognition of the asset is at the fair value of the asset, or if lower, the present value of the minimum lease payments. A liability (less any premium paid) may also be recognised at this value, which is reduced as lease payments are made. Lease payments made to the lessor are split between the reduction in the liability and interest, which is charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Lessor Accounting for a finance lease

Where the council grants a finance lease over property or items of plant or equipment the carrying values of the relevant assets are written out of the Balance Sheet to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, as part of the gain or loss on disposal. The amount receivable on disposal (representing the minimum lease payments due), is credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, also as part of the gain or loss on disposal, matched by a cash receipt (if a premium has been paid) or a long term debtor (if to be settled by payments in future years) on the Balance Sheet.

The amount receivable 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.

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

Where the amount due under the lease is settled by payments in future years the amount receivable on disposal is posted out of the General Fund Balance to the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve. When received future lease payments are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the assets, which reduces the lease debtor
- finance interest, which is credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

An amount equivalent to the charge for the acquisition of the assets is at the same time transferred from the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

Defining an Operating Lease

A lease is classified as an operating lease if it does not transfer substantially all the risks and rewards arising from ownership of the asset.

Lessor Accounting for an operating lease

Where the council grants an operating lease over property or items of plant or equipment, the asset is retained on the Balance Sheet. Rental income is credited to the relevant service income line or, if the asset is classified as an Investment Property, to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Lessee Accounting for operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the service using the asset in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

1.18 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Financial assets and liabilities are recognised in the Balance Sheet when the authority becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. In the case of a financial asset this is when the authority becomes committed to its purchase, except in the case of trade receivables, which are recognised when the goods or services have been supplied. Financial liabilities are recognised when the cash or goods or services have been received.

Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are initially measured at fair value and then carried at amortised cost. Where interest is payable this is charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, 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. Transaction costs are charged to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, unless deemed material, in which case they are added to the initial cost.

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

Normally this means, for the council's borrowings, the amount recognised in the Balance Sheet represents the outstanding principal repayable plus any accrued interest, and interest charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the amount payable for the year stated in the loan agreement. For current payables with no stated interest rate the amount recognised is the outstanding invoiced amount.

Gains and losses on the early settlement of borrowing are credited or charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year of settlement. However, where settlement has taken place as part of a restructuring of the loan portfolio that involves the modification or exchange of existing instruments, the premium or discount is deducted from or added to the amortised cost of the new or modified loan and its write-down to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is spread over the life of the loan by an adjustment to the effective interest rate.

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

Financial Assets

Under IFRS 9 the authority's financial assets are classified into three types:

- Financial assets at amortised cost – where payments consist solely of principal and interest and the reason for holding is to collect cash flows
- Fair value through Other Comprehensive Income (OCI) – where payments do not consist solely of principal and interest but where the authority has designated the instrument as Fair value through OCI
- Fair value through Profit and Loss (P&L) - where payments do not consist solely of principal and interest.

Financial assets at amortised cost

These are initially measured at fair value and carried at amortised cost. Where interest is receivable this is credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. Normally this means, for the council's loans and investments, the amount recognised in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable plus any accrued interest, and interest credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the amount receivable for the year stated in the loan agreement.

Interest attributable to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is calculated based on the level of its usable reserves held throughout the year and the weighted average

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

(consolidated) rate of interest earned by the council, in accordance with statutory provisions.

Deposits, bonds and loans are assessed on recognition for impairment due to the likelihood that payments due under the contract will not be made and, if material, a provision for twelve month expected credit losses set aside from the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. If the risk of default increases significantly after initial recognition and for trade and lease receivables a provision is set aside based on expected lifetime credit losses, if deemed significant or material.

For current receivables with no stated interest rate the amount recognised is the outstanding invoiced amount, less any allowance for impairment (provision for bad or doubtful debts).

Any gains and losses that arise on the disposal or de-recognition of the asset are credited or charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Fair value through OCI

These are initially measured at cost (equivalent to fair value) and carried at fair value. For instruments quoted in an active market, fair values are based on their market prices at the reporting date, except where the instruments will mature within twelve months of that date, in which case they are assumed not materially different to (and therefore equal to) their carrying values.

Interest receivable is credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, based on the amortised cost of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. Dividends from equity instruments designated by the authority as Fair value through OCI are credited to the same line when they become receivable by the council.

Changes in fair value are balanced by an entry to the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve (FIRR) (formerly the Available-for-Sale Reserve), with the gain or loss being recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Any gains or losses held in the FIRR on de-recognition of the asset are credited or charged to the General Fund Balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Fair value through P&L

These are initially measured at cost and carried at fair value. For instruments quoted in an active market, fair values are based on their market prices at the reporting date, except where the instruments will mature within twelve months of that date, in which case they are assumed not materially different to (and therefore equal to) their carrying values.

Dividends are credited to the Financing and Investment Income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) when they become receivable by the council. Changes in fair value and any gains or losses on de-recognition are charged or credited to the same line in the CIES and, in the case of pooled investment funds reversed to the Pooled Investment Funds Adjustment

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

Account via the Movement in Reserves Statement (MIRS). Sale proceeds on de-recognition are credited to usable capital receipts via the MIRS.

1.19 FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT

The authority measures certain non-financial assets (Surplus Assets, Investment Property and Assets Held for Sale) and its Fair value through OCI and Fair value through P&L financial assets at fair value at the balance sheet date, unless there is no material difference between carrying value and fair value.

Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. The fair value measurement assumes that the transaction to sell the asset or transfer the liability takes place either:

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

The fair value of an asset or liability is measured using the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability, assuming that market participants act in their best economic interest. In the case of a non-financial asset, the authority takes into account the market participants' ability to use the asset in its 'highest and best use' or by selling it to another market participant that would use the asset in its 'highest and best use'.

Inputs to the valuation techniques used in measuring fair value are categorised within the fair value hierarchy as follows:

- Level 1 - unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities
- Level 2 - directly or indirectly observable inputs other than quoted prices
- Level 3 - unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

1.20 INVENTORIES

Inventories held in stores are included in the Balance Sheet at the latest price paid. This is a departure from the requirements of the Code, which require inventories to be shown at the lower of cost and net realisable value. The effect of the different treatment is not considered material.

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

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

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

1.22 PROVISIONS

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the council an obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits, but where the timing or amount of the transfer is uncertain. For instance, the council may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or the payment of compensation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when the council becomes aware of the event, based on its best estimate of the likely settlement. When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried on the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year. Where it becomes more likely than not that a transfer of economic benefits will not be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

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

1.23 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

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

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

1.24 RESERVES

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

Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments, retirement and employee benefits, and they do not represent usable resources for the council – these reserves are known as unusable reserves.

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

1.25 CONTINGENT ASSETS

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

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

1.26 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 made has a material effect, 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.

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

1.27 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 arose after the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is adjusted to reflect such events
- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events, but where 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.

1.28 ESTIMATION TECHNIQUES

Estimation techniques are the methods adopted to assess the values of assets, liabilities, gains and losses and changes in reserves in situations where there is uncertainty as to their precise value. Unless specified in the Code or in legislative requirements, the method of estimation will generally be the one that most closely

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

reflects the economic reality of the transaction.

1.29 JOINTLY CONTROLLED OPERATIONS

Jointly controlled operations are activities undertaken by the council, together with other organisations, involving the shared use of the assets and resources of the organisations, rather than the establishment of a separate entity. The council recognises on its Balance Sheet the assets that it controls and the liabilities that it incurs and charges or credits the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement with the expenditure it incurs and the share of income it earns from the activity of the operation.

Such operations, not being separate entities, are accounted for in the council only accounts and are not separate entities for Group Account purposes.

1.30 INTERESTS IN COMPANIES AND OTHER ENTITIES – GROUP ACCOUNTS

The council has material interests in companies that have the nature of being subsidiaries and joint ventures and require it to prepare Group Accounts. In the council's own single-entity accounts the interests in companies and other entities are recorded as financial assets at cost (if any), less any provision for losses.

Basis of Consolidation

The group accounts bring together the council's own accounts with those of Gloucestershire Airport Limited (GAL), in which the council has a 50% shareholding, and Cheltenham Borough Homes Limited (CBH), a company limited by guarantee in which the council is the sole member. The accounts of CBH include those of Cheltenham Borough Homes Services Limited (CBHSL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Cheltenham Borough Homes Limited.

GAL has been treated as a Joint Venture since it is jointly owned and controlled with Gloucester City Council. GAL has therefore been consolidated with the council's accounts on an equity accounting basis, in which the council's share of the company's operating results and net assets or liabilities (based on its proportionate shareholding) are shown as separate lines in the main group statements. There is no requirement to adjust for inter-organisation transactions and balances.

CBH has been treated as a Subsidiary (since it is wholly controlled by the council), so its accounts have been consolidated in the main group statements on a line-by-line basis, eliminating inter-organisation transactions and balances.

At 31st March 2019 the council also had a 14.29% shareholding in Ubico Limited, a local authority owned company which has seven members, providing environmental services to the shareholder councils. Since the council does not have control or significant influence over the company, its accounts are not consolidated into the group accounts, however full disclosure notes are provided.

The council also has an interest in Publica Group (Support) Limited, a Joint Venture company limited by guarantee, in which the council is one of four members. The council's share of the company's profit for the year and net assets at the balance sheet date have not been consolidated into the Group Accounts on the basis of immateriality.

The council also has an interest in the South West Audit Partnership Limited (SWAP),

Appendix A – Accounting Policies

a company limited by guarantee. As the council does not have any controlling or significant influence in the company it is classed as an investment, and is not included in the Group Accounts.

Accounting Policies

The financial statements in the group accounts are prepared in accordance with the policies set out above, with the following additions and exceptions:

Cheltenham Borough Homes Limited (CBH)

The financial statements for CBH have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (UK GAAP), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS102) and the Housing SORP 2014: Statement of Recommended Practice for Registered Social Housing providers.

Consequently dwellings owned by CBH are initially valued at historic cost. For the purposes of the group accounts they have been re-valued at Current value to bring them into line with the council's accounting policies, using the existing use value for social housing (EUV-SH) appropriate to the dwellings' tenure as affordable homes. Any revaluation gains or losses are treated as described in paragraph 1.10 (Measurement).

In the company accounts capital grants are written off to the Income and Expenditure account over the estimated life of the asset in line with depreciation. However in the group accounts such grants are treated in accordance with paragraph 1.4, whereby they are credited to the Income and Expenditure account when any conditions attaching to the grant are met.

Gloucestershire Airport Limited

The financial statements of the Airport have been prepared under the historic cost convention (except for certain items that are shown at fair value) in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS102).

Since Investment Property and Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) assets held by the airport have been valued at fair value no adjustments are required to the value of non-current assets on consolidation with the council's accounts. Unlike in the airport accounts, however, where any gains in value over historic cost are credited to the Profit & Loss Account, such gains are credited in the group accounts to the Revaluation Reserve (for PPE assets) and the Capital Adjustment Account via the Group Income and Expenditure Statement (for Investment Property), in line with the council's accounting policies.