

Guildford Borough Council Statement of Accounts 2023-24

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Statement of Responsibilities

The Council's Responsibilities

The Council is required to:

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

The Chief Financial Officer's Responsibilities

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Council'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
- Made 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.

I certify that the Statement of Accounts presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Guildford Borough Council at 31 March 2024 and of its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024.



Richard Bates
Chief Financial Officer

24th February 2025

Independent auditor's report to the members of Guildford Borough Council

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Disclaimer of opinion

We were engaged to audit the financial statements of Guildford Borough Council (the 'Authority') and its subsidiaries (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2024, which comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement in Reserves, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, the Housing Revenue Account Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement on the Housing Revenue Account Statement, the Collection Fund, the Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Group Balance Sheet, the Group Movement in Reserves, the Group Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24.

We do not express an opinion on the accompanying financial statements of the Authority or the group. Because of the significance of the matters described in the basis for disclaimer of opinion section of our report, we have not been able to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to provide a basis for an audit opinion on these financial statements.

Basis for disclaimer of opinion

The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024 ('the Regulations') require the Authority to publish audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 by 28 February 2025 ('the backstop date'). The backstop date has been put in law with the purpose of clearing the backlog of historical financial statements. We have been unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence by the backstop date to conclude that the Authority's and group's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 as a whole are free from material misstatement. We were also unable to obtain sufficient appropriate evidence over the corresponding figures or whether there was any consequential effect on the Authority and Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 March 2024 for the same reason. We have concluded that the possible effects on the financial statements of undetected misstatements arising from this matter could be both material and pervasive.

In addition, the Authority has disclosed within the Annual Governance Statement a potential fraud in relation to housing maintenance contracts let in October 2021 and June 2023. This is subject to an ongoing police investigation and therefore the Authority has not been able to estimate the final financial effect. We have not been able to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence by the backstop date to conclude on the possible effects on the financial statements arising from the potential fraud.

We have therefore issued a disclaimer of opinion on the financial statements. This enables the Authority to comply with the requirement in the Regulations that they publish audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 by the backstop date.

Other information we are required to report on by exception under the Code of Audit Practice

Because of the significance of the matters described in the basis for disclaimer of opinion section of our report, we have been unable to consider whether the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with the requirements of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority

Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24, or is misleading or inconsistent with the information of which we are aware from our audit. We are not required to consider whether the Annual Governance Statement addresses all risks and controls or that risks are satisfactorily addressed by internal controls.

Opinion on other matters required by the Code of Audit Practice

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts, other than the Authority's and group's financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Because of the significance of the matters described in the basis for disclaimer of opinion section of our report, we have been unable to form an opinion, whether based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit of the financial statements and our knowledge of the Authority gained through our work in relation to the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, whether the other information published together with the financial statements in the Statement of Accounts for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Under the Code of Audit Practice, we are required to report to you if:

- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- we make a written recommendation to the Authority under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- 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 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or;
- we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit.

We have nothing to report in respect of the above matters.

Responsibilities of the Authority and the Chief Financial Officer

As explained more fully in the Statement of 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. The Chief Financial Officer 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 2023/24, for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Chief Financial Officer 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 Chief Financial Officer is responsible for assessing the Authority's and the group's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matter related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless they have been

informed by the relevant national body of the intention to dissolve the Authority and the group without the transfer of its services to another public sector entity.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our responsibility is to conduct an audit of the Authority's and the group's financial statements in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and to issue an auditor's report. However, because of the matters described in the basis for disclaimer of opinion section of our report, we were not able to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to provide a basis for an audit opinion on those financial statements.

We are independent of the Authority and group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that material misstatements in the financial statements may not be detected, even though the audit is properly planned and performed in accordance with the ISAs (UK).

The audit was defective in its ability to detect irregularities, including fraud, on the basis that we were unable to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence due to the matters described in the basis for disclaimer of opinion section of our report.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements – the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

Matter on which we are required to report by exception – the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

Under the Code of Audit Practice, we are required to report to you if, in our opinion, we have not been able to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2024.

We have nothing to report in respect of the above matter except the below which were identified and reported to those charged with governance on 20 February 2025:

We identified a significant weakness in how the Authority manages its financial sustainability arrangements. This was in relation to unidentified savings and funding gaps that threaten delivery of the medium-term financial plan. We recommended the Authority should:

- revise its three-year Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 31 March 2029 identifying the Authority's increasing structural budget gap for a further two years as there are significant changes ahead which are not reflected in the current MTFP with its gap of £2.4 million to 31 March 2027. The Authority needs to establish a pipeline of recurrent savings and income generation schemes over the next few years, at a granular level, through its collaboration and business transformation to mitigate the increasing financial challenge, which needs to be more transparent in its revised 2025/26 to 2028/29 Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Additionally, we identified two significant weaknesses in the Authority's arrangements for governance.

These were in relation to serious and pervasive weaknesses in final accounts processes that led to material errors in draft accounts and failure to meet statutory reporting deadlines and pervasive weaknesses in internal controls which had a significant financial and service-delivery impact on the housing service which enabled a material fraud to occur. We recommended the Authority should:

- include sufficient finance team resources and specialist skills to adequately prepare the Authority's financial statements to a high standard. The entries in the financial statements should be supported by good quality working papers which are available from the start of the audit.
- the arrangements for financial reporting to senior members and officers needs strengthening to facilitate the Authority's improvement process.

Furthermore, we identified two significant weaknesses in the Authority's arrangements for Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

These were in relation to the failure to secure improvement in the housing service where the Authority and the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) have identified weaknesses and significant financial loss and failure to deliver efficiency/performance improvements as expected when managing significant outsourced contracts and services in housing. . We recommended:

- the outstanding actions on the Authority's Corporate Improvement Plan and Housing Sub Improvement Plan need to be reflected at a granular level with actions and target dates over the three years officers and members predict the length of the Authority's improvement journey to be. This will allow proper debate over the forecast pace of change and prioritisation of resources.
- the Authority's Independent Assurance Panel formally reports on progress against the revised Corporate Improvement Plan to Council every three months, rather than every six months, as this is in line with good practice intervention reporting.
- the Head of Procurement report on the Authority's readiness to meet the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023 which comes into force on 24 February 2025, as a matter of priority.

Responsibilities of the Authority

The Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Auditor's responsibilities for the review of the Authority's arrangements for securing 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 be satisfied 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.

We undertake our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in November 2024. This guidance sets

out the arrangements that fall within the scope of 'proper arrangements'. When reporting on these arrangements, the Code of Audit Practice requires auditors to structure their commentary on arrangements under three specified reporting criteria:

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

We document our understanding of the arrangements the Authority has in place for each of these three specified reporting criteria, gathering sufficient evidence to support our risk assessment and commentary in our Auditor's Annual Report. In undertaking our work, we consider whether there is evidence to suggest that there are significant weaknesses in arrangements.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements – Delay in certification of completion of the audit

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate for Guildford Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2024 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice:

- until we have completed the work necessary in relation to consolidation returns, including Whole of Government Accounts (WGA), and the National Audit Office has concluded their work in respect of WGA for the year ended 31 March 2024. We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.
- until we have completed our consideration of an objection brought to our attention by a local authority elector under section 27 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. We are satisfied that this matter does not have a material effect on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the members of the Authority, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as set out in paragraph 85 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Authority's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and the Authority's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

John Paul Cuttle

John Paul Cuttle, Key Audit Partner

for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Local Auditor

London

24 February 2025

Chief Financial Officer's Narrative Report

Introduction

This document is the statutory financial statements for Guildford Borough Council covering the 2023 - 24 financial year. This year has been financially challenging with a budget being set in February 2022 included reserves funding which was later identified to be part funded by government grants which needed to be returned to central government.

Following the statement of the previous S151 officer that the authority would 'likely' need to issue a S114 (3) statement in the current year, the senior management team recruited specialist interim resources to review a number of financial streams, formulate a Finance Recovery Plan and introduce immediate spending controls. Introduction of both revenue and capital monitoring, forecasting and reporting, which was initially taken through management team and committees but is now uploaded onto our website. The budget book was produced and uploaded alongside a deep dive into staffing budgets which was one of the major overspends in the previous year. A review of capital plans was undertaken, reducing potential borrowing costs to the revenue account and a programme of asset disposal to give not only a capital receipt but to reduce our borrowing costs.

In October 2023 the S151 officer was able to issue a report that, through the actions taken to date, he felt that there would be no need to issue a S114 report in the current year but advised that significant work was needed to ensure we set a robust, balanced, achievable budget in 2024 - 25 and activable MTFP. Significant work continued, reviewing and re-writing finance procedures, updating the fees and charges and the formation of a robust savings programme. In February 2023 a balanced budget was set with an achievable MTFP, alongside the publication of the budget book, reporting timetable and continuation of recovery plans.

In July 2023 a fraud was identified within the Housing Revenue Account. Whilst this is currently under investigation, the organisation instructed Solace to undertake a review of Corporate Governance within the council and the Housing Service. The work was concluded in Spring 2024 and a report published in April 2024, alongside a detailed action plan to enable the council to address the issues identified in the report. Outstanding issues from the Financial Recovery Plan have now been incorporated into the Corporate Improvement Plan.

Building on the progress to date the council will need to continue its strong focus on financial management. It will require an improvement in financial management capabilities across the organisation and a strong emphasis on budget management and accountability.

The Council, like all other authorities, also has uncertainty of future levels of Government funding. The Government has not given any indication of funding beyond 2024/25 and any decisions around reforms to the local government finance system have been deferred until after the life of the current parliament. This uncertainty adds considerably to the challenge of planning the authority's finances over the medium term. We have been cautious with projecting the finances of the Council and have assumed funding distributed via the local government finance settlement will remain flat over the medium term.

I would like to express my sincere and genuine thanks for all staff in my Finance team during 2023/24 who have played their part in producing the Statement of Accounts and for their wider efforts in supporting the Council.

The sections contained within the narrative statement are:

Key Facts about Guildford

Key facts about Guildford Borough Council

Strategic Objectives and Corporate Plan

Key facts about Guildford

Guildford is the county town of Surrey, known for its historic buildings and landscapes, cultural associations and the picturesque town centre. Situated in the southwest of the county and surrounded by Green Belt and countryside, the urban areas of Guildford, Ash and Tongham are home to many of the borough's residents, with further communities in village settlements. We are within commuting distance from London and about 70 kilometres from the south coast.

We are the second largest borough in the county in terms of area, covering approximately 270 square kilometres. Guildford Cathedral, the University of Surrey, the Hog's Back and Surrey Hills are dominant landmarks of our borough. We are one of the safest parts of Surrey and part of one of the safest counties in England.

Our borough's population has risen steadily from 93,000 in 1951 to 143,649 in 2021. The population is predicted to grow to 167,126 by 2034

Our residents are largely healthy and enjoy well above average life expectancy. The workforce is generally well educated, highly skilled and well paid.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 provides a measure of deprivation based on factors such as income, employment, health, education, housing and crime. The Index ranks our borough amongst the least deprived 10 per cent of boroughs in England.

In accordance with the Council's commitment to openness, this Narrative Report to the Statement of Accounts presents an overview of the Council's finances for the financial year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. It also shows how the Council has performed and identifies the challenges faced and aims to help readers understand the most significant issues reported in the accounts and how they relate to the Council's overall business.

The financial statements presented are those of the Council and its group entities.

Key facts about Guildford Borough Council

As a local authority the Council's purpose is to deliver a wide range of services to the local community. It also provides and maintains 5243 Council houses.

To achieve its objectives the Council employs approximately 666 staff in full-time and part-time positions, including apprentices, in a wide variety of roles. The Council recognises the importance of investing in the development of its employees through staff development and training programmes to enable the delivery of a quality service.

Financial Headlines – the Council:

- Collected £133 million of Council Tax of which £13.3 million was kept by the Council to spend on services.
- Paid £12.7 million in Welfare Payments

- Collected £76 million of Business Rates from business rate payers, most of which was paid to the Government.
- Holds £1.097 billion in assets (including Council Dwellings) which generate income to help deliver services.
- Ended the year with a total general fund transfer to reserve in 2023/24 of £2.224 million.
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) with a £5.616 million deficit which has decreased earmarked reserves.
- Guildford Borough Council and Waverley Borough Council agreed to create a shared management team, which has now been created and took effect from 1 October 2022.

Strategic objectives and Corporate Plan

The Council provides its services under its overarching Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan 2021-2025 was adopted by the Council in November 2021 and is currently being updated. The Corporate Plan provides the Council with direction, priorities and key objectives. Objectives are delivered through annual service plans which are agreed with Members and monitored and reported regularly. The full Corporate Plan 2021-2025 can be found on the Council's website www.guildford.gov.uk. This is due to be updated in July 2024.

Key relationships with other parties for effective service delivery:

- Town and Parish councils
- Surrey County Council
- Waverley Council as collaboration partner
- Community Organisations under Service Level Agreements
- Contractor partners including Freedom Leisure operating Spectrum, Ash Manor and LIDO leisure facilities and HQ Theatres running GLIVE theatre.
 - Demographic changes and the budget pressures of adult social care demands being felt by Surrey County Council and filtering down to Borough Councils.
 - Government legislation on homelessness.
 - Staff recruitment and retention in key professional roles.
 - Local high house prices and demand for affordable housing.

Annual Governance Statement

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS), documents the Council's approach to governance and ensures there are robust rules, systems and information available for managing and delivering services to the local community. The AGS also identifies any issues arising in the year and details actions taken to address them. The AGS is currently under review and will be published during the summer

Financial Performance

The Council has several short, medium, and long-term plans to direct resources into service delivery and outcomes that fulfil its strategic and operational objectives for meeting the needs of the community.

These plans comprise:

Capital and Investment Strategy	Brings together the Council's detailed policies, procedures and plans relating to cash investments and property assets.
Medium Term Financial Plan	Sets out the pressures and opportunities over the next three years and strategy to address the forecast funding shortfall to ensure there will be sufficient resources for service delivery.
Annual revenue budget	To allocate resources to provide services during the year.
Capital programme and projects	Delivery of projects for longer term benefits including income generation. The Council has a three-year rolling capital programme.

The key resources on which the Council depends are:

Financial Resources

- Local taxation
- Income raised from fees and charges and property rents
- Grants

Non-Financial Resources

- Skilled and experienced staff
- Partnerships with other organisations
- Information sharing

Revenue expenditure for year

A summary of the general fund position is shown below. To summarise the planned contribution in the budget from earmarked reserves was £1.4 million (excluding the business rates reserve). The outturn position shows a contribution of £3.7 million, £2.3 million greater than expected.

A summary of the General Fund position is below:

	Final Budget £'000	Outturn £'000	Variation £'000
Community Wellbeing	17,762	17,640	(122)
Transformation & Governance	9,420	8,947	(473)
Place	(2,301)	(1,947)	354
Total Services	24,881	24,640	(241)
MRP	1,619	1,560	(59)
Interest payable to HRA	1,376	1,376	0
External interest payable and receivable	(3,394)	(4,720)	(1,326)
Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay (RCCO)	906	906	0
Capital Charges	(8,773)	(10,767)	(1,994)
Other Charges	212	212	0
Total Cost of Services	16,827	13,207	(3,620)
Funded by:			
Parish Precepts	2,174	2,174	0
Business Rates Retention			0
Tariff	32,512	32,512	0
Levy		0	0
Safety Net	619	619	0
Retained Income	(31,623)	(31,623)	0
Collection Fund deficit	140	140	0
Council Tax			0
Demand on the Collection Fund (inc precepts)	(13,567)	(13,567)	0
Collection Fund surplus	(2,297)	(2,297)	0
General Grants			0
New Homes Bonus Grant	(1,283)	(1,283)	0
S31 grant	(4,652)	(4,705)	(53)
Other grants and Income	(227)	(3,373)	(3,146)
Contributions to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	1,377	2,027	650
Contributions to/(from) business rates reserves			0
Total Funding	(16,827)	(19,376)	(2,549)

The main variances are detailed below:

Community Wellbeing	Amount £	Explanation
Case Services	(154,648)	Agency and casuals fully offset by staff vacancies
Internet Site Access	(203,602)	There have been a number of payment in advances this year that have been accrued for
Public Relations & Marketing	(113,585)	Underspend due to vacancies
Customer Service Centre	(279,728)	Underspend due to vacancies
ICT Development	(290,604)	Prior year creditor reversal and reduced consultancy.
ICT Technical & Infrastructure	153,539	Unbudgeted contribution to reserves
Resources Caseworker	(168,853)	Vacancy savings and reduced spend in external printing needs and ICT hardware.
Community Wellbeing	(113,666)	Vacant Posts. Lower casuals, events and equipment costs
Parks Contracts	(360,631)	Lower central and fleet charges
Trees And Countryside	(229,467)	Lower transport pool hire and central recharges
Crematorium	442,434	Actual depreciation charge higher than budgeted
Street Cleansing	(222,217)	Lower transport pool hire and central recharges
Fleet Workshops	428,319	Vehicle repairs and maintenance costs
Fleet Refuse Freighters	179,417	Central recharges lower than budgeted offset partly by underspend within the service
Fleet Administration	505,426	Increased costs not recharged
Housing Surveying Services	(452,135)	Extra month 12 timesheet recharges
Building Maintenance	746,016	Surge in repairs partly offset with increased charges to HRA
Woking Road Depot Stores	118,058	Casual staff and storage recharges

Place	Amount £	Explanation
Woking Road Depot	339,239	Rent reviews as well as other rents higher than projected. Recharge expenditure higher.
Industrial Estates Admin	156,522	
Lysons Avenue Small Units	106,861	
Slyfield Industrial Estate	(370,935)	
Woodbridge Meadow Industrial Estate	(119,302)	
Investment Property	361,822	Rent re-imburement expected for previous years
Other Property Admin	325,576	Depreciation actuals and recharge expenditure greater than forecast
Asset Management	(1,454,994)	At P11 Asset maintenance projected here for whole council. Expenditure occurs in other services.
Millmead House	168,584	Vacant Units, increased building maintenance and increased Business rates

Development Control - Fee Earn	1,579,420	Higher than budgeted agency and consultancy costs as well as as lower than budgeted planning fee income
Development Control Non Fee	(227,840)	Lower staffing spend as well as lower than budget consultancy spend
Business	(105,635)	Head of service planned in year savings
Environmental Control	(101,901)	Favourable variance reflects receipt of Government Grants
Private Sector Housing Standard	101,334	Income for licence fees re-apportioned over following 4 years as rent in advance
Transformation and Governance	Amount £	Explanation
G Live	130,767	Depreciation higher than forecast
Spectrum	705,404	Depreciation and utility costs higher than forecast
Lido	164,549	Depreciation and asset maintenance spend higher than forecast
Car Parks - Administration	721,943	Movement to reserves for car parks maintenance and unbudgeted overtime hours for staff
Waverley On-Street	(116,042)	Favourable variance due to WBC year end debtors.
Bedford Road Mscp	(277,560)	Depreciation less than budgeted and parking income better than expected.
Bright Hill Car Park	(125,036)	Parking income was better than expected.
Farnham Road Mscp	316,414	Parking income less than expected
Guildford Park Car Park	(134,465)	Parking income was better than expected.
North Street Car Park	459,198	Development in North Street car park
Onslow Park And Ride	(137,586)	No business rates or contribution to reserves along with services spend less than budgeted.
Building Control - Fee	236,753	Fees earned lower than budgeted, agency staff hired and overtime to cover staff training.
H B Rent Allowances	(199,120)	Increased overpayment refunded
H B Rent Rebates	(475,274)	Overpayment from previous periods received in current year.
Corporate Services	658,742	Increased audit fee as well as higher shared management costs
Council Tax Collectn Expenses	(263,526)	Increased income recovery
Miscellaneous Expenses	231,106	There has been and £525k transfer to reserves
Council Tax Energy Rebate	(130,486)	Expenditure less than expected.

COVID-19	158,806	Expenditure has exceeded the grant income received
Unallocable Central Overheads	(1,345,285)	Surrey pension fund and General debtors. Bad debt provision lower than previous year.
IT Renewals Fund Revenue A/C	142,324	23/24 amortisation exceeded budget and higher central recharge
Finance Specialists	(1,675,319)	Underestimated recharge forecast
Procurement Services	(299,435)	Procurement recharge forecast was underestimated
Council & Committee Support	(100,052)	Recharges to HRA greater than budgeted.
Executive	106,782	Budgets now moved within Committee Support
Elections	520,667	PCC and PGE costs to be recouped from DLUHC.
Committee Services	(185,256)	Recharges to HRA greater than budgeted.
Strategy & Performance	(124,088)	Forecast underspend is due to staffing savings.
Insurance Revenue Account	894,117	Higher insurance premium in 2023-24
Learning & Development	(287,730)	The training budget is reflected here and the actuals within the services. The staff training budget is to be apportioned between services in 2024-25.
Business Transformation	253,942	Lower central recharges in 2023-24

- Revenue contribution to capital spend was £1.4 million higher than budget and will be funded from capital reserves
- (£0.9 million) extra net interest received less paid to the HRA

The finances for the Council's council houses are maintained in a ring-fenced account called the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The HRA has an agreed 30-year Business Plan. Revenue spend for the year was within budget. The cost of providing services is detailed in the table below:

	2023-24		
	Budget	Outturn	Variance
	£000	£000	£000
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Borough Housing Services	11,251	12,480	1,229
Strategic Housing Services	1,872	2,408	536
Community Services	852	1,259	407
Depreciation	5,865	6,782	917
Other Expenditure	578	5,539	4,961
<u>Total Expenditure</u>	20,418	28,468	8,050
<u>Income</u>			
Rents	(34,429)	(33,756)	673
Other Income	(2,225)	(1,764)	461
<u>Total Income</u>	(36,654)	(35,520)	1,134
<u>Net Cost of Services</u>	(16,236)	(7,052)	9,184
HRA share of CDC	1,438	1,528	90
<u>Net Cost of HRA Services</u>	(14,798)	(5,524)	9,274
Investment Income	(1,593)	(2,714)	(1,121)
Interest Payable	4,751	4,751	0
<u>Operating (Surplus) / Deficit</u>	(11,640)	(3,487)	8,153
<u>Reserves & Adjustments</u>			
REFCUS - Revenue funded from capital	75	0	(75)
Transfer from Pensions Reserve	0	(78)	(78)
Transfer from CAA re: Revaluation	0	(5,256)	(5,256)
Transfer from CAA re: REFCUS	0	(207)	(207)
Transfer from CAA re: Intangible assets	0	(9)	(9)
Contribution to RFFC	2,500	2,500	0
Contribution to New Build Reserve	9,065	6,536	(2,529)
HRA Balance	0	0	0
Balance Brought Forward	(2,500)	(2,500)	0
Balance Carried Forward	(2,500)	(2,500)	0

Risks and Opportunities

The Council has a risk management strategy in place to identify and evaluate risk. This strategy is subject to regular review and updating. Through understanding risk, the Council is able to support better decision making and identify opportunities, as well as threats, in relation to future service provision. The risk register shows the high-level risks that could prevent the Council from achieving its corporate aims and objectives and includes mitigation against these risks as well as a risk rating and impact assessment.

The key themes, being the most significant to the Council in achieving its Corporate Strategy objectives are:

- Finance – Medium Term Financial Plan and addressing the projected budget gap
- Deliver housing options for people in need of affordable housing
- Achieving sustainable housing needs for the future
- Achieving Value for Money for our residents and businesses.
- Ensuring the management and governance processes in place are fully utilised
- Ensuring that procurement processes are adhered to across the Council
- A sense of responsibility for our environment, promoting biodiversity and protecting our planet
- Responsible planning and supporting place-shaping and local engagement in planning policy
- Promoting the use of environmentally sustainable transport options, including reducing the need to travel and supporting the use of electric vehicles
- Promoting a business-friendly culture that supports local businesses and helps those wanting to locate to the borough
- Delivering a Property Investment Strategy that supports the local economy, while providing additional income to the Council
- Ensuring the council operates in an open, democratic manner where all residents feel valued and able to contribute

Looking ahead, the following are some key areas of risk and opportunity for the coming year:

- Mitigating the cost-of-living crisis and its impact on local residents and on the council, in terms of reducing income and higher costs associated with the rapid rise in inflation.
- Support to the community and the associated increase in homelessness presentations.
- Challenges to our carbon neutral action plan from economic and supply chain pressures.
- The potential for high staff turnover, with recruitment and retention being key. Impact on services and cost of agency cover will be under close management scrutiny.
- Draw in external funding for revenue and capital across all services
- Protecting the Council from the heightened cybercrime risk
- Ensuring that the Guildford - Waverley collaboration meets its objectives.
- Housing rent constraints, inflation on costs and affordability will be a key consideration in the ongoing HRA business plan

All councils face severe financial challenges in the next few years due to increased demand for services, the economy, the environment and a succession of government funding reductions over many years. Guildford Borough Council's challenge is increased due to ambitious decisions to support infrastructure and regeneration that have increased our requirement to finance the council's overall debt, which is expected to rise further during the next 20-30 years. Following a detailed review commissioned by the new management team, the council put in place experienced external support, imposed financial controls and developed a Finance Recovery Plan. A Section 114(3) notice – a formal statement by the Chief Finance Officer that expenditure cannot be met by resources was avoided in October 2023/24. Whilst this action was not required in the 2023/24 year or expected to be required within the MTFP period we continue to monitor the longer term financial future for the Council.

General Information

Management Board as at 31 March 2024

- Joint Chief Executive Pedro Wrobel
- Interim Joint Strategic Director for Housing & Environment Julian Higson
- Joint Strategic Director for Place Dawn Hudd
- Joint Strategic Director for Transformation & Governance Ian Doyle
- Joint Strategic Director of Finance and S151 Officer Richard Bates
- Joint Strategic Director of Legal and Democratic Services Susan Sale

External Auditors

Paul Cuttle

Grant Thornton UK LLP

30 Finsbury Square London

EC1A 1AG

Explanation of Key Information contained in the Financial Statements

Local Authorities are required to prepare their accounts in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom ("the Code"). International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) form the basis for the Code, which has been developed by the Local Authority Accounting Code Board comprising members from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Local Authority of Scotland Accounts Advisory Committee (LASAAC), under the oversight of the Financial Reporting Advisory Board (FRAB). The Code constitutes a proper accounting practice under the terms of section 21(2) of the Local Government Act 2003.

The complete set of financial statements is set out on the following pages. The Code prescribes the order of presentation of the financial statements and the Statement of Accounting Policies supports the accounts by explaining the policies used in their preparation. In summary, the financial statements comprise the:

- **Expenditure and Funding Analysis (EFA):** showing how the Council's annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, rents, council tax and business rates) in comparison with those resources the Council consumes or earns in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the Council's Directorates.
- **Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES):** showing the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. This Statement provides the detail behind the surplus or deficit on provision of services figure included in the Movement in Reserves Statement. The Statement shows the total expenditure and income in the year for all services.
- **Movement in Reserves Statement (MiRS):** showing the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Council, analysed into usable reserves (i.e. those that we can use to finance expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other reserves. This Statement shows how the movements in year of the Council's reserves are broken down between gains and losses incurred in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and the statutory adjustments required to return the amounts chargeable to council tax or rents for the year.
- **Balance Sheet:** showing the value of the Council's assets and liabilities at 31 March 2023. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Council.
- **Cash Flow Statement:** showing the changes in the amount of cash and cash equivalents during the financial year. The Statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities.
- **Notes to the above Statements:** giving a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information. We have split these notes into normal and accounting technical notes to aid the readability of the financial statements for users.
- **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Income and Expenditure Statement:** covering income and expenditure relating to the provision of council housing in accordance with Part 6 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The HRA is ring-fenced from the rest of the General Fund. Its primary purpose is to ensure that the expenditure on managing tenancies and maintaining dwellings is balanced by rents charged to tenants so that rents cannot be subsidised from council tax, or vice versa.
- **Notes to the HRA:** giving explanatory information to the HRA Income and Expenditure statement.
- **Collection Fund Revenue Account:** showing the transactions of the Council as a billing authority in relation to non-domestic rates and council tax. The Fund shows the way in which these have been distributed to local authorities and the Government on whose behalf Guildford Borough Council collects the amounts due.
- **Notes to the Collection Fund:** giving explanatory information to the Collection Fund Revenue Account.

- **Group accounts:** provides a set of account for the Council's wholly owned companies.

Measuring Performance in 2023/24

The Council measures and monitors performance in a number of ways:

- At a strategic level the Council sets out its objectives in the Corporate Strategy and measures performance against these objectives.

Looking ahead – addressing the financial challenges

In the light of continued financial pressure from government cuts and the impact of new legislation the Council must adapt to the challenges and changes ahead. The Council has developed plans which include focusing on strengthening resilience in operations and policies including financial and staffing resilience. The budget strategy comprising a multi-programme approach to cost saving and income generation will put the Council in a stronger position to withstand the financial challenges it faces in the future.

The medium- and long-term strategies and plans to address any future funding shortfalls include:

- Cost savings from better procurement
- Cost savings from collaboration with Waverley Council, with a combined Chief Executive and Senior Management Team
- Business transformation and customer service improvement
- Property income
- Council tax increases
- Robust savings programme
- Asset Disposals

The Council's aim is to continue to provide high quality services and replace diminishing traditional resources with alternative sources of income whilst also reducing its cost base.

To use its resources to maximum effect the Council will continue to:

- Strengthen its approach to risk management
- Spend appropriately to keep its assets fit to maintain service delivery.
- Consider different or innovative ways of delivering services including partnership working where appropriate.
- Improve performance and project management.
- Monitoring and reporting of revenue and capital budgets, reserves and balances.

Richard Bates
Chief Financial Officer
31st May 2024

General Accounting Policies

This section sets out general accounting policies used to prepare the statement of accounts of Guildford Borough Council and its group. Accounting policies that are used to report on specific balances or transactions are set out in the accounting notes for the relevant balance or transaction.

1. General Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2023-24 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2024. The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 require the Council to prepare its annual Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

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

2. Group Accounts

Guildford Borough Council is the ultimate parent of two wholly owned subsidiaries, Guildford Borough Council Holdings Company Limited and North Downs Housing Limited. Both companies have a year end of 31 March. For 2023-24 elements of their financial statements are material to the statement of accounts of the Council. As a result, group accounts will be prepared and included in due course.

3. Accruals of Income and Expenditure (debtors and creditors)

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

- revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or for the provision of goods, is recognised when (or as) the goods or services are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the performance obligations in the contract.
- supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed – where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption, they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet
- expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made
- interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure based on the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract
- where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where debts may not be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

The de-minimis for these are £1,000

4. Accounting practice for Council Tax and Business Rates

Guildford Borough Council is a billing authority for council tax and business rates. This means that we:

- Act as an agent, collecting council tax and business rates on behalf of the major preceptors (Surrey County Council, Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner and, for business rates only, central government) and
- As a principal, collecting council tax and business rates for the Council itself.

The Council is required by statute to maintain a separate fund (the Collection Fund) for the collection and distribution of amounts due in respect of council tax and business rates. Under the legislative framework for the Collection Fund, billing authorities, major preceptors and central government share proportionately the risks and rewards that the amount of council tax and business rates collected could be less or more than predicted.

The council tax and business rate income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) is the authority's share of accrued income for the year. However, regulations determine the amount of council tax and business rates that must be included in the authority's General Fund. Therefore, the difference between the income included in the CIES and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the General Fund is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account and included as a reconciling item in the Movement in Reserves Statement (MIRS).

The Balance Sheet includes the authority's share of the end of year balances in respect of council tax and business rates relating to arrears, impairment allowances for doubtful debts, overpayments and prepayments and appeals. Where these balances are impaired (because of a likelihood arising from a past event that payments due under the statutory arrangements will not be made) the asset is written down and a charge made to the Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income line in the CIES. The impairment loss is measured as the difference between the carrying amount and the revised future cash flows.

The Council recognises a creditor in its Balance Sheet for cash collected from taxpayers and businesses on behalf of major preceptors but not yet paid to them, or a debtor for cash paid to major preceptors in advance of receiving the cash from council tax payers and business rate payers.

5. Material Items

When items of income and expense are material, their nature and amount is disclosed separately, either on the face of the CIES or in the notes to the accounts, depending on how significant the items are to an understanding of the Council's financial performance.

6. Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets

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

- Depreciation attributable to the assets used by the relevant service

- Revaluation and impairment losses on assets used by the service where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which the losses can be written off
- Amortisation of intangible assets attributable to the service.

The Council is required to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement equal to an amount calculated by the Council on a prudent basis and determined in accordance with statutory guidance. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisation are therefore replaced by the contribution in the GF Balance, called a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the MIRS for the difference between the two.

7. Events after the Reporting Period

Events after the reporting period are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period (31 March 2024) and the date when the Statement of Accounts was authorised for issue by the Chief Financial Officer on 31st May 2024. Two types of events can be identified:

- Those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is adjusted to reflect such events.
- 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 events and their estimated financial effect.

Events taking place after 31st May 2024 are not reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

8. Overheads and Support Services

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

9. VAT

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

10. Fair Value Measurement

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

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

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

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

Inputs to the valuation techniques in respect of assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the Council's financial statements are categorised within the fair value hierarchy, 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.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

2022/23			2023/24		
Expenditure	Income	Net	Expenditure	Income	Net
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
33,923	(18,012)	15,911	40,251	(22,535)	17,716
62,486	(41,488)	20,998	56,466	(44,104)	12,362
25,627	(4,413)	21,214	52,074	(4,879)	47,195
13,827	(33,620)	(19,793)	27,790	(35,520)	(7,730)
2,854	0	2,854			0
0	0	0			
<u>138,717</u>	<u>(97,533)</u>	<u>41,184</u>	<u>176,581</u>	<u>(107,038)</u>	<u>69,543</u>
2,029	0	2,029	2,174	0	2,174
0	0	0			0
(431)	0	(431)	4,445	(4,696)	(251)
<u>1,598</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,598</u>	<u>6,619</u>	<u>(4,696)</u>	<u>1,923</u>
3,214	0	3,214	991	0	991
0	(3,415)	(3,415)		(6,458)	(6,458)
5,696	0	5,696	5,020	(569)	4,451
2,035	0	2,035	166	0	166
1,743	(9,158)	(7,415)	269	(9,714)	(9,445)
<u>12,688</u>	<u>(12,573)</u>	<u>115</u>	<u>6,446</u>	<u>(16,741)</u>	<u>(10,295)</u>
0	(13,291)	(13,291)	0	(13,788)	(13,788)
0	846	846	0	393	393
0	(4,047)	(4,047)	0	(7,865)	(7,865)
0	(7,334)	(7,334)	0	(37,733)	(37,733)
<u>0</u>	<u>(23,826)</u>	<u>(23,826)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(58,993)</u>	<u>(58,993)</u>
<u>153,003</u>	<u>(133,932)</u>	<u>19,071</u>	<u>189,646</u>	<u>(187,468)</u>	<u>2,178</u>
		(42,634)			29,034
		(104,609)			(23,493)
		<u>(147,243)</u>			<u>5,541</u>
		<u>(128,172)</u>			<u>7,719</u>

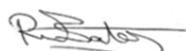
Movement in Reserves

	General Fund Balance	Earmarked Reserves	Housing Revenue Account	HRA Earmarked Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Major Repairs Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Council Reserves
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
2022/23										
Balance at 1 April 2022	(4,212)	(47,457)	(2,500)	(103,188)	(10,683)	(9,588)	(506)	(178,134)	(572,829)	(750,963)
Movement in Reserves in 2022/23:										
(Surplus) deficit on the provision of services (accounting basis)	27,079	0	(8,008)		0	0	0	19,071	0	19,071
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	(147,243)	(147,243)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	27,079	0	(8,008)	0	0	0	0	19,071	(147,243)	(128,172)
Adjustments between accounting and funding basis under regulation - note 3	(12,353)	0	13,914		(1,495)	3,161	(114)	3,113	(3,113)	0
Net increase/decrease before transfers to Earmarked reserves	14,726	0	5,906	0	(1,495)	3,161	(114)	22,184	(150,356)	(128,172)
Transfers to/from Earmarked reserves - note 11	(14,726)	14,726	(5,906)	5,906	0	0	0	0	0	0
Increase/(Decrease) in Year	0	14,726	0	5,906	(1,495)	3,161	(114)	22,184	(150,356)	(128,172)
Balance at 31 March 2023	(4,212)	(32,731)	(2,500)	(97,282)	(12,178)	(6,427)	(620)	(155,950)	(723,185)	(879,135)
2023/24										
Balance at 1 April 2023	(4,212)	(32,731)	(2,500)	(97,282)	(12,178)	(6,427)	(620)	(155,950)	(723,185)	(879,135)
Movement in Reserves in 2023/24:										
(Surplus) deficit on the provision of services (accounting basis)	4,392		(2,213)					2,179		2,179
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure								0	5,541	5,541
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	4,392	0	(2,213)	0	0	0	0	2,179	5,541	7,720
Adjustments between accounting and funding basis under regulation - note 3	(10,925)		13,702		(2,656)	6,427	37	6,585	(6,585)	0
Net increase/decrease before transfers to Earmarked reserves	(6,533)	0	11,489	0	(2,656)	6,427	37	8,764	(1,044)	7,720
Transfers to/from Earmarked reserves - note 11	2,027	(2,027)	(11,489)	11,489					0	0
Increase/(Decrease) in Year	(4,506)	(2,027)	0	11,489	(2,656)	6,427	37	8,764	(1,044)	7,720
Balance at 31 March 2024	(8,718)	(34,758)	(2,500)	(85,793)	(14,834)	0	(583)	(147,186)	(724,229)	(871,415)

Balance Sheet

31 March 2023		31 March 2024
£'000		£'000
910,842 Property, Plant and Equipment	<i>Note 12</i>	907,480
3,765 Heritage Assets	<i>Note 13</i>	3,765
178,646 Investment Properties	<i>Note 14</i>	183,327
2,541 Intangible Assets	<i>Note 15</i>	2,126
20,768 Long Term Investments	<i>Note 24</i>	29,626
19,860 Long Term Debtors	<i>Note 17</i>	19,956
1,136,422 LONG TERM ASSETS		1,146,280
0 Assets Held for Sale		553
13,515 Short Term Debtors	<i>Note 17</i>	14,924
385 Inventories		347
78,904 Short Term Investments	<i>Note 24</i>	31,166
16,360 Cash and Cash Equivalents	<i>Cash Flow, Note 19</i>	11,408
109,164 CURRENT ASSETS		58,398
(43,765) Short Term Creditors	<i>Note 18</i>	(46,186)
(6,866) Provisions	<i>Note 21</i>	(12,819)
(127,232) Short Term Borrowing	<i>Note 24</i>	(72,062)
(177,863) CURRENT LIABILITIES		(131,067)
(20,535) Other Long Term Liabilities	<i>Note 9</i>	1,290
(168,053) Long Term Borrowing	<i>Note 24</i>	(203,486)
(188,588) LONG TERM LIABILITIES		(202,196)
879,135 NET ASSETS		871,415
(4,212) General Fund		(8,719)
(32,731) Earmarked Reserves	<i>Note 11</i>	(34,930)
(2,500) Housing Revenue Account		(2,500)
(97,282) HRA Earmarked Reserves		(85,622)
(12,178) Capital Receipts Reserve		(14,834)
(6,427) Major Repairs Reserve		0
(620) Capital grants and contributions		(583)
(155,950) USABLE RESERVES	<i>MIRS</i>	(147,188)
(330,305) Revaluation Reserve		(294,097)
(414,289) Capital Adjustment Account		(430,685)
20,535 Pensions Reserve		(1,290)
452 Collection Fund Adjustment Account		1,266
286 Accumulated Absences Account		277
136 Financial Instruments Adjustment Account		302
(723,185) UNUSABLE RESERVES	<i>Note 22</i>	(724,227)
(879,135) TOTAL RESERVES		(871,415)

These financial statements replace the unaudited financial statements confirmed by the Chief Finance Officer on 31st May 2024 and were authorised for issue on the 24th February 2025



Richard Bates, Chief Finance Officer

Cash Flow Statement

The Cash Flow Statement shows how the Council generates, uses and the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting period.

2022-23	2023-24
£'000	£'000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES	
(19,072) Net surplus/(deficit) on the provision of services	(2,178)
10,590 Adjustments for non-cash movements (Note 20)	35,696
(11,881) Adjustments for items included in the net surplus that are investing and financing activities (Note 20)	(44,234)
(20,363) Net cash flows from Operating Activities	(10,716)
INVESTING ACTIVITIES	
(45,373) Payments for additions to long-term assets	(56,702)
(42,491) Payments for purchase of investments	(8,858)
70 Other payments for investing activities	
4,726 Proceeds from the disposal of long-term assets	5,588
68,392 Proceeds from disposal of investments	47,738
6,935 Other receipts from investing activities	37,733
(7,741) Net cash flows from investing activities	25,499
FINANCING ACTIVITIES	
10,000 Cash receipts of short and long-term borrowing	33,455
15,948 Other receipts from financing activities	0
0 Other payments from financing activities	0
(18,013) Repayments of short and long-term borrowing	(53,192)
7,935 Net cash flows from financing activities	(19,737)
(20,169) Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(4,954)
36,531 Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	16,362
16,362 Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period (Note 19)	11,408

Cash flows are classified as operating, investing and financing activities.

the amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Council are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Council.

investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources that are intended to contribute to the Council's future service delivery.

cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (that is borrowing) to the Council.

The cash flow statement shows cash and cash equivalents net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and form an integral part of the Councils cash management.

Notes To The Accounts

1. Expenditure And Funding Analysis (EFA)

The EFA shows how the Council's annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, rents, council tax and business rates) in comparison with those resources the Council consumes or earns in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision-making purposes between the Council's Directorates.

Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the CIES and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The split of the balance between the General Fund (GF) and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is set out in the MIRS.

2022-23			2023-24			
Net Expenditure Chargeable to General Fund	Adjustments between Funding and Accounting basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Net Expenditure Chargeable to General Fund	Adjustments between Funding and Accounting basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000
12,253	3,658	15,911	Community Wellbeing Transformation & Governance Place	17,640	76	17,716
7,383	13,615	20,998		8,947	3,415	12,362
(2,457)	23,671	21,214		(1,947)	49,142	47,195
(18,027)	(1,766)	(19,793)	Housing Revenue Account	(5,524)	(2,206)	(7,730)
0	2,854	2,854	Exceptional item (provision for North Downs Housing cumulative interest) Covid Expenditure			
(848)	42,032	41,184	Cost of Services	19,116	50,427	69,543
21,481	(43,594)	(22,113)	Other Income and Expenditure	(14,161)	(53,204)	(67,365)
20,633	(1,562)	19,071	(Surplus) or Deficit on Provision of Services	4,955	(2,777)	2,178
General Fund	HRA	Total		General Fund	HRA	Total
£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000
(51,670)	(105,688)	(157,358)	Opening balances (Surplus) or Deficit on Provision of Services	(36,943)	(99,782)	(136,725)
14,727	5,906	20,633		(6,535)	11,489	4,954
			0 Transfers between reserves			
(36,943)	(99,782)	(136,725)	Closing balance	(43,478)	(88,293)	(131,771)

Net Expenditure Chargeable to the GF and HRA balances is as reported to Management throughout the year except that:

excludes depreciation, which is included as an adjustment between funding and accounting basis

net income relating to investment property which is reported to Place, is included in other income and expenditure in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices

The other adjustments between accounting and funding basis are not reported to Management during the year but are included in the final year-end outturn report to Corporate Management Board , Corporate Governance and Standards Committee (CGSC) and the Executive.

Notes To The Expenditure and Funding Analysis

Financing and Accounting Adjustments

2022-23					2023-24					
Financing and Accounting Adjustments					Financing and Accounting Adjustments					
Capital and Assets (a)	Pensions (b)	Tax Collection	Other (inc. Recharges) (c)	Total		Capital and Assets (a)	Pensions (b)	Tax Collection	Other (inc. Recharges) (c)	Total
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
765	3,287	0	(394)	3,658	Community Wellbeing	191	480		(595)	76
6,680	947	0	8,842	16,469	Transformation & Governance	(79)	(16)		3,510	3,415
15,728	1,030	0	6,913	23,671	Place	40,279	149		8,714	49,142
5,911	398	0	(8,075)	(1,766)	Housing Revenue Account	(79)			(2,127)	(2,206)
29,084	5,662	0	7,286	42,032	Cost of Services	40,312	613	0	9,502	50,427
(7,765)	3,213	(9,454)	(29,589)	(43,595)	Other Income and Expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	(67,153)	1,055	813	12,081	(53,204)
21,319	8,875	(9,454)	(22,303)	(1,563)	Total	(26,841)	1,668	813	21,583	(2,777)

Net Expenditure Chargeable to the GF and HRA balances is as reported to Management

throughout the year except that:

- it excludes depreciation, which is included as an adjustment between funding and accounting basis
- net income relating to investment property which is reported to Place, is included in other income and expenditure in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices.

The other adjustments between accounting and funding basis are not reported to Management during the year but are included in the final year-end outturn report to Corporate Management Board , Corporate Governance and Standards Committee (CGSC) and the Executive.

(a) - Adjustments for Capital Purposes

Adds in depreciation and revaluation gains and losses in the services line, and for:

Other operating expenditure	adjusts for capital disposals with a transfer of income on disposal of assets and the amounts written off for those assets
Financing and Investment income and expenditure	the statutory charges for capital financing i.e. Minimum Revenue Provision and other revenue contributions are deducted from other income and expenditure as these are not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices
Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure	capital grants and contributions are adjusted for income not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices. Revenue grants and contributions are adjusted from those receivables in the year to those receivables without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied throughout the year. The Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income and Expenditure line is credited with capital grants and contributions receivable in the year without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied in the year

(b) – Net change for the Pensions adjustments

This column shows the net change for the removal of pension contributions and the addition of IAS 19 Employee Benefits pension related expenditure and income:

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

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

(c) – Other differences

This column adds in the amortisation of intangible software assets and revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute in the services line, and for:

Other operating expenditure	adds in the payment to the government Housing Capital Receipts Pool
Financing and Investment income and expenditure	the statutory transfer of the amount equal to the total depreciation charge for all HRA assets to the Major Repairs Reserve is deducted from other income and expenditure as this is not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices
Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure	the charge represents the difference between what is chargeable under statutory regulations for council tax and business rates 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

2. Expenditure And Income Analysed By Nature

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

2022-23	2023-24
Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services	Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services
£'000	£'000
40,995 Employee benefits expenses	39,919
90,449 Other service expenses	121,583
5,696 Interest payments	4,451
14,266 Depreciation, amortisation, impairment	21,770
0 Payments to Housing Capital Receipts Pol	0
2,029 Precepts and levies	2,174
(431) (Gain)/Losses on the disposal of assets	(251)
153,004 Total Expenditure	189,646
(66,164) Fees, charges and other service income	(81,809)
(9,158) Income in relation to investment	(9,279)
(3,416) Interest receivable and similar income	(6,458)
(12,445) Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rate	(13,395)
(42,750) Grants and Contributions	(76,528)
(133,933) Total income	(187,468)
19,071 Net	2,178

General Fund balance

A statutory fund in which all the receipts and expenditure of the Council are accounted. It summarises the resources the Council has to spend on its services or on capital investment at the end of the financial year.

Housing Revenue Account

This reflects the statutory obligation to maintain a revenue account for local authority council housing provision. It contains the balance on income and expenditure that is available to fund future expenditure in connection with the landlord's function.

Capital receipts reserve

This holds the proceeds from the disposal of capital assets which can only be used to fund new capital expenditure or be set aside to fund financial historical capital expenditure (ie debt). The balance is the resources yet to be applied at the end of the year.

Major repairs reserve

The Council is required to maintain a major repairs reserve, which controls an element of the capital resources limited to being used on capital expenditure on HRA assets or the financing of historical capital expenditure by the HRA. The balance is the resources yet to be applied at the end of the year.

Capital contributions unapplied

This holds the grants and contributions received towards capital projects where the Council has met the conditions that would otherwise require repayment but the money has not yet been spent. The balance is restricted by grant terms as to the capital expenditure against which it can be applied and/or the financial year in which this can take place.

4. Officers' Remuneration

The following table sets out the remuneration of the council's senior employees for 2023-24. The term senior employee' is defined by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (the 2015 Regulations) as:

an employee whose salary is £150,000 per year; or

an employee whose salary is £50,000 or more per year (to be calculated pro rata if employed for fewer than the usual full-time hours) and whose post or role meets certain criteria set out in the 2015 Regulations.

2023/2024						
Name & Title (where applicable)	Salary (Inc. fees & Allowances)	Expense Allowance & Benefits in Kind	Com-pensation for loss of office	Employer Pension Con-tributions	Total Remun-eration inc. pension contributins	Net Cost to Guildford
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Financial Year: 2023-24						
Tom Horwood Joint Chief Executive ¹ (to 09/02/2024)	146,911	-	-	23,652	170,563	85,282
Joint Strategic Director - Transformation and Governance ¹	129,601	-	-	21,877	151,478	75,739
Joint Strategic Director - Community and Wellbeing (to 31/03/2024)	129,069	-	-	22,200	151,269	75,905
Joint Strategic Director - Place ¹	128,478	-	-	21,877	150,355	90,213
Joint Strategic Director - Legal and Democratic Services (from 01/03/2024)	2,750	-	-	473	3,223	1,611
Executive Head of Finance - S151 Officer (to 03/09/2023) ²	47,683	-	-	8,201	55,884	27,942

The comparative information for 2022/23 relating to individuals in the 2023/2024 note is:

Name & Title (where applicable)	Salary (Inc. fees & Allowances)	Expense Allowance & Benefits in Kind	Com-pensation for loss of office	Employer Pension Con-tributions	Total Remun-eration inc. pension contributins	Net Cost to Guildford
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Financial Year: 2022-23						
Tom Horwood Joint Chief Executive (from 1/12/2021)	158,610	0	0	26,768	185,378	92,689
Joint Strategic Director ¹ (from 01/08/2022)	82,461	0	0	14,183	96,644	48,322
Joint Strategic Director ¹ (from 01/08/2022)	84,820	0	0	14,183	99,003	49,501
Joint Strategic Director ¹ (from 01/08/2022)	84,820	0	0	14,183	99,003	59,661
Executive Head of Finance-S151 Officer(from 01/10/2022) ²	47,683	0	0	8,201	55,884	27,942

¹From 1 December 2021 the Chief Executive post at Waverley Borough Council and the Managing Director post at Guildford Borough Council were replaced with a new post of Joint Chief Executive for Waverley Borough Council and Guildford Borough Council. The Joint Chief Executive is contractually employed by Waverley Borough Council, however the costs are shared 50/50 with Guildford Borough Council. The above "Total Remuneration including pension contributions" represents 100% of Joint Chief Executive's remuneration for 2023/24. From 1 August 2022 the Strategic Director posts at Waverley Borough Council and Guildford Borough Council were replaced with three new Joint Strategic Director posts. The Joint Strategic Directors are contractually employed by Waverley Borough Council, however the costs are shared with Guildford Borough Council. This is reflected in the "Net cost to GBC" column.

²From 1 October 2022 Head of Service posts at Waverley were replaced with Joint Executive Head of Service posts shared across Waverley and Guildford Borough Council. The "Total Remuneration including pension contributions" represents the cost of the Executive Head of Finance salary and pension costs from 1 October, this post holder is the S151 officer for both authorities. The cost of this post is shared with Guildford and this is reflected in the "Net cost to GBC" column. This post holder left on 03/09/2023 and the S151 role was covered by agency during the remainder of 2023/24. On 01/05/2024 a new post of Joint Strategic Director - Finance started and is the S151 Officer for Waverley and Guildford.

The Council's other employees receiving more than £50,000 remuneration for the year, which includes termination payments but excludes employer's pension contributions, were paid the following amounts:

Salary band	2023/24	2022/23
£50,000 - 54,999	51	33
£55,000 - 59,999	25	23
£60,000 - 64,999	17	10
£65,000 - 69,999	12	6
£70,000 - 74,999	5	5
£75,000 - 79,999	2	2
£80,000 - 84,999	4	1
£85,000 - 89,999	2	0
£90,000 - £94,999	8	1
£95,000 - £99,999	0	0
>£100,000	1	3
	<u>127</u>	<u>84</u>

Benefits Payable during Employment

Short-term (<12 months) employee benefits include wages and salaries, paid annual leave, paid sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits (for example cars). These are recognised in the year in which employees provide service to the council and charged to the service line in the CIES.

An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlements earned by employees but not taken before the year-end and which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. It is charged to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, but then reversed out through the MIRS so that holiday benefits are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

5. 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 appropriate service in the CIES at the earlier of when the Council can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the Council recognises costs for a restructuring.

Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require the GF Balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. Notional amounts for pension enhancement termination benefits are reversed in the MIRS and replaced with the cash paid and payable but not yet paid in the year.

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

2022-23				Banding	2023-24				
Number of exit packages			Cost		Number of exit packages			Cost	
Compuls. Redund.	Other departures	Total exit packages	Total		Compuls. Redund.	Other departures	Total exit packages	Total	
				£'000					£'000
3	0	3	18	£0 - £20,000	2	1	3	18	
0	0	0	0	£20,001 - £40,000	0	0	0	0	
1	0	0	53	£40,001 - £60,000	0	0	0	0	
2	0	0	151	£60,001 - £80,000	0	0	0	0	
0	0	0	0	£80,001 - £100,000	0	0	0	0	
0	0	0	0	£100,001 - £150,000	0	0	0	0	
6	0	3	222	Total	2	1	3	18	

Payments shown in respect of redundancies include both redundancy payments and additional amounts paid to the Pension Fund, where applicable.

Payments made in respect of other departures agreed include voluntary redundancies, contractual obligations and discretionary payments, relating to people who have left the Council's employment in the interests of efficiency of the service.

6. External Audit Cost

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

2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
84 External audit services	236
43 Fees payable for certification of grant claims	0
1 Other services	7
128	243

7. Related Parties

The Council is required to disclose material transactions with related parties (bodies or individuals) that have the potential to control or influence the Council or to be controlled or influenced by the Council.

UK Central Government

UK Central Government has significant influence over the general operations of the Council – it provides the statutory framework, within which the Council operates, provides funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Council has with other parties (for example council tax bills, housing benefits). Grants received from Government departments are set out in note 10.

Councillors and Officers

Councillors have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies.

- The Council has made payments to voluntary organisations totalling £1,482,927 (£1,055,793 in 2022-23).
- Of that, the council has made payments to voluntary organisations totalling £1,267,443 (£1,032,79 in 2022-23) where number of elected councillors and officers had an interest or were acting as a nominee.
- The council has paid grants totalling £729,608 (£309,990 in 2022-23) to voluntary organisations in which a number of elected councillors and officers had an interest or were acting as a nominee.
- Of that the council has paid grants totalling £181,263 (£0.00 in 2022-23) to voluntary organisations in which none senior officers or councillors declared an interest, and had no part in the decision to award the grant.
- The council has paid to Guildford Citizens Advice Bureau £313,000 (£275,00 in 2022-23). This year none of the senior officers or councillors declared an interest, and had no part in the decision to award the grant but last year one councillor had an interest or were acting as a nominee.

The Council controls North Downs Housing Limited and its parent company Guildford Borough Council Holdings Limited through its ownership of 100% of the shares of Guildford Borough Council Holdings Limited.

The Council invests in North Downs Housing Limited through a mixture of share equity (40%) and a 25-year secure variable rate loan (60%) at initial interest rate of Bank of England base rate plus 5%. The finance is used to purchase residential property within the borough.

At 31 March 2023, the Council had invested a total of £25.3 million (£22.83 million, in 2021-22) in North Downs Housing, maintaining the funding ratio of loan to equity investment of 60:40. Shares in the parent company, Guildford Borough Council Holdings Limited, at 31 March 2023 totalled £10.2million (£9.15 million in 2021-22), with the company continuing to own 100% of the share capital of North Downs Housing Limited.

The Council provides property repair and management services to North Downs Housing Limited. During 2022-23, these services totalled £271,000 (£495,708 in 2021-22), of which £238,000 was unpaid at 31 March 2023 (2022: £66,529).

8. Councillors' Allowances

This shows the amounts paid to Councillors in the year. The amount paid to each councillor is published on the council's website at:

<https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/18872/Councillors-allowances>

	2023/24	2022/23
	£'000	£'000
Basic Allowance	400	374
Special Responsibility Allowance	116	113
Mileage and Subsistence		
Total	516	487

9. Defined Pension Benefit

Participation in Pension Schemes

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

The Council participates in the Local Government Pension Scheme administered by Surrey County Council. Most of the Council's employees are members. The scheme provides defined benefits (retirement lump sums and pensions) to members that they have earned as Council employees. It is a funded scheme, meaning that the Council and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension liabilities with investment assets in the long term.

The scheme is operated under the regulatory framework for the Local Government Pension Scheme and the governance of the scheme is the responsibility of the Pension Board of Surrey County Council. Policy is determined in accordance with the Pension Fund Regulations. The investment managers of the Fund are appointed by the Board and consist of eleven investment fund managers plus private equity fund managers.

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

The scheme is a multi-employer plan. Employers are required by regulation to meet the minimum contributions as set out in the Rate and Adjustments Certificate for the relevant actuarial valuation. For 2023-24 this would be the valuation carried out as at March 2023.

If another entity was to be unable to meet required funding commitments to the Fund and no suitable guarantee was available, either in the form of a bond or a charge on assets or a parent organisation, then any deficit would be spread across existing fund employers.

If the Council were to withdraw from the scheme, the fund actuary would carry out a cessation valuation to calculate its plan liabilities and assets. Any deficit on this valuation would need to be recovered through a final contribution to the fund. Any surplus would not be recoverable.

Transactions Relating to Post-employment Benefits

The Council's participation in the Local Government Pension Scheme is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme.

- the liabilities of the pension scheme attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method – that is an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc., and projections of projected earnings for current employees.
- liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate of 4.85% (based on the indicative rate of return on high quality corporate bond over a range of periods).
- the assets of the pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value using the following bases:
 - quoted securities – current bid price
 - unquoted securities – professional estimate
 - unitised securities – current bid price
 - property – market value

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

- Service cost comprising:
 - current service cost - the increase in liabilities as result of years of service earned this year – allocated in the CIES to the services for which the employees worked
 - past service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years - debited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the CIES, within the Resources Directorate.
- net interest on the net defined benefit liability, i.e. net interest expense for the Council – the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability that arises from the passage of time charged to the FIIE line in the CIES – this is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability at the beginning of the period – taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments

Re-measurements comprising:

- The return on plan assets (excluding amounts included in the net interest on the net defined benefit liability) – the annual investment return on the fund assets attributable to the Council, based on an average of the expected long-term return – credited to Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure
- Actuarial gains and losses – changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure
- Contributions paid to the Surrey County Council Pension Fund – cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the GF 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 MIRS, this means that there are appropriations to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the GF of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

Discretionary Benefits

The Council also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. These are unfunded defined benefit arrangements under which liabilities are recognised when awards are made. However, there are no investment assets built up to meet these pension liabilities, and cash has to be generated to meet actual pension payments as they eventually fall due. They are accounted for using the same policies as are applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

We recognise the cost of retirement benefits in the reported cost of services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge we are required to make against council tax is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund via the MIRS.

The following transactions have been made in the CIES and the GF Balance via the MIRS during the year:

2022-23	2023-24
£'000	£'000
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	
9,296 Current Service Cost	5,119
0 Past Service Cost	25
9,296 Cost of Services	5,144
3,214 Net interest expense	991
3,214 Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	991
12,510 Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	6,135
104,609 Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability	23,493
117,119 Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	29,628
Movement in Reserves Statement	
12,510 Reversal of items charges relating to retirement benefit debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	6,135
(3,635) Employers pension contributions	(4,467)
8,875 Total taken to Note 3	1,668

Pension Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet The amount included in the Balance Sheet arising from the authority's obligation in respect of its defined benefit plan is as follows:

2022-23	2023-24
£'000 Reconciliation of Fair Value of Employer Assets (scheme Assets):	£'000
244,844 Value of Assets at 1 April	236,612
0 Effect of settlements	
6,563 Interest income on plan assets	11,142
1,360 Contributions by Members	1,554
3,635 Contributions by the Employer	4,467
(11,597) Return on assets excluding amounts recognised in Other Comprehensive Income	15,805
Admin expenses	
(8,193) Benefits Paid	(10,151)
236,612	259,429
2022-23	2023-24
£'000 Reconciliation of Defined Benefit Obligation (scheme Liabilities):	£'000
(361,113) Value of Liabilities at 1 April	(257,147)
(9,296) Current Service Cost	(5,119)
0 Past Service Cost	(25)
(9,777) Interest Cost	(12,133)
(1,360) Contribution by Members	(1,554)
Actuarial Gains and (Losses):	
7,714 Change in demographic assumptions	1,434
131,024 Change in financial assumptions	14,689
(22,532) Other experience gains and (losses)	(8,435)
8,193 Benefits Paid	10,151
(257,147)	(258,139)
(20,535) Net (Liability)/ Asset at 31st March	1,290

31 March 2023			31 March 2024		
Total	% of total assets	Asset Category	Total	% of total assets	
£'000	%		£'000	%	
21,106	8.90%	Equity Securities	20,746	7.00%	
-	0.00%	Debt Securities		0.00%	
33,508	14.20%	Private Equity	39,707	15.00%	
14,258	6.00%	Real Estate	12,741	5.00%	
163,416	69.10%	Investment Funds and Unit Trusts	182,370	71.00%	
- 631	-0.30%	Derivatives	- 148	-0.10%	
4,954	2.10%	Cash and Cash Equivalents	4,013	2.10%	
236,612	100%	Total	259,429	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 assumption about mortality rates, salary levels etc. The County Council fund liabilities have been assessed by Hymans Robertson LLP, an independent firm of actuaries. The Actuary has prepared the figures by applying a 'roll-forward' approach to the last formal valuation, which was as at 31 March 2024. The main financial assumptions used in their calculation have been:

2022-23	2023-24
Mortality assumptions:	
Mortality age rating assumptions (Life expectancy from the age of 65 years)	
21.9 Men	21.7
24.8 Women	24.6
Future pensioners retiring in 20 years	
22.6 Men	22.4
26.2 Women	26.0
2022-23	2023-24
3.0% Rate of CPI inflation	2.8%
4.0% Rate of increase in salaries	3.8%
3.0% Rate of increase in pensions	2.8%
4.8% Rate for discounting scheme liabilities	4.9%

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. The sensitivity analyses below have been determined based on reasonably possible changes of the assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period and assumes for each change that the assumption analyses changes while all the other assumptions remain constant. The assumptions in longevity for example, assume that life expectancy increases or decreases for men and women. In practice, this is unlikely to occur, and changes in some of the assumptions may be interrelated. The estimations in the sensitivity analysis have followed the accounting policies for the scheme, i.e. on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method.

Sensitivity analyses on the Present Value of the Defined Benefit Obligation

Adjustments made to:	Approximate % Increase to Employer	Approximate Monetary amount £'000
Discount rate (decrease by 0.1%)	2%	4,726
Long Term salary increase (increase by 0.1%)	0%	178
Pension increases (increase/decrease by 0.1%)	2%	4,634
Life expectancy assumptions (increase by 1 year)	4%	10,326

The principal demographic assumption is the longevity assumption (i.e. member life expectancy). For sensitivity purposes, the Actuary has estimated that a one-year increase in life expectancy would approximately increase the Employer's Defined Benefit Obligation by around 3% to 5%. In practise the actual cost of a one-year increase in life expectancy will depend on the structure of the revised assumption (i.e. if improvements to survival rates predominantly apply at younger or older ages)

Impact on the Council's Cash Flows

The objectives of the scheme are to keep employers' contributions at as constant a rate as possible. Funding levels are monitored on an annual basis. The triennial valuation carried out as at 31 March 2023 applies from 1 April 2024.

The scheme will need to take account of the national changes to the scheme under the Public Pensions Services Act 2013. Under the Act, the Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales and the other main existing public service pension schemes may not provide benefits in relation to service after 31 March 2014 (or service after 31 March 2015 for other main existing public service pension schemes in England and Wales). The Act provides for scheme regulations to be made within a common framework, to establish new career average revalued earnings schemes to pay pensions and other benefits.

Change in position from liabilities to assets of £1.2 million reduced slight strain on the pension, however this is very volatile. Statutory arrangements for funding the surplus/deficit mean that the financial position of the Council remains healthy; the surplus/deficit will be made good by decreased/increased contributions over the remaining working life of employees, as assessed by the scheme actuary.

10. Grant Income

Government grants, third party contributions and donations are recognised as due to the Council when it is reasonable to conclude that:

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

Amounts are recognised credited to the CIES when conditions attached to the grant or contribution have been satisfied. Conditions are stipulations that specify that the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset in the form of the grant or contribution are required to be consumed by the recipient as specified, or future economic benefits or service potential must be returned to the transferor.

Where conditions have not been satisfied, grants and contributions are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied grants and contributions are credited to the CIES:

- attributable revenue grants and contributions are credited to the relevant service line
- non-ring-fenced revenue grants and all capital grants are credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income.

Where capital grants and contributions are credited to the CIES, they are reversed out of the GF Balance in the MIRS. Where a contribution has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Contributions Unapplied reserve. Where a grant or contribution has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Contributions Unapplied Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

Where it is uncertain whether a grant or contribution will be used for capital or revenue purposes, the grant will be credited to an earmarked reserve.

The Council credited the following grants, contributions and donations to the CIES.

2022-23	2023-24
£'000	£'000
(11,763) DWP benefits subsidy - Rent Allowance	(12,934)
(9,802) DWP benefits subsidy - Rebate	(10,150)
(318) Housing Benefits Administration Grant	(231)
(4,942) Council Tax Energy Rebate	(980)
(32) COVID-19	(253)
(940) Homelessness	(1,256)
(3,573) Other Grants and Contributions	(5,126)
Daycare and other social services	
<u>(31,370)</u> Total within Cost of Services	<u>(30,930)</u>
<i>Revenue</i>	
(202) Revenue Support Grant	(1,875)
(15) New Burden Grant	(2)
(766) New Homes Bonus	(1,283)
(3,242) Section 31 Grant Income	(4,705)
0 COVID-19	0
(7,155) <i>Capital</i>	(37,733)
<u>(11,380)</u> Total within Taxation and non-specific grant income	<u>(45,598)</u>
<u>(42,750)</u> Total income from grants and contributions	<u>(76,528)</u>

11. Earmarked Reserves

The Council sets aside specific amounts from the GF and HRA as Earmarked Reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies.

	Balance at 31 March 2023	Transfers out	Transfers in	Balance at 31 March 2024
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Fund				
Election Costs Reserve	(266)	265	(48)	(49)
Hls Reserve	(232)	46	(40)	(226)
Carried Forward Items	(894)	269	(50)	(675)
Insurance	(500)	0	0	(500)
Salix Reserve	(315)	0	(31)	(346)
IT Renewals	(1,894)	564	(531)	(1,861)
Spectrum	(773)	373	0	(401)
Car Parks Maintenance	(2,331)	130	(200)	(2,400)
G Live Sinking Fund	(130)	27	(10)	(113)
Business Rates Equalisation	(2,931)	0	0	(2,931)
SPA Reserve - Effingham	(3,520)	0	(629)	(4,148)
SPA Reserve - Riverside Park	(989)	24	(120)	(1,084)
SPA Reserve - Chantry Wood	(6,284)	76	(167)	(6,375)
SPA Reserve - Lakeside	(532)	0	(47)	(579)
SPA Reserve -Parsonage Water	(2,127)	0	(124)	(2,251)
Refugee Support	(393)	191	(1,984)	(2,186)
Safer Guildford Partnership Reserve	(27)			(27)
MTFP Reserve	(8,265)	642	(589)	(8,211)
Business Rates - New Burdens Ongoing	(330)			(330)
Family Support Programme	0		(237)	(237)
Civil Parking-Gbc/Glc Shared	2			2
	(32,731)	2,608	(4,807)	(34,929)
HRA				
Capital Programme	(37,905)	16,914	(6,608)	(27,599)
New Build	(59,377)	2,542	(1,189)	(58,024)
Total	(97,282)	19,456	(7,797)	(85,622)
Total	(130,013)	22,064	(12,603)	(120,552)

This note sets out:

- Earmarked reserves are created by appropriating amounts out of the GF or HRA in the MIRS. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the relevant service in that year in the CIES. The expenditure is then appropriated back into the GF or HRA in the MIRS.
- the amounts set aside from the GF and HRA balances in earmarked reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans and
- the amounts posted back from earmarked reserves to meet GF and HRA expenditure.

His Reserve	Natural England grants towards parks and countryside schemes
Carried forward items reserve	Cover cost of Interim Finance and due diligence
Insurance reserve	Insurance excess reserve, can be released if insurance is transferred to LB Sutton
Salix Reserve	Match Funding for Salix (Carbon Trust) match funding grants
IT renewals	Receives repayments from services to fund expenditure as set out in the Council's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategy
Spectrum	Unplanned maintenance and repairs
Car parks maintenance	Used to fund repairs, maintenance and improvements in the Council's off street car parks
G-live sinking fund	Required by G live operating agreement
Business rates equalisation	To be used as appropriate to smooth out the effects of the Business Rates Retention Scheme, including those related to regeneration projects
Special Protection Area (SPA) sites	Set up to hold s106 income received in relation to various SPA sites
Family Support	Carry forward of SCC Family Support funding
Refugee Support	Carry forward of Government Ukrainian Refugee support funding
Safer Guildford partnership	Partnership working with Police
MTFP Reserve	Amalgamation of smaller reserves
Business Rates – New Burdens Ongoing	Debt recovery capacity funding
HRA capital programme	Available to fund HRA capital expenditure in future years
HRA new build	To fund the building and acquisition of new Council homes

12. Property, Plant And Equipment (PP&E)

Definition

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 for more than one financial year.

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of PP&E is capitalised if it is probable that the item of PP&E will generate future economic benefits and/or service potential.

Expenditure that does not enhance an asset such as repairs and maintenance expenditure is not capitalised and is charged to the CIES as an expense when it is incurred.

Measurement

PP&E 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 initial estimate of any future decommissioning costs that will be necessary such as dismantling an item or restoring a site upon which the asset it is located.

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

- infrastructure, community assets and assets under construction - historical cost (depreciated as appropriate)
- council dwellings - current value, determined using the existing use value for social housing
- surplus assets – current value, determined using fair value, estimated at highest and best use from a market participant’s perspective
- all other assets – current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use.

Where there is no market-based evidence of current value because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost is used as an estimate.

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at current value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their current value at the year-end, but as a minimum every five years.

Increases in valuations are credited to the Revaluation Reserve unless there has been a previous reduction in valuation that has been charged to the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of

Services line in the CIES. Where such a charge has been made, the increase in valuation is credited to the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services (up to the amount that had previously been charged).

Decreases in value are charged:

- to the Revaluation Reserve, where there is a balance in the Revaluation Reserve of revaluation gains for the asset
- where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance, to the relevant service line(s) in the CIES.

The Revaluation Reserve contains revaluation gains recognised since 1 April 2007 only, the date of its formal implementation. Gains and losses that arose prior to 1 April 2007 have been transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Revaluations

The Council carries out a rolling programme that ensures that all PP&E required to be measured at current value is revalued at least every five years. All of our council dwellings and a proportion of our other operational properties were revalued by the Valuation Office Agency and Bruton Knowles Limited, chartered surveyors, in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Council dwellings were revalued as at 1 April 2024 and other property as at 31 March 2024. Where applicable the assets were inspected between October 2023 and February 2024 and the valuer assumed, where relevant, that the properties valued will continue to be in the occupation of the Council for the foreseeable future having regard to the prospect and viability of the continuance of that occupation.

Properties regarded by the Council as operational were valued on the basis of open market value for the existing use or, where this could not be assessed because there was no market for the subject asset, the depreciated replacement cost.

Any property, regarded by the Council as surplus and therefore non-operational, is valued at fair value, based on the market approach using current market conditions and recent sales prices and other relevant information for similar assets in the local area. Market conditions are such that similar properties are actively purchased and sold and the level of observable inputs are significant, leading to the property being categorised at Level 2 in the fair value hierarchy.

All assets of the same type, e.g. car parks, are generally revalued together in one year. We check that there are no material trends in the revaluations that should be applied to any of our other assets.

The sources of information and assumptions made in producing the various valuations are set out in a valuation certificate and report, which also provides assurance that the valuer has reviewed the balance sheet values of the remainder of the Council's property portfolio to give assurance that no class of assets is materially misstated.

The valuation figures incorporated in the accounts are the aggregate of separate valuations of parts of the portfolio, not an apportioned valuation of the portfolio valued as a whole.

The following statement shows the progress of the Council's rolling programme for the revaluation of PP&E assets:

	Council Dwellings	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles Plant, Furniture and Equipment	Infrastructure	Commun. Assets	Assets under Construction	Surplus Props.	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Carried at Historical Cost	0	11,265	30,116	11,575	7,894	42,223	0	103,073
Valued at Current Value as at:								
31/03/2024	588,040	187,703					5,229	780,972
31/03/2023		24,280						24,280
31/03/2022		17,429						17,429
31/03/2021		9,283						9,283
31/03/2020		8,601						8,601
31/03/2019		5,387						5,387
Total Cost or Valuation	588,040	263,948	30,116	11,575	7,894	42,223	5,229	949,025

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 charged to the Revaluation Reserve, where there is a balance in the Revaluation Reserve of revaluation gains for the asset
- where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance, to the relevant service line(s) in the CIES.

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

Disposals and Non-current Assets Held for Sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an Asset Held for Sale. The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and fair value less costs to sell and is no longer subject to a depreciation charge. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any previously recognised losses.

If assets no longer meet the criteria to be classified as Assets Held for Sale, they are reclassified back to non-current assets and valued at the lower of:

- their recoverable amount at the date of the decision not to sell.

- 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

When an asset is disposed of (or decommissioned), the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether PP&E or Assets Held for Sale) is written off to the CIES as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited to the CIES also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (that is 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.

Disposal proceeds in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. A proportion of receipts relating to housing disposals, net of statutory deductions and allowances, is payable to the Government. The balance of receipts is required to be credited to the Capital Receipts Reserve and can then only be used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the Council's underlying need to borrow (the capital financing requirement). Receipts are appropriated to the reserve from the GF Balance in the MIRS.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the GF Balance in the MIRS.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on PP&E assets that are available for use by charging their depreciable amounts over their useful lives on a straight-line basis.

- Assets that do not have a determinable finite useful life (such as freehold land) and assets that are in the course of construction (and therefore not yet available for use) are not depreciated.
- Where an item of PP&E has major components where the cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, and where it is necessary to ensure materially correct depreciation charges, the components are depreciated separately. The Council's policy is to consider for componentisation all assets (excluding land) with a value greater than £1 million and where the component(s) comprise more than 20% of the value of the asset.
- Revaluation gains are depreciated, with an amount equal to the difference between current value depreciation charged on assets and the depreciation that would have been chargeable based on their historical cost being transferred each year from the Revaluation reserve to the Capital Adjustment Account.

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

- Council Dwellings – 60 years
- Other Land and Buildings – 5 to 60 years (as estimated by the valuer)
- Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment – 3 to 30 years (as advised by a suitably qualified officer)
- Infrastructure – 5 to 60 years (as advised by a suitably qualified officer)

Assets under construction

Assets that are transferred to under construction in year, may carry a depreciation charge in the year of transfer for the time it was an operational asset.

Depreciation will not be chargeable while assets are under construction

When assets are constructed, they will be moved to their relevant category, and will then start to be depreciated. These assets will be revalued the year after they become operational.

Property Plant & Equipment	Housing	Land & Buildings	Plant / Vehicles / Equipment	Infrastructure	Community	Surplus	Assets Under Construction	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost								0
At 1 April 2023 - Restated	605,014	256,836	30,270	11,349	7,846	4,935	36,464	952,714
Additions	33,583	908	85	226	48	0	17,021	51,871
Acc Dep & Imp WO to GCA	(8,076)	(6,788)	0	0	0	(2)	0	(14,866)
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	(32,203)	2,921	0	0	0	247	0	(29,035)
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(5,256)	(561)	0	0	0	0	0	(5,817)
Derecognition - Disposals	(4,439)	(1)	(239)	0	0	0	0	(4,679)
Assets reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale	0	(581)	0	0	0	0	0	(581)
Other movements in Cost or Valuation	0	11,213	0	0	0	49	(11,262)	0
At 31 March 2024	588,623	263,947	30,116	11,575	7,894	5,229	42,223	949,607
Accumulated Depreciation & Impairment								
At 1 April 2023	(1,066)	(10,173)	(24,434)	(5,724)	(48)	0	(427)	(41,872)
Depreciation Charge for 2023/24	(6,600)	(7,025)	(1,484)	(276)	(1)	(2)	0	(15,388)
Acc. Depreciation WO to GCA	8,076	6,788	0	0	0	2	0	14,866
Derecognition - Disposals	8		231					239
Assets reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale	0	28	0	0	0	0	0	28
Other movements in Depreciation and Impairment	0	6	0	0	0	(6)	0	0
At 31 March 2024	418	(10,376)	(25,687)	(6,000)	(49)	(6)	(427)	(42,127)
Net Book Value								
At 31 March 2024	589,041	253,571	4,429	5,575	7,845	5,223	41,796	907,480
At 31 March 2023	603,948	246,663	5,836	5,625	7,798	4,935	36,037	910,842

Property Plant & Equipment - Previous Year	Housing	Land & Buildings	Plant / Vehicles / Equipment	Infrastructure	Community	Surplus	Assets Under Construction	Total
Cost								
At 1 April 2022	564,047	243,813	30,404	18,467	7,769	5,366	25,832	895,698
Additions	24,467	1,265	526	1,535	77	0	1,979	29,849
Acc Dep & Imp WO to GCA	(6,219)	(6,273)	0	0	0	(2)	0	(12,494)
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the Revalu	26,487	16,576	0	0	0	(429)	0	42,634
Revaluation increases/(decreases) recognised in the Surplu	539	1,455	0	0	0	0	0	1,994
Derecognition - Disposals	(4,307)	0	(660)	0	0	0	0	(4,967)
Other movements in Cost or Valuation	0	0	0	(8,653)	0	0	8,653	0
At 31 March 2023	605,014	256,836	30,270	11,349	7,846	4,935	36,464	952,714
Accumulated Depreciation & Impairment								
At 1 April 2022	(995)	(9,825)	(23,372)	(5,777)	(47)	0	0	(40,016)
Depreciation Charge for 2022/23	(6,321)	(6,621)	(1,704)	(374)	(1)	(2)	0	(15,023)
Acc. Depreciation WO to GCA	6,220	6,273	0	0	0	2	0	12,495
Derecognition - Disposals	30	0	642	0	0	0	0	672
Other movements in Depreciation and Impairment	0	0	0	427	0	0	(427)	0
At 31 March 2023	(1,066)	(10,173)	(24,434)	(5,724)	(48)	0	(427)	(41,872)
Net Book Value								
At 31 March 2023	603,948	246,663	5,836	5,625	7,798	4,935	36,037	910,842
At 31 March 2022	562,468	234,400	7,032	13,096	7,722	5,366	25,632	855,716

Capital Commitments

The contractual commitments for capital expenditure for schemes that had started, or where legal contracts entered into at the 31 March 2024 are:

	£'000s
WUV	10,232
Infrastructure	594
Regeneration	3
IT	25
Car Parks	6
Parks	91
Housing	149
Total	<u>11,100</u>

13. Heritage Assets

The Council holds various heritage assets, which are held and maintained principally for their contribution to knowledge and culture. Heritage assets are recognised and measured (including the treatment of revaluation gains and losses) in accordance with the Council's accounting policies on PP&E. However, some of the measurement rules are relaxed in relation to heritage assets. The Council's heritage assets are accounted for as follows:

- **Monuments**, including Guildford Castle and Chilworth Gunpowder Mills
These assets are ruins for which it is not possible to obtain a current valuation. They are held on the balance sheet at historical cost, i.e. the cost of capitalised works carried out to preserve the buildings and are not subject to depreciation as they have indefinite lives.

- **the art collection** held at Guildford House Gallery, and civic regalia held at the Guildhall

Insurance values have been used as a proxy for fair value. An insurance valuation was carried out by Bonhams 1793 Limited, international auctioneers and valuers as at March 2012. This was based on estimated price of the items if purchased on retail premises. The assets are not depreciated because they have indeterminable lives.

- **various sculptures and pieces of artwork** around the Borough

These assets are held on the balance sheet at historical cost and are not subject to depreciation as they have indeterminable lives.

- **the museum collection** held at Guildford Museum

The Council does not consider that reliable cost or valuation information can be obtained for the museum collection because of the diverse nature of the assets held and lack of comparable market values. Consequently, the Council does not recognise these assets on the balance sheet.

The carrying amounts of heritage assets are reviewed where there is evidence of impairment for heritage assets, for example when an item has suffered physical deterioration or breakage or where doubts arise as to its authenticity. Any impairment is recognised and measured in accordance with the Council's general policies on impairment – see note 12 in this summary of significant accounting policies.

Reconciliation of the carrying value of Heritage Assets held by the Council

2022-23	2023-24
£'000	£'000
1,202 Monuments	1,202
1,759 Civic Regalia	1,759
805 Art Collection	805
<u>3,766</u> Total	<u>3,766</u>

Civic Regalia

The Council's collection of civic regalia is held at the Guildhall, and includes such items as the mayor's badge, small and large mace and the civic plate.

Art Collection

The collection is held at Guildford House Gallery comprises more than 550 pieces and small collections. Many objects consist of multiple parts so the number of works comes close to 800. They span more than 250 years and include a plethora of media - oil paintings, watercolours, pastels, etchings, engravings, prints, textiles, ceramics, sculpture and glass.

The Heritage Services Collections Development Policy is available from the Council's Heritage Manager.

Museum Collections

Guildford Museum works with local people and other partners to collect, record and care for the Borough's heritage and to promote understanding, enjoyment, and engagement with that heritage through access and learning for all. Its collections contain material of local, regional, national and international importance and form a unique cultural asset and resource for Guildford Borough, its people and its visitors.

The heritage asset acquisitions and disposals policies are set out in the published Heritage Service's collections development policy, which the Council reviews every five years. This is a requirement of the national standards scheme for museums, which is managed by Arts Council England. A copy is lodged with other appropriate museums and regional organisations in Surrey and the South East. It is also available on the Council's website.

14. 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.

The value of an investment property is initially measured at cost. Thereafter, it is measured at fair value, being the price that would be received to sell such an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. As a non-financial asset, investment properties are measured at highest and best use. Investment 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 (FIIIE) line in the CIES as are any gains or losses on disposal.

Rentals received in relation to investment properties are credited to the FIIIE and result in a gain for the GF Balance. However, revaluation and disposal gains and losses are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the GF Balance. Accordingly, any gains or losses are reversed out of the GF Balance in the MIRS and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account (revaluations and value of assets disposed of) and the Capital Receipts Reserve (proceeds of disposals greater than £10,000).

The following items of income and expense have been accounted for in the FIIE line in the CIES:

2022-23		2023-24
£'000		£'000
(9,158)	Rental income from investment property	(9,714)
1,743	Direct operating expenses arising from investment property	269
<u>(7,415)</u>	Total	<u>(9,445)</u>

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 or develop investment property or for repairs, maintenance or enhancement.

The fair value of the majority of the Council's investment property has been based on the market approach using current market conditions and recent sales prices and other relevant information for similar assets in the local area. Market conditions are such that similar properties are actively purchased and sold and the level of observable inputs are significant, leading to the properties being categorised at Level 2 in the fair value hierarchy. The inputs used took the form of analysed and weighted market evidence such as sales, rentals and yields in respect of comparable properties in the same or similar locations at or around the valuation date.

In estimating the fair value of the Council's investment properties, the highest and best use of the properties is their current use. The table below shows the movement in the fair value of Investment assets held on the Balance Sheet

Investment Property Analysis

31-Mar-23		31-Mar-24
174,385	Balance at Start of Year - Restated	178,646
	Additions :	
908	Acquisitions	0
4,168	Enhancements	4,321
0	Disposals	0
(815)	Net gains/losses from fair value adjustments	360
<u>178,646</u>	Balance at End of Year	<u>183,327</u>

15. Intangible Assets

Expenditure on assets that do not have a physical substance are capitalised when it is expected that future economic benefits or service potential will flow from the intangible asset to the Council.

Intangible assets are initially measured at cost and carried at amortised cost. It is amortised over its useful life to the relevant service line(s) in the CIES.

The Council 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 PP&E. The intangible assets only include purchased licences as the Council does not have any significant internally generated software.

All software is given a finite useful life of 5 years based on an assessment of the period that the software is expected to be of use to the Council. The carrying amount of intangible assets is amortised on a straight-line basis.

The movement on the Intangible Asset balance during the year is as follows:

2022-23	2023-24
£'000	£'000
2,762 Balance at start of the year	2,541
652 Additions	510
0 Disposals	0
(873) Amortisation	(925)
<u>2,541</u> Balance at End of the Year	<u>2,126</u>

16. Assets Held For Sale

2022-23	2023-24
£'000	£'000
0 Carrying Amount at start of year	0
Assets newly classified as assets held for	553
Asset disposals	0
Other movements	0
<u>0</u> Total	<u>553</u>

17. Debtors

31-Mar-23	31-Mar-24
£'000	£'000
Amounts falling due within one year:	
7,002 Central & Local government bodies	5,962
1,113 Other entities and individuals: general	5,745
5,400 Other entities and individuals: CT & NNDR	3,217
13,515	14,924
Total short term debtors	

Balance at 31 Mar 23	Description	Advances in the year	Other movements	Balance at 31 March 2024
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000
16,166	North Downs Housing Company (NDH)	0	62	16,228
2,854	NDH interest	0	0	2,854
233	Car Purchase Loans	0	34	268
600	Ripley PC loans	0	0	600
6	Postal Franker Contract Deposit	0	0	6
19,859	Total Long Term Debtors	0	96	19,956

18. Short Term Creditors

31-Mar-23		31-Mar-24
£'000		£'000
	Amounts falling due within one year:	
(21,563)	Central & Local government bodies	(5,343)
(17,402)	Other entities and individuals	(36,112)
(4,800)	Receipts in Advance	(4,731)
(43,765)	Total short term creditors	(46,186)

This includes Receipts in Advance received for Covid-19 grants and Council Tax.

19. Cash And Cash Equivalents

Cash comprises cash in hand and on demand deposits. Cash also includes bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and that are integral to the Council's cash management.

Balances classified as 'Cash Equivalents' fit the definition of being short term, highly liquid (that is callable) investments that are readily convertible into known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

The net balance of Cash and Cash Equivalents consists of the following elements:

2022-23		2023-24
£'000		£'000
2	Cash held by the Council	3
10,996	Bank current accounts	(1,002)
5,363	Callable deposits	12,409
16,361		11,410

20. Cash Flow Statement – Operating Activities

The cash flows for operating activities include the following items:

2022-23		2023-24
£'000		£'000
(3,415)	Interest received	(4,025)
6,288	Interest paid	6,045
2,873		2,019

The surplus on the provision of services has been adjusted for the following non-cash movements:

2022-23	2023-24
£'000	£'000
15,020 Depreciation	15,388
(1,994) Revaluation gains on Property, Plant & Equipment	7,452
874 Amortisation of intangible assets	925
(8,699) Increase / (decrease) in creditors	2,421
(9,776) (Increase) / decrease in debtors	(1,409)
(213) (Increase) / decrease in inventories	38
8,875 Movement in pension liability	1,668
0 Contributions to provisions	5,953
4,295 Carrying amount of non-current assets sold	4,440
367 (Increase) / decrease in investment property value	(1,995)
1,841 Other adjustments	815
10,590	35,696

The deficit on the provision of services has been adjusted for the following items that are investing and financing activities:

2022-23	2023-24
£'000	£'000
0 Proceeds from short and long-term investments	0
(7,155) Other items	(38,624)
(4,726) Proceeds from the sale of non-current assets	(5,610)
(11,881)	(44,234)

21. Provisions

Provisions are created when the Council has an obligation, such as a legal claim against it, that has arisen from a past event and it is probable that the Council will need to settle that obligation. In addition, it is necessary that the obligation can be reliably estimated.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the CIES when the Council has an obligation. They are measured at best estimate at the Balance Sheet date, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties. When payments are made to clear the obligation, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year and where necessary revised. If there is a need to increase the provision, the additional amount is charged to the relevant service in the CIES. If, however, the obligation is estimated or ultimately proves to be less than the value of the provision, the excess amount is credited to the relevant service in the CIES.

Where some or all of the payment required to settle a provision is expected to be recovered from another party (for example 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 Council settles the obligation.

The Council's provisions total £5.95 million (£6.8 million in 2022-23).

	Outstanding legal cases £'000	Business rates appeals £'000	North Downs Housing Interest Provision (2,854)	Other provisions £'000 (31)	Total £'000 (6,866)
Balance at 1 April 22	0	(3,981)	(2,854)	(31)	(6,866)
Additional provisions made					0
Amounts used					0
Unused amounts reversed					0
Balance at 31 March 23	0	(3,981)	(2,854)	(31)	(6,866)
Additional provisions made		(5,970)			(5,970)
Amounts used				17	17
Unused amounts reversed					0
Balance at 31 March 24	0	(9,951)	(2,854)	(14)	(12,819)

updates when information is received

Outstanding Legal Cases

This relates to search fees, which, subject to legal action, may have to be repaid.

There are four cases outstanding which is likely to have a maximum cost to the council of £127,000

Business rates Appeals

The business rates appeals provision was set up to cover the Council's share of the estimated reduction in business rates collectable due to rating appeals. It was calculated using information provided by the Valuation Office Agency about outstanding appeals, and our historical knowledge of the likely success rate of these appeals. An additional £10.8 million was added into the reserve and £7.85 million of revaluation list amendments were charged against the provision, but only the Council's 30% share is shown here. The remainder is allocated to Surrey County Council (70%) and is reflected in the balance sheet in the Council's net creditors with them.

Other provisions

All other provisions are individually insignificant.

22. Unusable Reserves

The following table summarises the unusable reserves (i.e. non-cash reserves) held by the council, with more detail for each reserve below.

Balance 1 April 2022	Comp- rehensive I&E	Accounting - Financing Adjust.	Balance 31 March 2023
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
(294,156) Revaluation Reserve	(42,634)	6,485	(330,305)
(403,669) Capital Adjustment Account		(10,620)	(414,289)
0 Deferred capital receipts			0
116,284 Pensions Reserve	(104,609)	8,860	20,535
9,907 Collection Fund Adjustment Account		(9,455)	452
532 Accumulated Absences Account		(246)	286
(1,711) Financial instruments adjustment account		1,847	136
(572,813) Total for 2022-23	(147,243)	(3,129)	(723,185)
Balance 1 April 2023	Comp- rehensive I&E	Accounting - Financing Adjust.	Balance 31 March 2024
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
(330,305) Revaluation Reserve	29,034	7,174	(294,097)
(414,289) Capital Adjustment Account		(16,396)	(430,685)
0 Deferred capital receipts			0
20,535 Pensions Reserve	(23,493)	1,668	(1,290)
452 Collection Fund Adjustment Account		814	1,266
286 Accumulated Absences Account		(9)	277
136 Financial instruments adjustment account		166	302
(723,185) Total for 2023-24	5,541	(6,583)	(724,227)

Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its PP&E. 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.

2022-23 £'000	2023-24 £'000
(294,156) Balance 1 April	(330,305)
Comprehensive Income & Expenditure:	29,034
(42,634) Net Gain on revaluation of assets	
Accounting / Financing Adjustments:	
Other movements	
1,312 Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	1,388
5,173 Depreciation charged to Revaluation Reserve	5,786
(330,305) Balance at 31 March 24	(294,097)

Financial Instruments reserve

This reserve contains the gains made by the Council arising from increases in its value of investments classified as Fair Value through Profit and Loss (FVPL) which are eligible for the governments Statutory Override.

2022-23	2023-24
£'000	£'000
(1,711) Balance 1 April	136
Accounting / Financing Adjustments:	
1,847 Difference between accounting and statutory valuation	166
<u>136</u> Balance 31 March	<u>302</u>

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 CIES. The account is credited with the amounts set aside by the Council as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and enhancement.

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

The account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on PP&E before 1 April 2007, the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains.

2022-23	2023-24
£'000	£'000
(403,669) Balance 1 April	(414,289)
Accounting / Financing Adjustments:	
874 Write down Intangible Assets	925
15,020 Depreciation	22,840
(2,059) Revaluations and impairment of non-current assets	0
432 Movements in value of Investment Properties	(1,995)
2,983 Gain or (loss) on sale of non-current assets	3,052
14,817 Revenue Expenditure Financed from Capital under Statute - Expenditure	40,125
0 Revenue Expenditure Financed from Capital under Statute - Income	
(16,109) Capital expenditure financed from revenue	(19,174)
(3,226) Capital expenditure financed from Capital Receipts	(2,954)
(7,041) Capital expenditure financed from Capital grants and contributions	(38,661)
(9,588) Use of the Major Repairs Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	(13,208)
(1,550) Minimum Revenue Provision	(1,560)
(5,173) Depreciation charged to Revaluation Reserve	(5,786)
<u>(414,289)</u> Balance at 31 March 24	<u>(430,685)</u>

Pensions Reserve

This 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 CIES 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 balance on the Pensions 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.

2022-23	2023-24
£'000	£'000
116,284 Balance 1 April	20,535
Comprehensive Income & Expenditure:	
(104,609) Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability	(23,493)
Accounting / Financing Adjustments:	
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the surplus/deficit on provision of services	
8,875 Employer's pension contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	1,668
<u>20,535</u> Balance at 31 March 24	<u>(1,290)</u>

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 CIES as it falls due from council tax payers and business rates payers compared with the statutory arrangements for paying across amounts to the GF from the Collection Fund.

2022-23	2023-24
£'000	£'000
9,906 Balance 1 April	452
(238) Difference between accounting and statutory credit for Council Tax	(361)
(9,216) Difference between accounting and statutory credit for Non-Domestic Rates	1,175
<u>452</u> Balance at 31 March 24	<u>1,266</u>

23. Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing

The table below shows the total amount of capital expenditure incurred in the year together with the resources that have been used to finance it.

Where capital expenditure is to be financed in future years (as assets are used) by charges to revenue, the expenditure results in an increase in the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is a measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically by the Council that has yet to be financed.

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but does not result in the creation of a non-current asset has been charged as expenditure to the relevant service in the CIES in the year (revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute – REFCUS). Where the Council has determined to meet the cost of this expenditure from existing capital resources or by borrowing, a transfer in the MIRS from the GF Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account then reverses out the amounts charged so that there is no impact on the level of council tax.

2022-23	2023-24
£'000	£'000
349,959 Opening Capital Financing Requirement 1 April	376,067
Capital Investment	
38,628 Property, Plant and Equipment	51,385
6,424 Investment Properties	4,644
652 Intangible assets	510
14,817 Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS)	40,125
1,010 Long Term Debtors	0
2,063 Long Term Investments	0
Sources of finance	
(3,226) Capital receipts	(2,954)
(7,041) Government grants and other contributions	(38,661)
(9,588) HRA Major Repairs Reserve	(13,209)
(16,081) Sums set aside from revenue and reserves	(16,775)
(1,550) Minimum Revenue provision	(1,560)
<u>376,067</u> Closing Capital Financing Requirement 31 March	<u>399,572</u>

24. Financial Instruments

A financial instrument is a contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity investment of another entity. They are recognised on the balance sheet when the Council becomes party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument.

Financial Liabilities

A financial liability is an obligation to transfer economic benefits controlled by the Council. It can be a contractual obligation to deliver cash, financial assets or an obligation to exchange financial assets and liabilities with another entity that are potentially unfavourable to the Council.

They are initially measured at fair value and are subsequently measured and carried on the Balance Sheet at their amortised cost.

Annual charges to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure (FIIIE) line in the CIES for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective interest rate 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.

Financial liabilities held at the balance sheet date consist of long-term loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), bank overdraft and trade payables for goods and services received. For the Councils loans, 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.

The financial liabilities disclosed in the balance sheet are analysed across the following categories:

All non-derivative financial liabilities are carried in the balance sheet at amortised cost. Their fair values have been estimated by calculating the net present value of the remaining contractual cash flows at 31 March 2024, using the following methods and assumptions:

- loans borrowed by the Council have been valued by discounting the contractual cash flows over the whole life of the instrument at the appropriate market rate for local authority loans
- no early repayment or impairment is recognised for any financial instrument
- the fair value of short-term instruments, including trade payables, is assumed to approximate to the carrying amount.

The liabilities for which fair value is not disclosed comprise of short-term financial liabilities that are assumed to be approximate to the carrying amount, including both short-term borrowing and trade payables.

31-Mar-23			31-Mar-24	
Book Value	Fair Value		Book Value	Fair Value
£000's	£000's		£000's	£000's
(43,765)	(43,765)	Short Term Creditors - Amortised Cost	(46,186)	(46,186)
(115,575)	(115,065)	Local Authority loans	(52,053)	(52,053)
(11,659)		PWLB Borrowing	(20,009)	(20,009)
(14,380)		Liabilities not defined as financial liabilities		
<u>(185,379)</u>	<u>(158,830)</u>	Short Term Financial liabilities at amortised cost	<u>(118,248)</u>	<u>(118,248)</u>
<u>(168,053)</u>	<u>(153,569)</u>	Public Works Loan Board - Amortised Cost	<u>(203,486)</u>	<u>(200,583)</u>
<u>(168,053)</u>	<u>(153,569)</u>	Long Term Liabilities at amortised cost	<u>(203,486)</u>	<u>(200,583)</u>
<u>(353,441)</u>	<u>(312,408)</u>	Total Financial Liabilities	<u>(321,734)</u>	<u>(318,831)</u>

The fair value of long-term PWLB loans held at amortised cost is lower than their balance sheet carrying amount because the Council's portfolio of loans includes a number of loans where the interest rate payable is lower than the current rates available for similar loans at the balance sheet date.

Financial Assets

A financial asset is a right to future economic benefits controlled by the Council that is represented by cash or other instruments or a contractual right to receive cash or another financial asset.

There are three classifications for financial assets under the Code of Practice

- amortised cost
- fair value through other comprehensive income
- fair value through profit and loss

Financial assets are classified into these three categories based on the Council's business model for holding the assets and their cash flow characteristics.

Amortised Cost (cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest and the Council's business model is to collect those cash flows)

These comprise:

- cash in hand
- bank current and deposit accounts with HSBC Bank PLC
- fixed term deposits with banks and building societies
- loans to other local authorities
- loans to small companies and housing associations
- loans to the Council's subsidiary North Downs Housing Ltd
- covered bonds issued by banks and building societies
- trade receivables for goods and services provided

These financial assets are initially measured at fair value and are subsequently measured and carried on the Balance Sheet at their amortised cost. Annual credits to the FIIE line in the CIES for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument.

For the Council's financial assets this means that they are presented in the balance sheet as the outstanding principal receivable (plus accrued interest) and interest credited to the CIES is the amount receivable for the year in the investment agreement.

Any gains or losses that arise on the derecognition of an asset are credited or debited to the FIIE line in the CIES.

Fair value through other comprehensive income (where cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest and the Council's business model is to both collect those cash flows and sell the instrument)

The Council does not currently hold any financial assets with this categorisation.

Fair value through profit and loss (all other financial assets)

These financial assets comprise:

- money market funds
- pooled funds
- shares in Guildford Holdings Ltd, B4SH and Surrey Save

Details of the Council's investment holdings can be found in the Capital and Investment Outturn Report reported to the Executive

These are initially measured and carried at fair value. Changes in fair value are taken to the CIES within the FIIE line, and are gains and losses recognised in the GF. However, the Government introduced a 5-year statutory override for this impact for pooled funds, whereby the gain or loss in year is reversed out via the MIRS and held in the Financial Instrument Adjustment Account

Shares in Guildford Holdings Ltd, B4SH and Surrey Save are capital expenditure and the impact of fair value gains and losses on the GF is neutralised by a transfer to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Any gains and losses that arise on the de-recognition of the asset are credited or debited to the FIIE line in the CIES, and any accumulated gains or losses previously recognised in the Financial Instruments Reserve are transferred back to the GF via the MIRS

Expected Credit Loss Model

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

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

The financial assets included in the balance sheet are as follows.

31-Mar-23			31-Mar-24	
Book Value	Fair Value		Book Value	Fair Value
£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000
15,495	15,495	Investments- Fair value through profit and loss	16,659	16,659
18,035	18,035	Loan to company	18,035	18,035
839	839	Other Debtors	839	839
10,119		Non-financial assets	10,119	
44,488	34,369	Long term Assets	45,652	35,533
65,446	65,446	Investments - Amortised Cost	10,375	10,375
5,363	5,363	Cash and cash Equivalents FVPL	12,550	12,550
10,998	10,998	Cash - Amortised Cost	496	496
23,151	23,151	Debtors - Amortised Cost	9,758	9,758
4,298		assets not defined as financial liabilities	5,100	5,100
109,256	104,958	Short term Assets	38,279	38,279
153,744	139,327	Total Financial Assets	83,931	73,812

The fair value of short-term financial assets including trade receivables (debtors), and short-term investments as loans and receivables, is assumed to approximate to the carrying amount.

The fair value of financial assets held at amortised cost is higher than their balance sheet carrying amount because the interest rate on similar investments is now lower than that obtained when the investment was originally made.

Offsetting Financial Assets and Liabilities

Financial assets and liabilities are set off against each other where the Council has a legally enforceable right to sell off and it intends to either settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously. The only item offset on the balance sheet is the bank overdraft, which is shown within cash and cash equivalents. The Council had no other financial assets or liabilities subject to an enforceable master netting arrangement or similar agreement.

Gains and Losses

The gains and losses recognised in the CIES in relation to financial instruments consist of the following items:

31-Mar-23		31-Mar-24
£'000		£'000
5,160	Interest expense	9,127
2,035	(Gains)/ losses on revaluation	166
7,195	Total expense in Surplus/Deficit on Provision of Services	9,293
(3,415)	Interest income	(4,026)
	Other investment income - dividends	
(3,415)	Total income in Surplus/Deficit on Provision of Services	(4,026)
3,780	Net (gain)/loss for the year	5,267

Transaction Costs

Material transactions costs for financial assets and liabilities held at amortised cost are attached to the loan or investment and charged to the CIES over the life of the financial instrument. Immaterial transaction costs are charged in full to the CIES in the financial year in which they are incurred.

25. Nature And Extent Of Risks Arising From Financial Instruments

The Council has adopted CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management (and subsequent amendments) and complies with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (both revised in December 2021).

As part of the adoption of the Treasury Management Code, the Council approves a capital and investment strategy before the commencement of each financial year. The strategy sets out the parameters for the management of risks associated with financial instruments. The Council also produces treasury management practices specifying the practical arrangements to follow to manage these risks.

The capital strategy includes an Annual Investment Strategy in compliance with the DLUHC Guidance on Local Government Investments. This Guidance emphasises that priority is given to security and liquidity, rather than yield. The Council's capital strategy, together with its treasury management practices are based on achieving a suitable balance between risk and return or cost.

The council's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks:

- 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 cash available to make contracted payments on time
- market risk – the possibility that an unplanned financial loss might arise as a result of changes in market variables such as interest rates or equity prices.

Credit risk: Investments

The Council manages credit risk by ensuring that investments are placed with organisations of high credit quality and in line with the approved capital and investment strategy (the definition of high credit quality is set in the strategy). These include commercial entities with a minimum long-term credit rating of A-, the UK government, other local authorities, and organisations without credit ratings, or with a credit rating of below A-, where the Council has received independent investment advice. We have set our high credit quality criteria as A-, however we do have allowance in our capital strategy to invest in counterparties below this.

The capital and investment strategy also imposes a maximum sum the Council can invest with a financial institution or group other than the UK government. This is £10 million maximum, of which only £6 million may be on unsecured investments. The Council sets limits on investments in certain sectors. A maximum sum for long-term investments (greater than a year) is also set.

All investments in 2023-24 (2022-23) were in line with the Council's approved capital strategy.

The Council's maximum exposure to credit risk in relation to its investments in banks and building societies 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 non-recovery applies to all of the Council's deposits, but there was no evidence at the balance sheet date that this was likely to materialise.

The credit quality of the Council's long-time investments is enhanced by collateral held. This is entirely in the form of covered bonds collateralised by residential mortgages. This collateral significantly reduces the likelihood of the Council suffering a loss on these investments.

The table below summarises the credit risk exposures of the Council's investment portfolio by credit rating:

Investment type	Credit Rating	Long Term		Short term	
		31-Mar-23 £'000	31-Mar-24 £'000	31-Mar-23 £'000	31-Mar-24 £'000
Covered Bonds	AAA	9,550	8,300	1,850	3,750
Deposits fixed	A-			10,000	
Local authorities	A+				10,000
Notice Account	A			3,000	3,000
Housing associations	A1		10,000		
Housing associations	A3				
Bonds held in custody	A-		0		0
Local authorities	A+				
Guildford Holdings	n/a	10,119	10,119		
Surrey Save Shares	n/a	100	100		
B4SH	n/a	56			
Money Market Funds	AAA		0		12,550
Call Accounts	AA-		0		0
Investment Funds	n/a	15,339		13,390	
Total Investments		35,164	28,519	28,240	29,300

Credit Risk: Trade Receivables

The Council does not generally allow credit for customers. The past due amount can be analysed by age as follows:

1 March 2023	31 March 2024
£'000	£'000
12,079 less than 3 months	2,401
373 Three months to one year	869
3,381 More than one year	2,447
15,833 Total	5,717

The Council's credit risk on lease receivables is mitigated by its legal ownership of the assets leased, which can be repossessed if the debtor defaults on the lease contract. Loss allowances for receivables have been calculated based on historic information. Debts are deemed to be overdue when they are at least 30 days past their due date.

Credit Risk: Loan to Subsidiary Company

No credit loss adjustment has been made on the North Downs Housing Limited loans (shown in long-term debtors):

The market valuation at 31 March 2024 of the housing stock of North Downs Housing was £30.43m.

The company is financed by through a loan (£17.413 million) and equity (£10.120million) from the Council. The loan represents 58% of the company assets, while equity represents 34% of total assets.

The company business plan always assumed it was loss making in the first 5- years, the purchase of properties has been slower than planned so it is therefore assumed the period of making a loss is now the first 8 years.

The company is 100% wholly owned and the assets revert back to the Council if the company becomes insolvent.

The RICS July 2022 UK rental market survey indicates that the rental market remains buoyant. In addition, unemployment is low locally which would indicate a steady property rental market going forward.

(<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157330/report.aspx>)

Liquidity risk

The Council has a comprehensive cash flow management system that seeks to ensure that cash is available as needed. The Council has access to borrowing facilities via the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) and other local authorities and at higher rates from banks and building societies and other financial institutions. There is no perceived risk that the Council will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments.

The Council is exposed to the risk that it will need to refinance a significant proportion of its borrowing at the time of unfavourable interest rates. The Council's strategy is to plan carefully when new loans are taken out and making early repayments where financially advantageous. The risk is also managed by maintaining a spread of fixed rate loans ensuring loans mature at different times.

The Council would only borrow in advance of need where there is a clear business case for doing so.

The maturity analysis of the principal sums borrowed is as follows:

31-Mar-23 PWLB	31-Mar-24
£'000	£'000
Short Term Borrowing	
11,659 Less than one year	20,009
Long Term Borrowing	
10,000 Between one and two years	10,003
20,000 Between two and five years	100,235
62,000 Maturing in five to ten years	24,986
35,000 Maturing in more than 10 but not over 15	25,009
32,435 Maturing in more than 15 but not over 20	32,447
10,800 Maturing in more than 45 years	10,806
181,894 Total	203,486
31-Mar-23 Other	31-Mar-24
£'000	£'000
Short Term Borrowing	
115,575 Less than one year	52,053

All trade and other payables are due to be paid in less than one year.

Market risk: Interest rate risk

The Council is exposed to risks arising from movements in interest rates on its borrowing and investments. Movement in interest rates have a complex impact on the Council. For instance, a rise in interest rates would have the following effects:

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

Investments measured at amortised cost and loans borrowed are not carried at fair value, so changes in their fair value will have no impact on the CIES.

Changes in interest payable and receivable on variable rate borrowings and investments will be posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services. Movements in fair value of fixed rate investments measured at fair value will be reflected in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure or the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services as appropriate.

The Capital and Investment Strategy aims to mitigate these risks by setting upper limits for fixed and variable interest rate exposures.

If interest rates had been 1% higher (all other variables being constant) the financial effect across the whole portfolio would be an increase in interest received of approximately £0.4million, and an increase in interest payable on loans of approximately £0.9 million.

Market Risks: Price Risk

The market prices of the Council's fixed rate bond investments and its units in pooled bond funds are governed by prevailing interest rates and the market risk associated with these instruments is managed alongside interest rate risk.

The Council's investment in a pooled property fund is subject to the risk of falling commercial property prices. We limit our exposure to pooled property funds to help mitigate this risk.

The Council's investment in a pooled equity fund is subject to the risk of falling share prices.

The gain or loss on pooled funds are now classified as Fair Value through Profit and Loss, and charged to the FIIE line in the CIES, so all movements will have an impact in the year the movement incurred. The Government, however, has implemented a mandatory 5-year statutory override, in that the movement in year can be transferred out to a Financial Instrument Reserve via the MIRS.

26. 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 from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases.

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

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

Council as Lessee

Finance leases

PP&E held under finance leases is recognised on the Balance Sheet at the date of inception of the lease at fair value

PP&E recognised under a finance lease is accounted for using the policies applied generally to such assets, subject to depreciation being charged over the lease term if this is shorter than the asset's estimated useful life.

The Council is not required to raise council tax to cover depreciation or revaluation and impairment losses arising on leased assets. Instead, a prudent annual provision is made from revenue towards the deemed capital investment in accordance with statutory requirements. Depreciation and impairment losses are therefore replaced by revenue provision in the GF Balance, by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the MIRS for the difference between the two.

The Council has acquired a number of assets under finance leases over time. They are included on the Balance Sheet at the following net amounts:

Table to follow

There are no liabilities recorded on the balance sheet because the Council paid premiums at the start of these leases and there are no more payments due.

Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the CIES as an expense to the services benefitting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment. Charges are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease; even if this does not match the pattern of payments (for example there is a rent-free period at the commencement of the lease).

Council as Lessor

Finance leases

Where the Council grants a finance lease for an item of PP&E, 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 PP&E or Assets Held for Sale) is written off to the CIES, and any premium received is credited to the CIES, as part of the gain or loss on disposal.

The accounting treatment is the same as for PP&E disposals described in note 12.

The Council has leased out a number of investment properties on finance leases with remaining lease terms of 60 years or more. In each case a premium was paid to the Council by the lessee in order to enter into the lease and there are no future minimum lease payments due.

Operating leases

Where the Council grants an operating lease for an item of PP&E or an investment property, the asset is retained in the Balance Sheet. Rental income is credited to the CIES on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (for example, there is a premium paid at the commencement of the lease).

The Council leases out operational property under operating leases primarily for the provision of social housing and community services such as sports facilities. It also leases out investment property under operating leases.

From 1 April 2024, the council will adopt IFRS 16 Leases to replace the leases reporting above under IAS 17. For the implementation of IFRS 16, one qualifying lease has been identified with an annual value of £70,504.33. Adoption of IFRS 16 and a departure from IAS 17 would bring this contract onto the balance sheet with a corresponding lease liability. Within the CIES (Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement), the annual payment is replaced with a depreciation expense, MRP and an Interest Expense. The following table shows the impact of the changes in the 2023/24 Accounts

IAS 17**IFRS 16 Adoption**

<u>CIES</u>	
12,859 Operating Leases	0
Depreciation	2
Reversal of Depreciation	(2)
MRP	2
Interest	9
12,859 Total Impact on General Fund Balance	11
<u>Balance Sheet as at 1 April 2024</u>	
Property Plant & Equipment	318
Short Term Liability	(318)
Long Term Liability	
0 Total Impact on Balance Sheet	0

Since the adoption of IFRS 16 bring borrowing onto the Balance Sheet for any unfunded Capital Expenditure, Treasury Mangement Strategy for 2024/25 and future years shall be adjusted where applicable. Given only one asset was indentified to meet this criteria, this will not have a material impact on the council's CFR, MRP or the Authorised Limit and Operational Limit for Debt.

27. Post Balance Sheet Event

There are no post balance sheet events of a material nature that require disclosure.

28. Contingent Liabilities

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

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

29. Contingent Assets

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

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

The council had no contingent assets.

30. North Downs Housing Ltd

In the year ended 31 March 2024, North Downs Housing Ltd had purchased no additional properties in the financial year. At the end of the financial year NDH owned 91 properties, compared with the original business plan of 100 properties. The Council has invested £27.5 million (2022-23: £25.3 million) in the company through a mix of equity and loan finance.

The net loss for the year 2023-24 was £146,184 (2022-23 net loss £528,164). The company had cash at bank of £1,407k at 31.03.24 (£348k at 31.03.23).

31 Critical Judgements In Applying Accounting Policies

In applying the accounting policies, the Council has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events.

Although there is a degree of uncertainty about future levels of funding for local government the Council has determined that this uncertainty does not indicate that the assets of the Council might be impaired. The factors taken into account in concluding that the Council continues to be a going concern include our level of reserves, level of committed funding, budget and cash for the coming years, and the lack of proposed local government reorganisation.

32. Assumptions Made About The Future And Other Major Sources Of Estimation Uncertainty

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Council about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates. The items in the Council's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2024 for which there is a risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if Actual Results Differ from Assumptions
Business Rates	<p>Since the introduction of the Business Rates Retention Scheme effective from 1 April 2013, local authorities are liable for successful appeals against business rates charged to businesses in 2022-23 and earlier years, in their proportionate share.</p> <p>A provision of £9.55 million, of which the Council's share is £3.9 million, has been recognised for the best estimate of the amount that businesses have been overcharged up to 31 March 2023. The provision has been calculated using the Valuation Office ratings list of appeals and the analysis of successful appeals to date.</p>	<p>If the level of successful appeals varies by 1%, it would increase or decrease the appeals provision by £99,500, which in turn would increase or decrease the deficit on the Collection Fund by the same amount. The Council's share of the increase or decrease would be £39,800, which would increase or decrease the surplus on provision of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.</p>
Property, Plant and Equipment (PP&E) and Investment property	<p>PPE and investment property are included in the balance sheet at fair value of £913 million and £180 million respectively. Chartered surveyors are engaged to provide expert advice in the assumptions to be applied when carrying out the valuations.</p> <p>Individual items of PP&E are depreciated over estimated useful lives that are partly dependent upon assumptions about the level of repairs and maintenance that will take place.</p> <p>If the Council were not able to sustain its level of spending on the repair and maintenance of its assets in the long term the estimated useful life assigned to individual assets would need to be reduced.</p>	<p>If the valuations were changed by 1%, it would increase or decrease the value of net assets on the balance sheet by around £9.1 million.</p> <p>If the useful life of assets is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying amount of the assets falls.</p> <p>Depreciation costs do not affect the Council's overall financial position as they form part of the adjustment between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations.</p>

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if Actual Results Differ from Assumptions
Pensions Liability	<p>Estimation of the net asset £1.3m (£21m liability) depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. A firm of consulting actuaries is engaged to provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.</p>	<p>The effects on the net pension liability of changes in individual assumptions can be measured. For instance, a 0.1% decrease in the real discount rate assumption would result in an increase in the pension liability of £4.4 million. A 0.1% increase in the salary increase rate would result in an increase in the pension liability of £0.4 million and a 0.1% increase in the Pensions increase rate would result in an increase in the pension liability of £4.061 million.</p>
Debtors	<p>At 31 March 2024, the Council was owed approximately £20 million in long term debtors (greater than 12 months) and £15 million in short term debtors (due in less than 12 months).</p> <p>A review of significant balances suggested that an allowance for doubtful debts of £0.3 million was appropriate.</p>	<p>If collection rates for trade debtors were to deteriorate, a 50% increase in the amount of doubtful debts would require an additional £0.7 million to set aside as an allowance.</p>

In relation to the valuation of the Council's property assets on the balance sheet property markets are mostly functioning again, where there is a quantum of market evidence, but the market is still settling so certain assets in the portfolio are, therefore, are subject to material valuation uncertainty.

The value of PP&E on the Balance Sheet includes the value of certain land and buildings that were not formally revalued during the year under the Council's rolling programme of revaluations. The Council uses critical judgement to determine by how much the value of other land and buildings within PP&E on the Balance Sheet would have to be understated or overstated to mislead a user of the accounts and therefore to require these assets to be formally revalued.

Critical judgement has been used in identifying how assets are classified on the balance sheet. In particular, some assets that we hold to earn rental income are also held for economic development and regeneration purposes. However, as they are not used in the direct delivery of services they have been classified as investment property.

Also, some assets that are held for their historical interest are classified as PP&E rather than heritage assets because they are also used to provide a particular service.

The Weyside Urban Village project is a complex project with many elements and partners. The Council has an agreement with Thames Water and are making payments to them under the development agreement in relation to the moving of the Sewerage Treatment Works. These payments will continue until May 2026.

Critical judgement is also used in classifying our leases as either operating or finance leases.

The Council has determined that a materiality level of £1 million is appropriate for inclusion of accounting policies and disclosure notes in the Statement of Accounts.

33. Accounting Standards that have been issued but not yet adopted

The Council is required to disclose information relating to the impact of an accounting change required by a new standard that has been issued, but not yet adopted, in the 2023/2024 financial statements.

For the 2023/2024 accounts the accounting changes to disclose are in relation to:

- The most significant forthcoming standard which applies for this Council is IFRS 16 ("Leases"). IFRS16 was issued in January 2016 and became effective for the private sector on 1st January 2019. It removes the existing classifications of operating and finance leases for lessees, requiring a lessee to recognise assets and liabilities for all leases with a term of more than 12 months (unless the underlying asset is of low value) on their Balance Sheet. After a series of delays (including the impact of the pandemic), the CIPFA/LASAAC proposal to implement IFRS 16 in local government with effect from 1st April 2024 has been approved by the FRAB and is now to be incorporated into the 2024/25 Code. Guildford Council has prepared the impact statement and reviewing leasing activity in preparation for full disclosure and technical compliance within the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Income And Expenditure Statement

2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Expenditure	
8,722	9,242
5,816	6,552
- Rents, Rates, Taxes & Other Charges	0
6,426	6,782
15	9
(649)	5,221
1,131	1,804
165	152
21,626	29,762
Income	
(31,141)	(32,541)
(1,030)	(1,165)
(1,093)	(1,536)
(80)	(185)
(33,344)	(35,427)
(11,718)	(5,665)
111	90
(11,607)	(5,575)

HRA share of operating income & expenditure included in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement

(272)	839
4,799	269
(1,107)	(2,714)
- Movement in the provision of bad debts	0
179	(891)
(8,008)	(8,072)

The HRA Income and Expenditure Statement shows the income and expenditure related to providing council dwellings in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. However, the Council is required to charge rent to cover expenditure in accordance with the legislative framework rather than on an accounting basis. The increase or decrease in the year of the HRA balance on the legislative basis is shown in the Movement on the HRA Statement.

Movement On The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Statement

The Movement on the HRA Statement shows the increase or decrease in the HRA balance. This forms the basis on which rent levels are set. The statement includes an adjustment line which shows the difference between the surplus (or deficit) shown in the HRA Income and Expenditure Statement (the accounting basis) and the surplus (or deficit) for funding purposes (the legislative basis).

2022/23		2023/24
£'000		£'000
2,500	Balance at 1 April	2,500
	<u>Movement in reserves during Year</u>	
(8,008)	Surplus/ (deficit) on provision of services	(8,072)
	- Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure	
(8,008)	Total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure	(8,072)
13,914	Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations (note 6 main accounts)	13,702
(5,906)	Net Increase/ Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	5,630
5,906	Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves	(5,630)
0	Increase/Decrease in Year	0
2,500	Balance at 31 March carried forward	2,500

Notes To The Housing Revenue Account

1. Gross Rent Income

This is the total rent income due for the year after allowance is made for voids etc. During the year, voids amounted to £517k or 1.5% of gross rent income from dwellings (£33m or 1.5% for 2023-24). Average rents were £127.15 per week in 2023-24, a increase of £6.35 over the previous year.

2. Rent Arrears

At 31 March 2024, rent arrears were £2,137,778 of gross rent income. The comparable figures for 2022-23 were £2,298,409 of gross rent income.

The provision for bad debts as at 31 March 2024 as £982,499. The comparable figure for 2022-23 was £833,509.

Amounts written off in the year amounted to £14,009 (£32,996 in 2022-23)

3. Housing Stock

The Council was responsible for managing on average 5,236 dwellings in 2022-23, analysed below:

31-Mar-23		31-Mar-24
Total Stock	Analysis by Type of Dwelling Restated	Total Stock
2,552	Houses	2,556
2,226	Flats and Maisonettes	2,222
317	Bungalows	317
210	Other	141
5,305	Total Dwellings	5,236

The changes in stock during the year can be summarised as follows

5,289	Stock as at 1 April	5,305
22	Add: New Build, Acquisitions, Conversions etc.	12
(20)	Deduct: Sales	(16)
14	Other adjustments	(65)
5,305	Stock as at 31 March	5,236

4. Stock Valuation – Balance Sheet Basis

The basis for the balance sheet valuation of the Council's housing stock is Existing Use Value – Social Housing (EUV – SH) as defined by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Appraisal and Valuation Manual. The EUV – SH is broadly based on the vacant possession value of the properties, adjusted to reflect the occupation by a secure tenant. The valuation was carried out by Wilks Head and Eve, Chartered Surveyors. The date of the valuation was as at 31 January 2023.

The balance sheet value increases where new dwellings and properties are built or acquired and when capital works that improve or significantly enhance the value of the assets are carried out. The balance sheet value reduces when assets are sold and are written out of the accounts. Depreciation is charged on assets and this also reduced the balance sheet valuation.

Valuations for HRA assets are:

31-Mar-23		31-Mar-24
£'000		£'000
603,363	Council Dwellings (HRA)	589,040
5,509	Other Land & Buildings	4,160
31	Vehicle, Plant & Equipment	0
116	Infrastructure	17
139	Community Asset	148
10,776	Assets Under Construction	0
619,934	Total	593,365

Other operational land and buildings are valued at open market value in existing use.

5. Stock Valuation – Vacant Possession Value

Valuation of dwelling stock at Vacant Possession Value within the HRA at March 2023 was £x billion. The vacant possession value and the balance sheet value of dwellings within the HRA show the economic cost to Government of providing council housing at less than open market rent.

6. Major Repairs Reserve (MRR)

The MRR is a reserve established by the Government as part of the resources accounting system in the HRA. Movements in the MRR during the year were:

2022/23	2023/24
£'000	£'000
9,587 Balance brought forward at 1 April	6,426
6,427 Depreciation charge for the year	6,782
(9,588) Financing of capital expenditure for the year	(13,208)
6,426 Balance Carried forward	0

7. Capital Expenditure and Financing

The table below shows the total amount of capital expenditure incurred in the year together with the resources that have been used to finance it. Where capital expenditure has not been financed in the year, it results in an increase in the Capital Financing Requirement.

2022/23	2023/24
Capital Financing	Capital Financing
£'000	£'000
199,205 Opening Capital Financing Requirement	199,205
HRA Capital Expenditure	
24,467 Dwelling Stock	33,096
1,766 Assets Under Construction	487
4 Intangible Assets	1
118 Revenue Expenditure Funded by Capital under Statute	207
26,355 Total	33,791
Financed by:	
(400) Capital Receipts	(1,222)
- Government Grants & Other Contributions	(891)
(9,588) Major Repairs Reserve	(13,209)
(13,948) Revenue Contributions	(15,768)
(2,419) Retained Right To Buy Receipts Reserve	-
(26,355) Total	(31,090)
199,205 Closing Capital Financing Requirement	201,906

Total capital receipts from disposals of land, houses and other property within the HRA during the financial year amounted to £4.1 million, before making any payments to Government on sales of houses under Right to Buy.

8. Depreciation

The charges for depreciation for the houses and other property within the HRA for the year are as follows:

2022/23		2023/24
£'000		£'000
6,321	Council dwellings	6,600
112	Other land & buildings	101
7	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	3
11	Infrastructure	78
6,451	Total	6,782

The depreciation amount has been calculated by the straight-line method in line with the Council's policies for PP&E (see note 12).

9. Contributions to/from the Pensions Reserve

The HRA share of the contributions to the Pensions reserve is as follows:

2022/23		2023/24
£'000		£'000
398	Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited to the HRA	64
	Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	
398	Contribution to the Pensions Reserve	64

Collection Fund

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 the Government of Council Tax and Business Rates.

2022-23 £000	2022-23 £000		2023-24 £000	2023-24 £000
Council Tax	Business Rates		Council Tax	Business Rates
		INCOME		
	75,909	Income from Business Ratepayers - Note 2		75,602
127,555		Council Taxes	133,669	
47		Transfer for Transitional Relief, S13A(1)(C) Reliefs		3,069
		Council Tax Discounts Funded from Billing Authority		
		General Fund	175	
		Distribution of prior year estimated deficit:		
	10,337	Central Government		
0	2,067	Surrey County Council	1,023	
0		Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner	185	
0	8,270	Guildford Borough Council	140	
127,602	96,583	Total Income	135,192	78,671
		EXPENDITURE		
		Precepts		
94,877		Surrey County Council	99,185	
17,242		Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner	18,390	
12,928		Guildford Borough Council	13,567	
		Payment of Business Rates shares:		
	34,385	Central Government		39,529
	6,877	Surrey County Council		7,906
	27,508	Guildford Borough Council		31,623
	1,386	Transitional Protection payments		
	220	Charge to General Fund for collecting NDR		217
(887)		Provision for council tax bad debts	508	
	400	Provision for business rates bad debts		52
	2,768	Provision for business rates appeals		(3,446)
		Distribution of prior year estimated surplus:		
		Central Government		2,871
904		Surrey County Council		574
164		Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner		
125		Guildford Borough Council		2,297
125,353	73,544	Total Expenditure	131,650	81,623
		COLLECTION FUND BALANCE		
661	24,561	Balance at the beginning of the year	(1,588)	1,522
(2,249)	(23,039)	(Surplus)/deficit for the year	(3,542)	2,952
(1,588)	1,522	Balance at the end of the year ((Surplus) / Deficit	(5,130)	4,474

Notes To The Collection Fund

1. General

These accounts represent the transactions of the Collection Fund, which is a statutory fund separate from the main accounts of the Council. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis, and they are consolidated with the other accounts of the Council on an agency basis.

The overall balance on Fund as at 31 March 2024 was a surplus of £0.6 million, made up of a Council Tax surplus of £5.1 million and a deficit in relation to business rates of £4.5 million.

The year-end Collection Fund surplus in relation to council tax is distributed between billing (the Council) and precepting (Surrey County Council and Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner) authorities on the basis of estimates of the year-end balance made on 15 January.

The year-end Collection Fund deficit in relation to business rates is distributed between billing and precepting (central government and Surrey County Council) authorities on the basis of year-end estimates made on 31 January.

2. Income from Business Rates

Income from Business Rates The Council collects business rates for its area. These rates are based on local rateable values £220,077,143 as at 31 March 2024 multiplied by a uniform rate (51.2p standard and 49.9p small business rate in 2023-24. Local authorities retain a proportion of the total collectable rates due. For Guildford in 2023-24, this share is 40%. The remainder in 2023-24 is retained by Surrey County Council (10%), and the Government 50%

3. Income from Council Tax

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

	line 29 on CTB		line 31 on CTB
Band	Estimated number of taxable properties after effect of discounts	Ratio	Band D equivalent dwellings
Dis A	1.80	5/9	1.00
A	796.60	6/9	531.10
B	2,209.40	7/9	1,718.40
C	9,523.70	8/9	8,465.50
D	14,174.30	9/9	14,174.30
E	9,324.70	11/9	11,396.90
F	6,335.80	13/9	9,151.70
G	7,091.80	15/9	11,819.70
H	1,723.20	18/9	3,446.50
	51,181.30		60,705.10

Plus adjustment for MoD properties and collection rates offset by anticipated changes during the year for successful appeals against valuation banding, new properties, demolitions, disabled person's relief, exempt properties and the Local Council Tax Scheme

399.50

61,104.60

4. Collection Fund Provisions

The movement of the council tax bad debt provision during the year was as follows:

2022-23	2023-24
£'000	£'000
4,388 Balance at 1 April	3,439
(887) Transfer (to) / from revenue	509
(62) (Write offs)/write backs	(1)
<u>3,439</u> Balance at 31 March	<u>3,947</u>

The movement on the business rates bad debt provision was as follows:

2022-23	2023-24
£'000	£'000
5,100 Balance at 1 April	5,500
400 Transfer from revenue	52
0 Write offs	0
<u>5,500</u> Balance at 31 March	<u>5,552</u>

The movement on the business rates appeals provision was as follows:

2022-23	2022-23
£'000	£'000
7,183 Balance at 1 April	9,951
10,812 Transfer from revenue	2,748
(8,044) RV list amendments	(6,194)
<u>9,951</u> Balance at 31 March	<u>6,505</u>

Group Accounts and Explanatory Notes

Introduction

The CIPFA Code of Practice sets out a requirement for local authorities to prepare group accounts where the authority has interests in subsidiaries, joint ventures or associates, subject to consideration of materiality.

Guildford Borough Holdings Ltd was formed as a subsidiary company in the financial year ending 31st March 2017, as part of Guildford Borough Council strategy to diversify its income sources by commercial acquisition and rental of residential property.

The Council decided to set up a property investment company North Downs Housing Limited (“NDHL”) as the operational entity with Guildford Borough Holdings Limited (“GBCH”) as a holding company for the property company and other potential companies.

Set out below are the details of these subsidiary companies:

Name of the Subsidiary	Place of incorporation	Company Number	Proportion owned by the Council	
			2023-24	2022-23
Guildford Borough Holdings Ltd	England & Wales	10152910	100%	100%
North Downs Housing Ltd	England & Wales	10153122	100%	100%

Although these companies operate on a commercial basis, independent from Council policy, the Council finances the activities of these subsidiaries through equity investments and loans. The board of directors are appointed by the Council, and are subject to regulation and oversight from the Council's Executive Shareholder and Trustee Committee.

Because these companies are owned and controlled by the Council, Group Accounts provide an insight into the combined financial affairs of Guildford Borough Council and the group of companies it owns. While the Group Accounts are not primary statements, they provide transparency and enable comparison with other entities that have different corporate structures by showing the full extent of the Council's wider assets and liabilities.

The Group Accounts include the following:

- Group CIES - summarises the resources that have been generated and consumed in providing services and managing the Group during the year. It includes all day-to-day expenses and related income on an accruals basis.
- Group Balance Sheet - showing the value of the Groups assets and liabilities at 31 March 2024. The net assets of the Group (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Group.
- Group MIRS - shows the movement in the year on the Council's single entity usable and unusable reserves together with the Council's share of the Group reserves. – to follow.
- Group Cash Flow Statement - shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Group during the year. The statement shows how the Group generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cashflows as operating, financing and activities – to follow.

During the year 2023-24 group accounts of GBC Holdings shows a net profit of £3.12 million (2022-23 profit £0.303 million) and owned investment property of £30.436 million (£27.174 million in 2022-23). The group accounts are shown in the appendices that follow.

Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

	2023/24			2022/23		
	Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000	Expenditure £'000	Income £'000	Net £'000
Corporate & Democratic Core	40,251	(22,535)	17,716	33,923	(18,012)	15,911
Executive Management Team	56,466	(44,104)	12,362	62,486	(41,488)	20,998
Corporate & Improvement	52,074	(4,879)	47,195	25,627	(4,413)	21,214
Communities	27,790	(35,520)	(7,730)	13,827	(33,620)	(19,793)
Customer	0	0	0	2,854	0	2,854
Environment	0	0	0	0	0	0
CCHL Ltd	416	(1,229)	(813)	551	(1,087)	(536)
Cost of Services	176,997	(108,267)	68,730	139,268	(98,620)	40,648
Parish Council Precepts	2,174	0	2,174	2,029	0	2,029
Payments to the Government Housing Capital Receipts Pool	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Gains) on the disposal of assets	4,445	(4,696)	(251)	(431)	0	(431)
Livestock Market	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Operating Expenditure	6,619	(4,696)	1,923	1,598	0	1,598
Pension interest cost and expected return on pension assets	991	0	991	3,214	0	3,214
Interest receivable and similar income	0	(5,499)	(6,458)	0	(2,477)	(3,415)
Interest payable and similar expenses	5,020	(569)	5,410	5,822	0	6,760
Changes in fair value of investment properties	0	0	0	0	0	0
Impairment losses	0	0	0	0	500	500
Other investment income	166	0	166	2,035	0	2,035
Income and expenditure in relation to investment properties	269	(9,714)	(9,445)	1,743	(9,158)	(7,415)
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	6,446	(15,782)	(9,336)	12,814	(11,135)	1,679
Council Tax Income	0	(13,788)	(13,788)	0	(13,291)	(13,291)
Non Domestic Rates	0	393	393	0	846	846
Non-ringfenced government grants	0	(7,865)	(7,865)	0	(4,047)	(4,047)
Capital grants and contributions	0	(37,733)	(37,733)	0	(7,334)	(7,334)
Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure	0	(58,993)	(58,993)	0	(23,826)	(23,826)
(Surplus) or Deficit on Provision of Services	190,062	(187,738)	2,324	153,680	(133,581)	20,099
Surplus on revaluation of non-current assets.			25,772			(43,466)
Actuarial (gains)/losses on pension assets/liabilities			(23,493)			(104,609)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			2,279			(148,075)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure			4,603			(127,975)

Group Balance Sheet

	31 March 2024 £'000	31 March 2023 £'000
Property, Plant and Equipment	937,916	938,016
Heritage Assets	3,765	3,765
Investment Properties	183,327	178,646
Intangible Assets	2,126	2,541
Long Term Investments	19,506	10,648
Long Term Debtors	594	1,725
LONG TERM ASSETS	1,147,234	1,135,341
<i>Assets Held for Sale</i>	553	0
Short Term Debtors	15,039	13,619
Inventories	347	385
Short Term Investments	31,166	78,904
Cash and Cash Equivalents	12,815	16,708
	<i>Cash Flow</i>	
CURRENT ASSETS	59,921	109,616
Short Term Creditors	(46,280)	(43,870)
Provisions	(12,819)	(6,866)
Short Term Borrowing	(72,062)	(127,232)
CURRENT LIABILITIES	(131,161)	(177,968)
Pension Liabilities	1,290	(20,535)
Other Long Term Liabilities		
Long Term Borrowing	(203,486)	(168,053)
LONG TERM LIABILITIES	(202,196)	(188,588)
NET ASSETS	873,797	878,401
General Fund	(6,612)	(1,926)
Earmarked Reserves	(34,930)	(32,731)
Housing Revenue Account	(2,500)	(2,500)
HRA Earmarked Reserves	(85,622)	(97,282)
Capital Receipts Reserve	(14,834)	(12,178)
Major Repairs Reserve	0	(6,427)
Capital grants and contributions	(583)	(620)
USABLE RESERVES	(145,081)	(153,664)
Revaluation Reserve	(298,587)	(331,858)
Capital Adjustment Account	(430,685)	(414,289)
Pensions Reserve	(1,290)	20,535
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	1,266	452
Accumulated Absences Account	277	286
Financial Instruments Adjustment Account	302	136
UNUSABLE RESERVES	(728,717)	(724,738)
TOTAL RESERVES	(873,797)	(878,401)

Group Movement in Reserves

	General Fund Balance	Earmarked Reserves	Housing Revenue Account	HRA Earmarked Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Major Repairs Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Subsidiary Reserves	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Group Reserves
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
2022/23											
Balance at 1 April 2022	(4,212)	(47,457)	(2,500)	(103,188)	(10,683)	(9,588)	(506)	1,037	(177,097)	(572,829)	(749,926)
Movement in Reserves in 2022/23:											
(Surplus) deficit on the provision of services (accounting basis)	27,079	0	(8,008)	0	0	0	0	528	19,599	0	19,599
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	0	0	0		0	0	0	(832)	(832)	(147,243)	(148,075)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	27,079	0	(8,008)	0	0	0	0	(303)	18,768	(147,243)	(128,475)
Adjustments between accounting and funding basis under regulation - note 3	(12,353)	0	13,914	0	(1,495)	3,161	(114)	1,553	4,666	(4,666)	0
Net increase/decrease before transfers to Earmarked reserves	14,726	0	5,906	0	(1,495)	3,161	(114)	1,250	23,434	(151,909)	(128,475)
Transfers to/from Earmarked reserves - note 11	(14,726)	14,726	(5,906)	5,906	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Increase/(Decrease) in Year	0	14,726	0	5,906	(1,495)	3,161	(114)	1,250	23,434	(151,909)	(128,475)
Balance at 31 March 2023	(4,212)	(32,731)	(2,500)	(97,282)	(12,178)	(6,427)	(620)	2,287	(153,663)	(724,738)	(878,401)
2023/24											
Balance at 1 April 2023	(4,212)	(32,731)	(2,500)	(97,282)	(12,178)	(6,427)	(620)	2,287	(153,663)	(724,738)	(878,401)
Movement in Reserves in 2023/24:											
(Surplus) deficit on the provision of services (accounting basis)	4,392		(2,213)					146	2,325		2,325
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure								(3,262)	(3,262)	5,541	2,279
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	4,392	0	(2,213)	0	0	0	0	(3,116)	(937)	5,541	4,604
Adjustments between accounting and funding basis under regulation - note 3	(10,925)		13,702		(2,656)	6,427	37	2,935	9,520	(9,520)	0
Net increase/decrease before transfers to Earmarked reserves	(6,533)	0	11,489	0	(2,656)	6,427	37	(181)	8,583	(3,979)	4,604
Transfers to/from Earmarked reserves - note 11	2,027	(2,027)	(11,489)	11,489				0	0	0	0
Increase/(Decrease) in Year	(4,506)	(2,027)	0	11,489	(2,656)	6,427	37	(181)	8,583	(3,979)	4,604
Balance at 31 March 2024	(8,718)	(34,758)	(2,500)	(85,793)	(14,834)	0	(583)	2,106	(145,080)	(728,717)	(873,797)

Group Cash Flow Statement

The Cash Flow Statement shows how the Council generates, uses and the changes in cash and cash equivalents of
2022-23 **2023-24**

£'000		£'000
	OPERATING ACTIVITIES	
(19,269)	Net surplus/(deficit) on the provision of services	938
10,866	Adjustments for non-cash movements (Note 27)	33,640
(10,817)	Adjustments for items included in the net surplus that are investing and financing activities (Note 27)	(43,275)
(19,220)	Net cash flows from Operating Activities	(8,698)
0		0
0	INVESTING ACTIVITIES	0
(48,088)	Payments for additions to long-term assets	(56,702)
(40,734)	Payments for purchase of investments	(8,858)
70	Other payments for investing activities	0
4,726	Proceeds from the disposal of long-term assets	5,588
68,392	Proceeds from disposal of investments	47,738
6,935	Other receipts from investing activities	37,733
(8,699)	Net cash flows from investing activities	25,499
0		0
0	FINANCING ACTIVITIES	0
10,000	Cash receipts of short and long-term borrowing	33,455
15,948	Other receipts from financing activities	0
0	Other payments from financing activities	(959)
(18,013)	Repayments of short and long-term borrowing	(53,192)
7,935	Net cash flows from financing activities	(20,696)
0		0
(19,984)	Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(3,895)
36,694	Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	16,710
16,710	Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period (Note 19)	12,815

Cash flows are classified as operating, investing and financing activities.

the amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources that are intended cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of The cash flow statement shows cash and cash equivalents net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand

Glossary

Accrual – the recording of income and expenditure when it becomes due rather than when the cash is paid or received.

Accruals basis – accounting for income or expenditure when it becomes due rather than when the cash is paid out or received.

Appropriations – amounts transferred to or from revenue or capital reserves.

Balance Sheet – a statement which shows the value of the Council's assets and liabilities on a specific day. The final accounts show the value of the assets and liabilities as at 31 March.

Business Rates Retention Scheme – introduced by the Government in April 2013, the scheme means that each council retains some of the business rates generated in its area. The Government still controls the rateable value of the properties and the rate in the pound to be paid.

Capital commitment – a commitment to make a capital payment under a contract.

Capital expenditure – expenditure to purchase or construct a fixed asset, or expenditure adding to the value of an existing fixed asset. Expenditure that does not enhance an asset, such as repairs and maintenance expenditure, is not capital expenditure.

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) - the monies required to finance capital expenditure.

Capital Receipt – relates to the money from the sale of a fixed asset. Capital receipts can only be used to pay for new capital expenditure or to repay outstanding loans. Capital receipts cannot be used to finance revenue expenditure.

Cash Equivalents – these are short term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible into cash. They are subject to an insignificant risk of a change in value.

Cash Flow Statement – this shows the movement in cash and cash equivalents in the year.

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) – this is the professional organisation for accountants working in the public sector.

Code (The) – the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. This is the code produced by CIPFA/LASAAC that sets out how councils should show transactions in their accounts and the format of the accounts.

Collection Fund Revenue Account – this shows the transactions relating to national non-domestic rates (NNDR) and council tax. This fund shows on whose behalf Guildford Borough Council collects the amounts due and how these monies are distributed.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – this shows all the income and expenditure in the year.

Contingency – an amount of money set aside for unforeseen items of expenditure.

Depreciation – a reduction in the balance sheet value of a fixed asset due to either wearing out, consumption, or other reduction in its useful economic life, whether arising from use, passage of time or obsolescence, through technological or other changes.

Earmarked Reserve – money set aside for future use on a specific area of expenditure.

Financial Asset – a right to future economic benefits controlled by the Council.

Financial Liability – an obligation to transfer economic benefits controlled by the Council.

Financial Instrument – a contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity investment of another entity.

Financial Year – the year that the accounts relate to. The financial year starts on 1 April and ends on 31 March the following year.

General Fund (GF) – the Council's main revenue fund credited with charges, grants etc. and to which the costs of services are charged. However, separate accounts are maintained for other aspects of council activities, particularly the Collection Fund.

Heritage Assets – assets which are held and maintained principally for their contribution to knowledge and culture. These include monuments such as Guildford Castle, civic regalia at the Guildhall, the art collection at Guildford House Gallery, sculptures and artwork around the Borough and the museum collection at Guildford Museum.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – an account used to record the income and expenditure related to council housing. The Housing Revenue Account is ring-fenced from the rest of the General Fund. This is to ensure that the expenditure on managing tenancies and maintaining council houses is funded by rents charged to council tenants.

Housing Revenue Account Income and Expenditure Statement – this shows the income and expenditure relating to the provision of council housing.

Impairment – a reduction in the balance sheet value of a fixed asset.

International Accounting Standard (IAS) – these are the international accounting standards which state how balances, transactions and other events must be calculated and shown in the accounts.

International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) - these are the international financial reporting standards which state how balances, transactions and other events must be calculated and shown in the accounts.

Internal Borrowing – Internal borrowing occurs when rather than raising external borrowing to pay for capital expenditure, the Council uses cash, which would otherwise be externally invested.

Investment – a long-term investment is an investment held for use on a continuing basis in the activities of the Council for 365 days or more. A short-term investment relates to the investment of surplus funds for 364 days or fewer.

Investment Property – a property that is used to earn rental income.

LASAAC – Local Authority (Scotland) Accounts Advisory Committee.

Lease – a lease is a contract for the hire of a specified asset. The lessor owns the asset but transfers the right to use the asset to the lessee for an agreed period in return for the payment of specified rentals. A **finance lease** transfers all the risks and rewards of ownership, such as the cost of repairs and maintenance, to the lessee. All other leases are classified as **operating leases**.

Lessee – an organisation to whom a lease is granted.

Lessor – the owner of an asset who leases it to a third party

Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) - introduced by the Government in April 2013. Under the LCTSS, council tax payers who previously received a benefit payment, now receive a discounted council tax bill instead.

Long term – a term of 365 days or more.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) – the minimum amount which must be charged each year to the Council's General Fund revenue account and set aside as provision for credit liabilities. There is no MRP requirement for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Movement In Reserves Statement (MIRS) – this shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Council.

Out-turn – actual income and expenditure.

PPE – Property, Plant and Equipment i.e. tangible assets that are held for use in the production or supply of goods and services, for rental to others, or for administrative purposes, and expected to be used for at least part of the succeeding financial year.

Precept – a charge levied by a council. Precepts are levied by Guildford Borough Council, Surrey County Council, Parish Councils and the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner.

Provision – an amount, set aside in the accounts, for likely liabilities incurred but where the amounts or dates on which they will arise are uncertain.

Prudential Code – a code produced by CIPFA that Councils are required to follow when deciding upon their programme for capital expenditure.

Revenue expenditure – the day-to-day costs incurred by the Council. This is distinct from capital expenditure.

Right to Buy – the right of council tenants to buy their council houses at a discount.

S106 income – money received from planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Short term – a term of 364 days or fewer.

Straight line basis – depreciation that is charged on a straight line basis is charged in equal amounts for each year of the useful economic life of the fixed asset.

Trade payables – amounts owed to third parties when goods or services have been received but not yet paid for

Trade receivables – amounts due from third parties where goods or services have been supplied

Unapplied capital receipts – capital receipts which have not been used.

Usable reserves – those that the Council can use to finance expenditure or reduce local taxation.

Unusable reserves – these cannot be used to finance expenditure or reduce local taxation. These include reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts only become available if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences.

Vacant Possession Adjustment Factor - a vacant possession adjustment factor of 32% means that the Council values its council houses at 32% of their open market value in the Balance Sheet. The percentages used are set by central government. The vacant possession adjustment factor is used to reflect that a council owned property has a lower open market value when it is occupied by a tenant.



Guildford Borough Council
Annual Governance Statement 2023-24

Approving Body	Version	Date	Version Comment
Corporate Governance and Standards Committee	Ver 1.0 (draft)	September 2024	
Corporate Governance and Standards Committee	Ver 2.0	20 February 2025	As amended

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What is the annual governance statement?

Regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 requires that 'a relevant authority must, each financial year conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control required by regulation 3 and prepare (and approve) an Annual Governance Statement'.

Scope of Responsibility

Guildford Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that it conducts its business in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to plan 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, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs to facilitate the effective exercise of its functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.

The Council has considered the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government* (2016), including compliance with the CIPFA publication on *The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government* (2016) in the preparation of this statement together with the recently published (13th March 2024) Independent Governance Review of Guildford Borough Council by Solace in Business Ltd (SOLACE).

In July 2023 a potential fraud was identified within the HRA in relation to the Commercial in Confidence housing maintenance contracts. These contracts had been let in October 2021 and June 2023. The potential fraud related to substandard work, duplicate invoices and work not completed. This is still subject to an ongoing police investigation and therefore we are unable to estimate the final financial effect.

This statement explains how the Council has complied with the code and meets the requirements of regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to internal control and how the council plans to address and implement all the recommendations reported in the Independent Governance Review of Guildford Borough Council SOLACE report.

The purpose of the governance framework

The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, culture, and values by which the authority is directed and controlled and the activities through which it accounts to, engages with, and leads the community. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

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

The governance framework has been in place for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The Council: How it works

All Councillors meet as the Full Council around six times a year. All meetings are open to the public but occasionally some items are held in private session due to the sensitive nature of the information to be considered (exempt information, as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972). The conduct of the Council's business is defined by formal procedures and rules, which are set out in the Constitution. The Constitution also explains the roles and responsibilities of the Executive, Audit, Overview & Scrutiny and Officer functions.

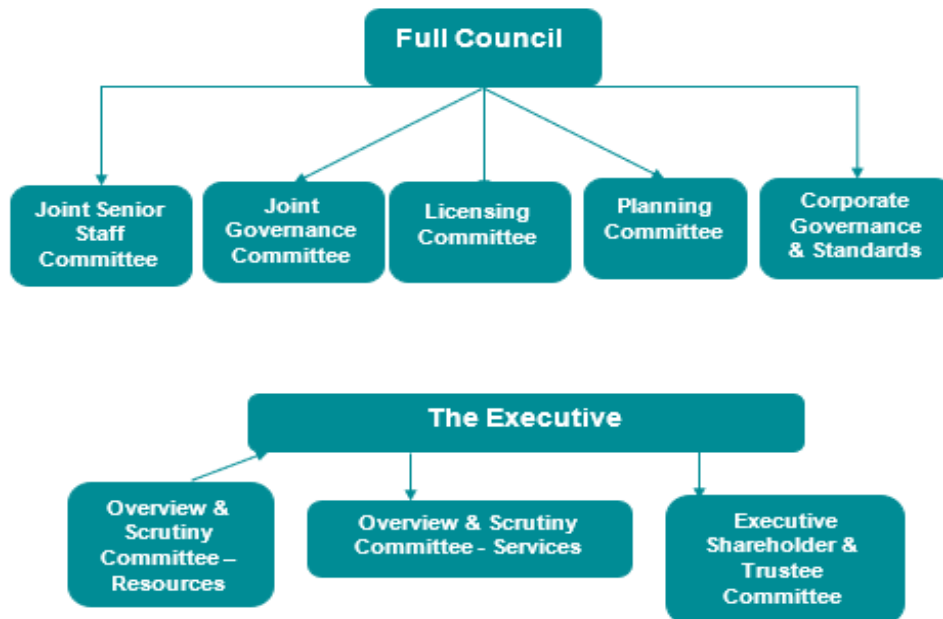
The 'Scheme of Delegation to Officers' sets out the basis on which Officers may take decisions under delegated authority. The Council also follows codes of Financial Management and Procurement and maintains codes of conduct for Councillors and Officers.

The Chief Executive is the Council's Head of Paid Service and is responsible for how the Council operates. The Chief Executive is assisted by the Corporate Leadership Board, which includes the four Strategic Directors. The Council is required to appoint a Monitoring Officer whose role includes ensuring that decision making is lawful and fair and a Section 151 Officer who is responsible for the Council's financial management.

The Council and its decisions are open and accessible. All reports requiring a decision are considered by appropriately qualified legal and finance staff before being considered by relevant decision-making forums.

In meeting the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 the Council has also published on its website a wide range of open data and information.

Councillor Decision-Making



- Licensing – considers issues relating to taxis, entertainment, alcohol, food premises and miscellaneous licensing functions.
- Planning – makes decisions on development control issues, including applications for planning permission.
- Corporate Governance & Standards – independent committee responsible for audit, risk and governance arrangements, ethical standards, and the Constitution.
- All non-Executive Committees – helps develop and review policy and holds the Executive to account publicly by calling-in and scrutinising decisions made by the Executive.
- Executive - appointed by the Leader, responsible for proposing new policy, putting the budget to the Council and implementing and delivering the agreed policy framework and budget. The Executive also has responsibility for executive functions and the council's shareholder functions.
- Council - 48 elected Councillors, covering 21 wards. Appoints the Overview & Scrutiny and other committees. Approves the policy framework and budget.

Governance Principles

The Council is a complex organisation with an appropriately comprehensive governance framework that works in a dynamic environment and keeps its processes under constant review. A description of how the Council puts the principles of good governance, set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE framework into practice is set out in the following table along with recent achievements, developments, and areas for improvement.

- Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
- Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
- Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
- Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
- Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it
- Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management
- Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Changes in governance this year

A Corporate Governance Review was commissioned in early 2024 and undertaken by SOLACE.

The report from the review was published in May 2024 and concluded that the Council was at serious risk of failing in its statutory duty to deliver best value and their recommendations were designed to assist the Council to avoid such a failure.

A comprehensive corporate improvement plan has been put in place to address the issues raised.

The key elements of the plan are:

- Establishing clear strategic direction and values for the Council, providing a basis for performance management and continuous improvement.

- Ensuring we provide the best value for money by embedding effective finance practices with sufficient capacity, and alignment between the organisation's priorities and its use of resources, including procurement and contract management.
- Embedding a public service culture, outward-facing, innovative, building partnerships, listening to and working with our communities and businesses to deliver effective services that are value for money.
- Implementing effective governance across the organisation, so decisions are made at the right level, with clear accountabilities and responsibilities.
- Decision-making will be open and transparent, supported by evidence, and a committee system that provides constructive challenge.
- Ensuring effective service delivery, focused on achieving the right outcomes for residents and businesses, and supported by an effective performance reporting, risk-management, monitoring and audit regime.
- To ensure that housing services are effective, value for money, and recognise the vital importance of providing a safe and secure home.

Some governance improvements, such as a strengthening of the joint legal and governance function will have a beneficial impact.

To improve our governance, the SOLACE report recommended:

- Review the way the Council and the Executive operates (including individual Members) to ensure its agendas, reports, minutes and decision making reflects its role appropriately
- Review the way the Overview and Scrutiny Committee operates and plans its work and ensure it provides more effective oversight and constructive challenge which contributes to the Council's priorities and the improvement agenda,
- Review the terms of reference and title of the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee to ensure that the audit function is not marginalised or seen to be so
- Consideration should be given to the formation of a separate Audit Committee.
- the Council commissions and supports a development programme for Councillors, particularly for members in leading roles (Executive, Chairs and Vice Chairs of Committees and Group Leaders).
- that the corporate leadership arrangements are reviewed including the ways in which the Corporate Leadership Board works together and makes decisions, the range and roles of the various corporate management forums and the role of Strategic Directors,
- A performance management system is put in place across the authority for measuring the achievement of priorities, the delivery of services and management of budgets across the authority's services,
- The current HR policies and processes are reviewed and confirmed.
- That to enable decision-makers to be held to account effectively, the Council ensures that its schemes of delegation and decision-making protocols are reviewed regularly and that everyone concerned understands and follows them.

Investment will be required to improve governance across the Council and to strengthen both the finance and legal functions as part of the Improvement Plan. These will be built into our Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Principles of Good Governance	Arrangements the council has for delivering good governance	Recent Achievements	Planned improvements	Shortcomings in governance and remedial actions
Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law	<p>Constitution: sets out the how the Council operates; the roles and responsibilities of members, officers and the scrutiny and review functions; how decisions are made; and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The Constitution is a live document that is subject to continuous review.</p>	<p>Constitution review – a review is underway to ensure its ongoing robustness, underpinned by a programme of training and regular monitoring.</p> <p>Councillors received a briefing note on Best Value duty in June 2024.</p>	<p>Constitution review – a review is underway to ensure its ongoing robustness, particularly as the council continues to collaborate with Waverley Borough Council. Examples <u>include</u>: Review terms of reference of all Committees, Review matters reserved to full Council and local choice functions, and review operation of the Executive.</p>	<p>Shortcomings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clarity in decision-making processes due to inconsistent adherence to the Constitution. • Limited training on ethical governance and standards for members and officers. • Fragmentation in the roles of the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer before 2024 changes. <p>Remedial Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement comprehensive training for members and officers on ethical standards and the Constitution. • Regular review and dissemination of the updated Constitution to ensure consistency in decision-making. • Reinforce the roles of the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer with clearer terms of reference and direct reporting lines.
	<p>Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Monitoring Officer is a statutory appointment who is responsible for ensuring, among other things, that the Council, its officers, and its elected members, maintain the highest standards of conduct in all they do. • Whilst all Council Members and Officers have a general financial responsibility, s151 of the Local Government Act 1972 specifies that one Officer in particular must be responsible for the financial administration of the organisation and that this Officer must be CCAB qualified. 	<p>The Section 151 and Monitoring Officers report directly to the Chief Executive, a change in 2024.</p> <p>The Statutory Officers meet regularly with appropriate terms of reference, agendas and minutes.</p>		
	<p>Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption Our policy encourages staff and others to report any cases of suspected wrongdoing or misconduct, illegal acts,</p>	<p>An updated Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy was considered by the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee on 11 April</p>		

Principles of Good Governance	Arrangements the council has for delivering good governance	Recent Achievements	Planned improvements	Shortcomings in governance and remedial actions
	<p>or failure to act within the council, as part of its commitment to act with integrity and openness in the best interest of its residents and communities.</p>	<p>2024 and approved by the Executive at its meeting on 16 May 2024, alongside Money Laundering Policy Anti Bribery Policy, Counter Fraud Policy and Fraud Prosecution Policy. Key officers from Finance, Housing and Governance have recently attended fraud prevention and awareness training and are actively using the insight gained to improve the internal fraud control environment.</p>		
	<p>Whistleblowing: The Council is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of openness and accountability in all of its practices. The Council's Whistleblowing policy aims to encourage and enable anyone to raise issues of concern about suspected improper conduct in the way the council carries out its business. It aims to give staff, councillors and others, the confidence to raise concerns by assuring them that they can do so without fear of harassment, victimisation or reprisals. It also confirms the council's commitment to investigate and rectify any malpractice reported to us swiftly and thoroughly. The Policy is kept under review by the Monitoring Officer.</p>	<p>Whistleblowing Policy was adopted by the Executive at its meeting on 25 January 2024, with further updates by the Monitoring Officer presented to Corporate Governance & Standards Committee on 11 April 2024. An annual report on whistleblowing for 2023/24 was reported to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee on 6 June 2024.</p>		

Principles of Good Governance	Arrangements the council has for delivering good governance	Recent Achievements	Planned improvements	Shortcomings in governance and remedial actions
	<p>Improvement Plan: Following a review, we have created a comprehensive improvement plan which sets out the steps we will take to stabilise our operations, governance and culture. Our journey to improvement - Guildford Borough Council</p>	<p>Appointment of an Independent Assurance Panel who will provide independent advice, challenge and expertise as we drive forward the delivery of our Improvement Plan.</p>	<p>Many actions as part of the Improvement Plan Our journey to improvement - Guildford Borough Council</p>	
	<p>Codes of conduct: Councillors and Officers must comply with their respective codes of conduct. Councillors must declare any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests and gifts and hospitality on a public register. Similarly, officers must declare any financial interests, gifts or hospitality. Additionally, councillors are expected to declare any interests they may have in respect of any business on the agenda of every meeting that they attend in accordance with Council Procedure Rules.</p>	<p>Our joint protocol on councillor and officer relationships was adopted by Guildford and Waverley in July 2024, and training took place for councillors and staff across both councils.</p>	<p>Align codes of conducts and HR policies to the new Corporate Strategy</p>	

Principles of Good Governance	Arrangements the council has for delivering good governance	Recent Achievements	Planned improvements	Shortcomings in governance and remedial actions
Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement	<p>Engagement & Communication: It is recognised that people need information about what decisions are being taken locally, and how public money is being spent to hold the council to account for the services they provide.</p> <p>There are several ways people can get involved and connect with the council, many of which are listed on the council's website. Local people have the option to engage in a dialogue through: social media sites, the petition scheme, neighbourhood forums, council meetings (open to the public), and their local Councillor(s).</p> <p>The Council regularly engages with its employees to ensure they are kept informed about the council and the Borough. There are communication channels for "off-line" and online employees and a dedicated communications point of contact for staff.</p>	<p>New weekly staff briefing hosted by the Chief Executive or a Strategic Director. This has been introduced to encourage a more open, collaborative culture.</p> <p>Within housing, we have been strengthening our engagement with our Tenants Engagement Group (TEG). We had two sessions with TEG to discuss the improvement plans and to start creating the vision of TEG.</p> <p>Internal staff site on Guildford's Improvement Plan and external webpages on new corporate Strategy and Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Reinvigorated bi-weekly staff newsletter delivered by email. This focuses on issues important to colleagues.</p>	<p>As part of our new Corporate Strategy,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a communications strategy to enable us to most effectively communicate with residents and external stakeholders. • Develop a customer services strategy to ensure that the experience residents and other customers have of the council is always improving. • Develop a digital strategy to inform and guide our continuing digital transformation. • Develop a consultation and engagement strategy. • Consider the use of innovative tools and approaches for community engagement. • Carry out residents' surveys to understand the concerns and priorities of residents, as well as understanding how the council is performing. 	<p>Shortcomings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate communication channels leading to limited stakeholder engagement. • Gaps in public consultation and feedback mechanisms, resulting in a lack of trust. <p>Remedial Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a robust communications strategy to enhance transparency and public trust. • Use innovative tools for community engagement and regularly conduct resident surveys to address stakeholder concerns. • Strengthen tenant and community engagement programs, such as the Tenants Engagement Group (TEG).
	<p>Complaints There is a clear and transparent procedure for dealing with complaints. If complainants remain dissatisfied, they have the right to refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman service or the Housing Ombudsman service.</p>	<p>We have reviewed our complaints within Housing, looking at volume and common themes. We have verified that our Complaints Policy was updated to comply with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code from 1st April and the policy meets both the Housing</p>	<p>Review of how the Council resources, manages and responds to complaints, led by Communications & Customer Services.</p>	

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		<p>Ombudsman and LGSCO process. We also have all our Housing Stage 1, Stage 2 and Ombudsman complaints logged and tracked through the corporate complaints tracking software.</p>		
	<p>Partnership working The authority works in partnership with local authorities and organisations including the collaboration with Waverley Borough Council working to streamline service delivery, learn from each other and innovate.</p> <p>Transformation and Collaboration Board meets monthly to progress the partnership objectives.</p>	<p>We have now commissioned Local Partnerships to carry out an independent cost-benefit analysis on the Guildford and Waverley collaboration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration update to be presented to the Executive – Autumn 2024. • Developing combined strategies and policies with Waverley Borough Council where appropriate which will benefit the residents of the borough. • Maximise the potential that the collaboration with Waverley brings through carrying out joint procurement and service delivery where there is an economic case to do so. • Continue to work with strategic partners in the borough for the benefit of residents and businesses 	
<p>Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits</p>	<p>Our Corporate Strategy helps us state <u>our</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose which brings all Members and officers together to work as one team pursuing a shared endeavour. • priorities which give direction to the organisation and provide the basis for managing the Council's performance. 	<p>Our new Corporate Strategy was adopted at Full Council on 23 July which is the start of us setting clear strategic direction for the Council.</p>	<p>Number of strategies to be developed as outlined in our Corporate Strategy.</p>	<p>Shortcomings:</p> <p>Unclear alignment between strategic priorities and resource allocation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays in adopting key strategies to address

Principles of Good Governance	Arrangements the council has for delivering good governance	Recent Achievements	Planned improvements	Shortcomings in governance and remedial actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> values which reflect the Council's aspirations for the way it wishes to operate and provide the basis for the behaviours which all Members and officers are expected to demonstrate. <p>Resource planning and monitoring: The Council continues to operate in a climate of uncertainty created by prolonged inflation and its volatility, cost of living related increases in demand for services and the forthcoming review of the Local Government Funding system. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy is the mechanism through which the organisation seeks to address these issues and has been developed to respond to these very challenging circumstances.</p>	<p>The 2023/24 budget and MTFP underwent review during Q2/ Q3 to provide a balanced but achievable budget. Spend by services was reviewed and non-essential spend was approved by a panel. The MTFP approved in Feb 2024 was both robust and achievable. The monthly forecasting was implemented from month 4, reviewed and challenged by both officers and members and published online for residents and business to view.</p>	<p>September – workshops with budget holders about process, start of process overlaying strategy and aspirations September/October – Budget Challenge Sessions November – draft budget completed. January - Revenue and MTFs to CG&S January – Council Tax Leaflet review February 5th - Budget approved at Full council.</p>	<p>environmental and economic challenges.</p> <p>Remedial Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise and implement strategies outlined in the Corporate Strategy, including a clear resource planning framework. Align the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) with sustainable development goals. Conduct regular performance reviews to measure progress against defined outcomes.

Principles of Good Governance	Arrangements the council has for delivering good governance	Recent Achievements	Planned improvements	Shortcomings in governance and remedial actions
Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	<p>Local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions.</p> <p>We have a number of mechanisms to support the council in delivering services which is flexible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project and programme management • Risk Management • Performance Management 	<p>Commenced the budget planning process, in accordance with objectives, strategies and the medium-term financial plan.</p> <p>New procurement and contract rules in July 2024.</p>	<p>Service Plans are being developed for all areas of the Council, which will act as a focal point for ongoing internal and external performance monitoring.</p> <p>Service challenge sessions for the budget planning 25-26</p>	<p>Shortcomings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent project and program management across departments. • Limited oversight in procurement and contract management processes. <p>Remedial Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a centralised project management framework with defined roles and responsibilities. • Strengthen procurement policies, including training programs and a robust Procurement Toolkit. • Enhance oversight mechanisms for contracts to ensure accountability and risk management.
Developing capacity, including the capability of leadership and the individuals within it	Council values: Everything we do is guided by our values. They set who we are as people, what we stand for and how we act. Our council values were chosen following engagement with staff.	Corporate Values were approved in May 2025.		

Principles of Good Governance	Arrangements the council has for delivering good governance	Recent Achievements	Planned improvements	Shortcomings in governance and remedial actions
	<p>Recruitment and induction: The Council operates a robust interview and selection process to ensure that Officers are only appointed if they have the right levels of skills and experience to effectively fulfil their role. New Officers must attend an induction session, which provides information about how the organisation works. Newly elected Councillors are required to attend an induction which includes information on roles and responsibilities; political management and decision-making; financial management and processes; health and safety; information governance; and safeguarding.</p> <p>All Officers are required to complete several mandatory e-learning courses including health and safety, equalities and diversity, financial rules, and information governance.</p>	<p>Initial restructure of JLT to address governance and finance capacity and capability.</p> <p>Redesignation of the S151 officer as a Strategic Director, reporting to the Chief Executive.</p> <p>Appointment of a permanent Section 151 Officer and other strategic directors.</p>	<p>A joint People Strategy is in the process of being developed. The new strategy will recognise that our staff are our greatest asset and will articulate how we will invest in them so that they have the skills and expertise needed to deliver on our priorities as set out in our new corporate strategy. The strategy will foster, promote, and nurture a positive, high performing culture that encourages and supports staff to innovate, challenge and achieve for our residents and businesses. It will also set out specific initiatives for how the council will manage recruitment and retention challenges.</p>	<p>Shortcomings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill gaps in leadership and management positions. • Challenges in recruitment and retention, impacting organisational capacity. <p>Remedial Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a joint People Strategy to address recruitment, retention, and staff development. • Provide targeted training programs for senior leaders and committee chairs. • Establish clear career progression paths and regular staff engagement initiatives.
	<p>Staff retention and development: All Officers receive regular one to ones with their manager in order to monitor workload and performance. Opportunities are provided for identifying future training and development needs, and to track progress against objectives. The organisation encourages that everyone should have a PAM – Performance</p>	<p>We created a volunteer Improvement Champions group where staff from all levels of the organisation can input and feedback into the Council's improvement journey, with the first meeting having taken place in May 2024.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out regular staff engagement activities, including staff surveys. • Support staff career progression through training and other development opportunities. • Support staff wellbeing at work through delivering a programme of wellbeing activities. 	

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	<p>Agreement Meetings – once a year. The process should ensure that staff are <u>supported, and</u> helped to maximise performance.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the establishment and operation of staff networks 	
<p>Managing Risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</p>	<p>Risk Management: The council recognises that risk management is fundamental to effective governance and leadership and is similarly core to how the Council is managed and controlled. It is recognised that risk must be an integral part of all council activities and must be considered in all aspects of informed decision making.</p> <p>The council has an adopted risk management policy that sets out how the authority identifies, assesses, manages and monitors risks that threaten the delivery of objectives. Risk is reported to senior officers and the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee.</p> <p>Services are expected to maintain service risk registers, with risks identified during the annual service planning and budget setting process. Projects and programmes must also consider the risk implications of major projects.</p>	<p>As identified in the Solace governance review, however, it is acknowledged that improvements are required to the council's approach to risk management. While a new risk management strategy and methodology is in development (see next column), a number of interim improvements have been introduced in the 2024/25 financial year. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The introduction of a new, improved risk register template for the recording and reporting of corporate risk. The new risk register template has undergone presentational improvements to enhance the visibility of corporate risks, highlight the recent direction of travel, as well as ensuring that controls and mitigations are identified and with timescales for implementation set out. It 	<p>As noted, a new risk management strategy and methodology is being developed. The new strategy and methodology will improve the Council's strategic and operational approach to risk management, ensuring that it underpins effective governance and leadership at all levels of the council and will align with industry and sector best practice. The strategy and methodology are being developed in collaboration with Waverley Borough Council as Waverley's strategy is also due for review. The new strategy will include a risk appetite.</p> <p>In developing the new strategy, the council is working with Zurich Resilience Solutions, a leading risk management consultancy to the UK public sector. Zurich will also assist in the development of the risk appetite.</p>	<p>Shortcomings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ineffective risk management practices and outdated risk management frameworks. Financial challenges, including a need for stronger budget controls and improved reserves. <p>Remedial Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a new risk management strategy. Enhance financial oversight by replenishing reserves and adopting transparent budget planning processes. Roll out a comprehensive performance management system tied to strategic objectives.

Principles of Good Governance	Arrangements the council has for delivering good governance	Recent Achievements	Planned improvements	Shortcomings in governance and remedial actions
		<p>also defines the level to where the risk owner is aiming to manage the risk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate risks are now reviewed and reported on a quarterly basis. Engagement with the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee on proposed improvements to the council's approach to risk management. 		
	Value for Money	<p>Emphasised accountability to the public purse, and value for money, through the Corporate Values.</p> <p>Financial Recovery Plan</p>	<p>Improved contract management alongside the new procurement legislation.</p> <p>Increased training and development of all members.</p> <p>The formulation of a service plan, linked to the Corporate Plan and values.</p>	
	Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new Head of Procurement joined the council in June 2024, bringing knowledge in relation to procurement regulations and the Procurement Act 2023. An updated Officer Scheme of Delegation was approved by Full Council on 23 July 2024. The updated scheme ensures its ongoing robustness in setting 	<p>We planned out the committee timetable for the Medium-Term Financial Plan 25/26 as part of the MTFP update at Full Council on 23 July. The work has already begun as we prepare for the budget setting approval in late spring 2025. Our budget planning will match our resources to our strategic priorities as set out in our</p>	

Principles of Good Governance	Arrangements the council has for delivering good governance	Recent Achievements	Planned improvements	Shortcomings in governance and remedial actions
		<p>out the responsibilities of officers and the limits of their decision-making powers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Financial Procedural Rules and updated Contract Procedure Rules were approved by Full Council on 23 July 2024. • Replenish the Council's reserves by at least £2m by April 2025. • Our accounts were formally closed and published, within the statutory deadline. 	<p>Corporate Strategy and inform the development of an annual Delivery Plan.</p> <p>Procurement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Corporate Procurement Strategy • a training package for officers and members • Procurement Toolkit provides the tools and guides to assist officers for all levels procurement. • Reviewing the need to have a central contracts database and to understand the risk/impact criticality of each contract. 	
	<p>Performance Management: Services report on a quarterly basis against a full set of performance measures which reflect the functions and objectives of the service.</p> <p>These measures are reported to Members and considered in detail at the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.</p>	<p>A new suite of KPIs is being developed alongside a revised reporting format, aligned to the new corporate strategy.</p>	<p>Our reporting from Q1 will be aligned with the priorities articulated in the new corporate strategy. This work will remain in progress and iterative. Once this is complete, we will focus our attention on service performance reporting and ensuring we use data and evidence to inform our decision making. In this vein, consideration is being given to improving the council's and data insight capability.</p>	

Principles of Good Governance	Arrangements the council has for delivering good governance	Recent Achievements	Planned improvements	Shortcomings in governance and remedial actions
	<p>Data management: The organisation has a designated data protection officer and clear and established processes for ensuring data is handled appropriately.</p> <p>Data Protection and Information Security reports annually to the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee which includes an update on compliance with statutory requirements. The next report is due to be considered at committee on 26 September 2024.</p> <p>Data Protection training is a requirement for all staff to complete and is included in the council's induction training for new starters. Regular refresher training sessions are also offered to staff.</p> <p>ICT Users and Information Systems Security Policies are provided to new starters on their first working day as part of the induction process. They provide guidance on the proper usage of corporate IT resources.</p> <p>Information Risk Group identifies information related risk and provide advice on the effective management of all council-held information by ensuring</p>	<p>Information Assurance Officer joined the council in mid-May and will be reviewing council systems to ensure that teams and providers have appropriate security policies and procedures in place. The officer will also support services with data security issues and will provide skills and knowledge training.</p> <p>Privacy and Data Protection Policy – is in place and is due to be reviewed in 2025. It forms part of the council's Information Security Framework and is subject to review in the light of changes in the law and Information Commissioner's guidance. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of officers and is managed by the Information Governance Manager. The policy includes guidance on data breaches and the process to follow.</p>	<p>In recognition of the importance of information governance and data protection, a review of the service will be carried out to ensure it is appropriately resourced and is resilient. Any actions arising from this review will be addressed as necessary.</p> <p>The ICT user policy will undergo review to ensure it appropriately covers all data protection and information governance considerations.</p> <p>Joint Data Sharing Group (JDSG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a new, fit for purpose data sharing agreement for the sharing of data between the two authorities. • Carry out data protection impact assessments for datasets and services. • Update key policies and procedures, including privacy notices to cover the processing of data. • Introduce an IT solution to improve the functionality and compliance of data sharing between the two councils. 	

Principles of Good Governance	Arrangements the council has for delivering good governance	Recent Achievements	Planned improvements	Shortcomings in governance and remedial actions
Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability	compliance with relevant legislation and effective risk management practices.			
	<p>Transparency The Council and its decisions are open and accessible to the community, service users, partners and its staff. All reports requiring a decision are considered by appropriately qualified legal, and finance staff with expertise in the particular function area before they are progressed to the relevant committee/group.</p> <p>To meet our responsibility to consider equality in decision-making, equality impact assessments are carried out on all major council services, functions, projects and policies in order to better understand whether they impact on people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010</p>	<p>Regular councillor updates on Guildford's Improvement Plan</p> <p>Independent Assurance Panel</p>	<p>LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, an exercise where a team of local authority experts look at how we work as an organisation, is planned in 2025.</p>	<p>Shortcomings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient focus on audit functions within the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee. • Lack of effective scrutiny and challenge in committee operations. <p>Remedial Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a dedicated Audit Committee to focus on statutory audit responsibilities. • Redefine the terms of reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to enhance effectiveness. • Strengthen reporting frameworks and ensure timely and accurate data for decision-making.
	Effective Scrutiny	<p>Overview & Scrutiny Committee received training on 20 June from The Institute of Local Government Studies.</p> <p>Reviewed the effectiveness of the Council's scrutiny function and abolished the Executive Advisory Boards and existing Overview & Scrutiny Committee and established two new Overview & Scrutiny Committees</p>	<p>Consider a dedicated Committee to be responsible for the statutory audit function of the Council</p>	

Signed

Julia McShane

Councillor Julia McShane

Leader of the Council

20th February 2025

Signed

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in grey ink, which appears to be 'Pedro Wrobel'.

Pedro Wrobel

Chief Executive

20th February 2025