



Business Efficiency Board

**Wednesday, 28 September 2016 at 6.30
p.m.
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R'.

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Martha Lloyd Jones (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Joe Roberts (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor John Bradshaw	Conservative
Councillor Arthur Cole	Labour
Councillor Chris Loftus	Labour
Councillor Alan Lowe	Labour
Councillor Andrew MacManus	Labour
Councillor Tony McDermott	Labour
Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh	Labour
Councillor John Stockton	Labour
Councillor Andrea Wall	Labour

Please contact Angela Scott on 0151 511 8670 or e-mail angela.scott@halton.gov.uk for further information.

The next meeting of the Board is on Wednesday, 23 November 2016

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Part I

Item No.	Page No.
1. MINUTES	
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
3. 2015/16 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS, AUDIT FINDINGS REPORT AND LETTER OF REPRESENTATION	1 - 180

In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

REPORT TO: Business Efficiency Board

DATE: 28 September 2016

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director, Finance

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: 2015/16 Statement of Accounts, Audit Findings Report and Letter of Representation

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Council's Letter of Representation, to consider the Audit Findings Report of the External Auditor (Grant Thornton), and to approve the Council's 2015/16 Statement of Accounts.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- 1) The draft Letter of Representation in Appendix 1 be approved and any subsequent additions or amendments be approved by the Operational Director - Finance, in liaison with the Chair of the Business Efficiency Board;**
- 2) The External Auditor's draft 2015/16 Audit Findings Report in Appendix 2 be received and any subsequent additions or amendments be approved by the Operational Director - Finance, in liaison with the Chair of the Business Efficiency Board; and**
- 3) The Council's draft 2015/16 Statement of Accounts in Appendix 3 be approved and any subsequent additions or amendments be approved by the Operational Director - Finance, in liaison with the Chair of the Business Efficiency Board.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Statement of Accounts sets out the Council's financial performance for the year in terms of revenue and capital spending and presents the year-end financial position as reflected in the balance sheet.

3.2 The format of the Statement of Accounts is heavily prescribed by the Accounts and Audit Regulations and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (The Code), which makes it a very technical document and not

particularly easy to understand. Therefore the key elements are outlined below.

- 3.3 The Statement of Accounts for 2015/16 has been prepared in full compliance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and there have been relatively few changes in the format from last year.
- 3.4 The draft 2015/16 Statement of Accounts was passed to the Council's External Auditor (Grant Thornton) on 01 July 2016, since when they have undertaken their audit. Grant Thornton will attend the meeting to present the report of their findings, the Audit Findings report, as shown in Appendix 2.
- 3.5 Section 2 of the Audit Findings report presents the findings of the External Auditor in respect of matters and risks identified at the planning stage of the audit and additional matters that arose during the course of their work.
- 3.6 Each year the Council is required to provide the External Auditor with a Letter of Representation relating to the financial statements, as shown in Appendix 1. This provides a number of assurances to the External Auditor in connection with the preparation of the Council's accounts. The letter is required to be signed by the Chair of the Board on behalf of the Council.

4.0 KEY SECTIONS WITHIN THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

- 4.1 The Council's 2015/16 Statement of Accounts is presented in Appendix 3. The Narrative Report by the Operational Director, Finance summarises the Council's financial performance for 2015/16, including revenue and capital spending.
- 4.2 In overall net terms the Council has underspent its 2015/16 revenue budget by £67,000. The overall outturn report was presented to Executive Board on 16 June 2016 and departmental outturn reports are available on the Council's Intranet. Following the outturn position and the use of £3.5m of the general reserve balance in funding the 2015/16 budget, the Council's general fund balance at 31 March 2016 stands at £5.4m.
- 4.3 Capital expenditure was £29.5m compared with planned expenditure of £37.3m. The outturn represents 79% of the total capital programme although 20% slippage is anticipated each year. Capital expenditure on several large projects slipped during the year and spend will continue to be incurred on them in 2016/17. The main areas of slippage included 3MG, Mersey Gateway Land Acquisitions and the Local Pinch Point Programme at Daresbury Expressway.
- 4.4 School balances as at 31 March 2016 totalled £5.7m. In addition, £1.6m of unspent schools related funding is held centrally and will carry forward into 2016/17.

- 4.5 The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) presents gross expenditure, gross income and net expenditure for 2015/16 along with the previous year's comparison. These are shown for each of the service groupings prescribed in The Code. These service groupings do not necessarily relate directly to the Council's organisational structure, but are shown as such to provide consistency across all local authorities. The Net Cost of Services is adjusted by a number of appropriations to give the Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. The CIES reports on how the Council performed during the year and whether its operations resulted in a surplus or deficit.
- 4.6 The Council's Balance Sheet sets out the Council's financial position as at 31 March 2016, along with a comparison to the position as at 31 March 2015. The balance sheet is a snapshot of the Council's financial position at a specific point in time, showing what it owns and owes at 31 March.
- 4.7 The Movement in Reserves Statement presents a summary of the changes in the Council's main reserves during the year. Reserves represent the Council's net worth and show its spending power. Reserves are analysed into two categories: usable and unusable.
- 4.8 The Cashflow Statement provides an overall analysis of the movements in cash and cash equivalents during the year.
- 4.9 Detailed notes relating to items within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet, Movement in Reserves Statement and Cashflow Statement are shown under Notes to the Core Financial Statements.
- 4.10 The Collection Fund and associated notes summarise the transactions in respect of the collection of Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax, along with the distribution to the Council's own General Fund, to central government (non-domestic rates only) and to the Precepting Authorities (Fire, Police and Parishes).
- 4.11 The Statement of Responsibilities outlines the basis upon which the Statement of Accounts has been prepared and is followed by a statement of the Council's Accounting Policies.
- 4.12 The External Auditor has used the draft Statement of Accounts as the basis for undertaking the annual audit of accounts, for which their Audit Report and Certificate is included within the final Statement of Accounts.
- 4.13 The final section presented within the Statement of Accounts is a Glossary of Terms.

5.0 VALUE FOR MONEY

- 5.1 Section 3 of the Audit Findings report presents the External Auditor findings on the Value for Money (VFM) conclusion. It considers if the Council has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.
- 5.2 The External Auditor evaluates the VFM conclusion against one single criterion, being “In all significant respects, the Council had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for tax payers and local people”.
- 5.3 The overall conclusion from the External Auditor is the Council had proper arrangements in all significant respects to ensure it delivered value for money in its use of resources.

6.0 NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 Following the meeting, the Letter of Representation will be signed and the External Auditor will provide their audit opinion. The Statement of Accounts will then be published along with a brief Summary, with copies being made available to the public via the Council’s website.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

- 7.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**
There are no specific implications for any of the Council’s priorities.
- 7.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**
See 7.1
- 7.3 **A Healthy Halton**
See 7.1
- 7.4 **A Safer Halton**
See 7.1
- 7.5 **Halton’s Urban Renewal**
See 7.1

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The Accounts and Audit Regulations require that the Statement of Accounts is certified by the External Auditor and published by 30th September 2016.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no equality and diversity issues arising from this report.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015	Kingsway House Kingsway Widnes	Steve Baker Divisional Manager, Financial Management
Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK 2015/16	Kingsway House Kingsway Widnes	Steve Baker Divisional Manager, Financial Management

Grant Thornton UK LLP
4 Hardman Square
Spinningfields
Manchester
M3 3EB.

28 September 2016

Dear Sirs

Halton Borough Council

Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2016

This representation letter is provided in connection with the audit of the financial statements of Halton Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2016 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2015/16 and applicable law.

We confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief having made such inquiries as we considered necessary for the purpose of appropriately informing ourselves:

Financial Statements

- i We have fulfilled our responsibilities for the preparation of 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 2015/16 ("the Code"); which give a true and fair view in accordance therewith.
- ii We have complied with the requirements of all statutory directions affecting the Council and these matters have been appropriately reflected and disclosed in the financial statements.
- iii The Council has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance. There has been no non-compliance with requirements of regulatory authorities that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance.
- iv We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud.

- v Significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.
- vi We are satisfied that the material judgements used in the preparation of the financial statements are soundly based, in accordance with the Code and adequately disclosed in the financial statements. There are no other material judgements that need to be disclosed.
- vii Except as disclosed in the financial statements:
 - a there are no unrecorded liabilities, actual or contingent
 - b none of the assets of the Council has been assigned, pledged or mortgaged
 - c there are no material prior year charges or credits, nor exceptional or non-recurring items requiring separate disclosure.
- viii We confirm that we are satisfied that the actuarial assumptions underlying the valuation of pension scheme assets and liabilities for IAS19 Employee Benefits disclosures are consistent with our knowledge. We confirm that all settlements and curtailments have been identified and properly accounted for. We also confirm that all significant post-employment benefits have been identified and properly accounted for.
- ix Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of the Code.
- x All events subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which the Code requires adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.
- xi Actual or possible litigation and claims have been accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of the Code.
- xii We have considered the adjusted misstatements, and misclassification and disclosures changes schedules included in your Audit Findings Report. The financial statements have been amended for these misstatements, misclassifications and disclosure changes and are free of material misstatements, including omissions.
- xiii We have considered the unadjusted misstatements schedule included in your Audit Findings Report and attached. We have not adjusted the financial statements for these misstatements brought to our attention as they are immaterial to the results of the Council and its financial position at the year-end.

The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions.

- xiv We have no plans or intentions that may materially alter the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.

- xv We believe that the Council's financial statements should be prepared on a going concern basis on the grounds that current and future sources of funding or support will be more than adequate for the Council's needs. We believe that no further disclosures relating to the Council's ability to continue as a going concern need to be made in the financial statements.

Information Provided

- xvi We have provided you with:
 - a access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
 - b additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of your audit; and
 - c unrestricted access to persons within the Council from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
- xvii We have communicated to you all deficiencies in internal control of which management is aware.
- xviii All transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.
- xix We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
- xx We have disclosed to you all our knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the Council involving:
 - a management;
 - b employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - c others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.
- xxi We have disclosed to you all our knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the Council's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, regulators or others.
- xxii We have disclosed to you all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing financial statements.
- xxiii We have disclosed to you the identity of all the Council's related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.
- xxiv We have disclosed to you all known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.

Annual Governance Statement

xxv We are satisfied that the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) fairly reflects the Council's risk assurance and governance framework and we confirm that we are not aware of any significant risks that are not disclosed within the AGS.

Narrative Statement

xxvi The disclosures within the Narrative Report fairly reflect our understanding of the Council's financial and operating performance over the period covered by the financial statements.

Approval

The approval of this letter of representation was minuted by the Business Efficiency Board at its meeting on 28th September 2016.

Yours faithfully

Name.....

Position.....

Date.....

Name.....

Position.....

Date.....

Signed on behalf of the Council

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

2015/16

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Narrative Report by Operational Director - Finance

Introduction

Whilst the publication of the Statement of Accounts is a statutory requirement, the purpose behind the requirement is to provide stakeholders with clear information regarding the Council's financial performance over the past year. Changing requirements over several years have led to the increasing complexity and technical nature of the information required to be included within the accounts. An exercise has been carried out over the past year to review and simplify the content of the information within the Statement of Accounts, to ensure information included is material from both a quantitative and qualitative viewpoint.

The Council's Statement of Accounts for 2015/16 has been prepared in compliance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2015/16 (The Code) and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Changing requirements over several years have led to the increasing complexity and details required in the accounts.

A summarised version of the accounts can be found on the Council's website at www.halton.gov.uk

The aim of this narrative is to provide an understandable guide to the Council's year-end financial position and future outlook which are relevant to the performance of the Council.

The Statement of Accounts sets out the Council's income and expenditure for the year and also provides a snapshot of the financial position as at 31 March 2016. Included are core financial statements supported by supplementary statements, which will help provide an analysis of the development and performance of the Council over the financial year 2015/16.

The format and content of the financial statements is prescribed by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom in 2015/16 (known as The Code), which in turn is underpinned by International Financial Reporting Standards.

The Core Statements are:

- **Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement** – this statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount which is funded from taxation. The end result is a very different position to how net outturn spend compared to budget is reported. A reconciliation between the two is therefore provided later on within the narrative.

- **Balance Sheet** – this statement shows the value as at the 31 March 2016 of the assets, liabilities and cash balances recognised by the Council.

- **Movement in Reserves Statement** – this statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Council, analysed into “Usable Reserves” i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure (both capital and revenue) or reduce local taxation, and “Unusable Reserves”, reserves which highlight changes to unrealisable gains or losses.
- **Cash Flow Statement** – this statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the authority generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e. borrowing) to the Council.
- **Notes to the above Statements** – extensive notes to support the core statements are set out in accordance with the requirements of the Code. The notes shall:
 1. Present information about the basis of preparation of the financial statements and the specific accounting policies used.
 2. Disclose the information required by the Code that is not presented elsewhere in the core financial statements.

The Supplementary Financial Statements are:

- **Collection Fund Account** – this is a statement that reflects the statutory obligation for the Council as a billing authority to maintain a separate Collection Fund. The statements show the transactions of the Council in relation to the collection from taxpayers and distribution to major and local preceptors and the Government of council tax and non-domestic rates.
- **Pension Fund Account** – reports the contributions received, payment to pensioners and the value of net assets invested in the Local Government Pension scheme on behalf of Council employees.
- **Group Accounts** – the purpose of this statement is to present the consolidated position of the Council’s activities, in accordance with the Code. This would involve consolidating the accounts of Halton Borough Transport Limited (HBT) and Mersey Gateway Crossings Board Ltd (MGCB) with the Council’s accounts by grossing up the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the Balance Sheet whilst eliminating intra group transactions. For 2015/16 the group account statements are excluded as the transactions relating to HBT and MGCB are not considered material.

The materiality of the transactions has been assessed based on quantitative and qualitative factors. Activities of HBT and MGCB are not significant to the representation of the operational activities of the Council. In addition the Council does not depend significantly on HBT and MGCB for continued provision of statutory services and grouping the accounts would not provide any more useful disclosures than already included.

Other Statements:

- **Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts** – this statement sets out the responsibilities of the Council and the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer).
- **Statement of Accounting Policies** – this statement explains the basis for the recognition, measurement and disclosure of transactions and other events in the accounts.
- **Independent Auditor’s Report to Members** – this is the report and certificate following the external audit of the Council’s accounts, carried out by Grant Thornton UK LLP.

Financial Performance 2015/16

The Council incurs both revenue and capital expenditure. Revenue expenditure is generally on items which are used in the year and is financed by the Council Tax, Retained Business Rates, Top-Up Funding and Revenue Support Grant. Capital expenditure generally has a life beyond one year and increases the value of an asset. The financing of capital expenditure is charged to revenue over a period in accordance with statutory requirements.

On 4 March 2015 Council set the budget for 2015/16 of £101.452m. Included within this figure was the use of £3.500m of General Fund reserves to assist with balancing the budget for the year.

The Council has closely monitored and controlled its spending throughout the year, such that total spending was £101.385m, £0.067m below the budget for the year (compared to £0.178m below budget in the previous year). Taking account of the underspend position and use of £3.500m of general fund balances, the Council’s General Fund Balance has decreased to £5.389m.

General Fund

	2015/16 Original Budget £000	2015/16 Actual £000
Net Expenditure	101,452	101,385
Parish Precepts	62	62
Total	101,514	101,447
Financed by Local Taxpayers – Council Tax	(41,263)	(41,263)
Financed by Local Taxpayers – Business Rates	(24,541)	(24,541)
Financed by Top-Up Funding	(7,449)	(7,449)
Financed by Revenue Support Grant	(28,261)	(28,261)
(Surplus)/Deficit for Year	-	(67)
Use of General Reserve in Net Expenditure	3,500	3,500
Balances brought forward	(8,824)	(8,822)
Balance carried forward	(5,324)	(5,389)

Budget savings for 2016/17 were implemented over three tranches, the first and second of which consisted of savings of £11.4m which were approved by Council in October and December 2015. The early approval of these savings has helped contribute to provide part-year savings through 2015/16.

The biggest pressure on the budget during the year again related to children in care costs. The outturn position reported an overspend against budget of £2.883m which whilst still considerable was a reduction on the previous year where the department reported an overspend position of £4.376m. The main areas of volatility to the budget were against out of borough residential placements & fostering, special guardianship orders and adoption and individual budgets/direct payments.

Staffing expenditure is below budget across the Council, as posts were held vacant to assist with achieving a balanced budget and in many cases to provide budget savings for 2016/17. Redundancy costs incurred during the year totalled £3.258m. These were met from the Transformation Fund Reserve which the Council established to meet the costs associated with structural changes. Posts vacated from staff electing to take up voluntary redundancy terms have been deleted from the Council's staffing structure to provide on-going savings. Further details on exit packages can be found in supporting note 3 to the financial statements.

A number of other expenditure areas were below budget including premises costs and supplies and services spend. Where possible those areas where underspends have occurred have been considered in delivering future savings, although there are areas of expenditure which were below budget which are demand led for which it is difficult to predict future use.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer published the Summer budget in July 2015, as part of this; Public Health allocations for the current year were reduced by £200m nationally. This had the impact of reducing the Council's 2015/16 Public Health allocation by £0.630m. The cut in funding was managed in-year from efficiencies to planned spending and service provision.

Given the financial challenges the Council has had to deal with over the past 5 years and the continued public spending austerity measures it is vital that high quality financial management is provided to the Council. Quarterly financial spending reports are presented to Members and the Council's Management Team giving details of budget pressures as they develop during the year. A budget risk register is maintained on a quarterly basis, key risks are evaluated and control measures put in place to ensure spend for the year remains within the set budget.

Schools

Expenditure incurred in relation to the Schools budget, both by individual schools and the Council totalled £78.428m and is shown in more detail in Note 12.

School balances at 31st March 2016 total £6.4m (£7.5m 2014/15). In addition, £1.6m (£2.4m 2014/15) of unspent schools related funding is held centrally and will carry forward into 2016/17.

Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement

Whilst the General Fund shows a net surplus for the year of £0.067m, the accounting position presented in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement (CIES) (Page 15) shows a surplus for the year of £96.979m. The CIES takes a wider view of financial performance than that shown in the General Fund and shows the true accounting position for the year. This surplus represents the total amount by which the Council's equity has increased over the year as shown in the Balance Sheet (Page 16). Therefore in addition to the net General Fund underspend, the CIES also includes the following major items:

- A charge for the depreciation and impairment of non-current assets (£19.2m) – A charge for depreciation is made to the CIES which reflects the annual cost of assets consumed during the year. An impairment loss is identified when the recoverable amount of an asset is estimated and it is less than the carrying amount recorded in the accounts.

- Capital Grant Income (£16.0m) - Grants received to fund the Council's capital programme are not included within the underspend in the General Fund, but in accordance with proper accounting practice, grants must be recognised against the CIES.
- Gain on Pension Assets and Pension Charge (£62.9m) – £70.5m is an amount arising from actuarial gains for the year. This represents assumptions made by the Actuary at the start of the year compared to assumptions made at the end of the year. £7.6m denotes the difference between the accounting cost of pensions (included in the CIES) and the actual employer contributions to the pension fund. More information on pensions is included elsewhere within the narrative report.
- Surplus on Revaluation of Property, Plant & Equipment (£33.8m) – Increase in the value of those non-current assets that have been revalued during the year.
- Minimum Revenue Provision (£3.1m) - This is an amount which is set aside in the General Fund to recognise the repayment of debt incurred from borrowing to finance the capital programme. In accordance with proper accounting practice this sum is not required to be included in the CIES.
- Net Change to Earmarked Reserves (£2.9m) – As per proper accounting practice, changes to earmarked reserves are not required to be included in the CIES.
- Capital Expenditure Charged to General Fund (£2.3m) – Refers to capital expenditure funded directly from revenue financing.
- Collection Fund Adjustment (1.7m) - Difference between amounts credited to the CIES and amounts to be recognised under statutory provisions relating to Council Tax and Business Rates
- Use of General Fund in Balancing Budget (£3.5m) – Reflects the decision for use of the General Fund reserve in balancing the 2015/16 budget. This amount is not included within the CIES.

The table below reconciles the General Fund underspend to the surplus on the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement:

	2015/16
	£000
General Fund Underspend	(67)
Accounting Adjustments:	
Charge for Depreciation & Impairment of Non-Current Assets	19,214
Capital Grant Income	(15,974)
Gain on Pension Assets and Pension Charge	(62,935)
Surplus on Revaluation of PP&E	(33,769)
Minimum Revenue Provision	(3,148)
Net Change to Earmarked Reserves	2,883
Capital Expenditure Charged to General Fund	(2,279)
Collection Fund Adjustment	(1,724)
Use of General Fund in Balancing Budget	3,500
Other Adjustments	(1,975)
Total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure	(96,274)

Capital Planning

The Council prepares and reports a rolling capital programme to forecast the probable level of capital spend over the next three years, along with the likely sources of funding. The Council also maintains a capital reserve, which has been generated from revenue contributions in order to support funding the capital programme. The forecast shows that there are sufficient resources over the medium term to cover the current capital programme, funded from borrowings, grants, revenue contributions and use of reserves.

At 31st March 2016 unused capital receipts were £5.3m, and the balance on the capital reserves was £5.0m and a list of any significant contractual commitments at 31st March 2016 is shown in Note 15.

The Council considers any new additions to the capital programme in light of the resources available. The Council has a significant capital programme over the next few years, of which the largest schemes relate to the Mersey Gateway, including a contribution towards construction costs, land acquisition and Mersey Gateway Crossings Board costs.

Capital Expenditure

The Council spent £29.487m on capital schemes (excluding finance leases) in 2015/16 compared with planned expenditure of £37.277m. This outturn represents 79% of the total capital programme although 20% slippage is anticipated on an annual basis. There has been slippage in-year on several large projects and spend will continue to be incurred on them in 2016/17. The approved budget and outturn capital position together with the various sources of funding are as follows:

	2015/16 Budget £000	2015/16 Actual £000	2015/16 Variance £000
Expenditure:			
Schools Related	2,672	2,349	323
People & Economy Directorate	8,067	4,655	3,412
Community & Resources Directorate	15,310	12,080	3,230
Mersey Gateway	11,228	10,403	825
Total Expenditure	37,277	29,487	7,790
Funded By:			
Borrowing	(7,069)	(6,740)	(329)
Capital Receipts	(7,495)	(4,494)	(3,001)
Revenue	(3,019)	(2,279)	(740)
Grants and Other Contributions	(19,694)	(15,974)	(3,720)
Total Funding	(37,277)	(29,487)	(7,790)

The main areas of slippage to the budget were in respect of schemes for 3MG, Local Pinch Point Programme at Daresbury Expressway, Mersey Gateway Land Acquisition, Norton Priory and Peelhouse Lane Cemetery. Analysis of the expenditure is included as part of the notes to the financial statements.

Non-Current Assets Valuation

The Balance Sheet shows the current value of property, plant & equipment as £373.951m as at 31 March 2016 compared to £337.646m at the same a year ago. This shows an increase of £36.305m (11%) over the year, in the main due to upward revaluations in land and buildings.

Pension Liability

Under International Accounting Standard 19, the Council is required to restate its accounts to reflect the activities of the two major pension providers, the Cheshire Pension Fund and the Teachers' Pension Agency. It also has a minor interest in the operations and accounts of the Merseyside Pension Fund in relation to employees in Greater Merseyside Connexions Limited and nursing health professionals who pay into the NHS pension scheme. The Council is also liable for the past service deficit of the Cheshire Pension Fund relating to Halton Borough Transport Ltd.

As at 31 March 2016 the Council has defined pension net liabilities of £64.719m, this is in comparison to the net liabilities of £127.655m from last year. The difference in the amounts is in the main due to an increase in the discount rate used in calculating future financial assumptions. There was a reported gain of £54.359m on this in 2015/16 compared to a loss of £77.314m in 2014/15.

Funding levels of the pension fund are monitored on an annual basis, the next triennial review has a date of 31 March 2016 with revised rates applicable from 1 April 2017.

Treasury Management

The Council operates within a Treasury Management framework, which requires that each year a strategy is prepared including setting prudential indicators to form a framework for the Council's borrowing and lending activities. The Council has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. Performance is monitored each quarter throughout the year and an outturn report is produced at the year end. The Council has had another successful year and actual borrowing costs for the year were less than budgeted whilst income from investments exceeded the income target.

The Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16 was approved by Council on 4 March 2015. The aim of the treasury management operation is to ensure that cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in low risk counterparties or instruments, security being prioritised over yield.

As at 31 March 2016 borrowing totalled £158m (£188m in 2014/15), well within the authorised borrowing limit of £250m. Borrowing comprises loans from the Public Works Loan Board and the market of £143.00m, a Lenders Option Borrowers Option loan from the Euro Hypo bank for £10.00m and a Liverpool City Region loan of £5.66m.

Of the £158m total borrowing £113m relates to long term borrowing undertaken in 2014/15 for the contribution from the Council towards the Mersey Gateway Bridge construction costs. Borrowing was taken in advance of need as the Council took advantage of historically low borrowing ahead of the Council having to make a number of payments from September 2016.

The Council's cashflow position continues to be well managed, cash held and short term deposits total £22.751m (£44.190m in 2014/15). As at the balance sheet date debtors total £20.032m a reduction of 4.1% from 2014/15 and creditors total £30.684m, a reduction of 11.8% from the previous year. The Council has a prompt payment discount scheme where in agreement with suppliers it will arrange early payment of invoices in return for a percentage discount on the invoice total, a scheme that is equally beneficial to both parties.

All transactions relating to investments and borrowings complied with the approved guidelines for the year. Further details of these transactions are contained in notes 21, 26 and 30 to the core financial statements.

Collection Fund

The transactions on this fund record the collection of Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.

The Business Rate Retention Scheme was implemented on 1st April 2013. As part of the scheme the Council acts as an agent and collects Non Domestic Rates on behalf of Central Government, Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service and itself.

The Council as the Billing Authority collects Council Tax on behalf of Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service, Cheshire Police & Crime Commissioner and itself.

The balance on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2016 is a surplus position of £4.448m compared to a surplus position of £0.082m from the previous year. Further details on the Collection Fund can be found within the supplementary financial statements (page 93). The Collection Fund position will be reviewed during 2016/17 and estimates will be provided in the second half of the financial year of the value of the balance which will be available for distribution in the following financial year.

In accordance with accounting guidelines, the Collection Fund is required to identify a provision for NNDR valuation appeal claims. The provision as at 31 March 2016 is £10.204m, an increase of £0.997m from the previous year.

Performance Measures 2015/16

The vision of the Council and its partners is “Halton will be a thriving and vibrant Borough where people can learn and develop their skills; enjoy a good quality of life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods.”

The Council’s Corporate Plan 2015 – 18 identifies the Council’s vision, values and principles and six strategic themes which underpin the work of the various departments and service areas across the authority.

These strategic themes provide the basis for the development of key actions and activities, and performance measures, which are reported on a quarterly basis to the Policy and Performance Board with responsibility for scrutiny in each of these strategic areas. These Priority Based Performance Reports also contain information concerning the key developments and emerging issues that have arisen during the period of reporting.

These reports are placed on public deposit and are available on the Council’s website via the relevant Policy and Performance Board agenda packs. The reports identify what progress is being made throughout the year in relation to the delivery of predetermined actions and the progress of a range of measures including direction of travel and achievement of targets.

The reports provide financial statements identifying variation in planned spend during the quarter and providing an explanatory comment.

Policy and Performance Boards also receive a mid-year update concerning the implementation of mitigation measures for those risks contained within the Directorate Risk Registers which have been assessed as high.

This approach allows the opportunity for the effective scrutiny of the Councils performance during the course of the year in order that any underperformance can be addressed in a timely manner and or resources can be realigned in response to prevailing conditions or pressures.

Listed below are a number of key performance indicators used in assessing the Council putting in place economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources:

- The number of working days lost during the year due to sickness absence has reduced from 10.44 in 2014/15 to 9.05. This is below the set target of 10 days.

- Collection of council tax for 2015/16 was 95.21% ahead of the set target of 94.75%, although it is a decrease from the 2014/15 collection rate of 95.47%. The collection of council tax continues to be adversely affected by national reforms.
- The percentage of business rates collected during the year that should have been received was 96.89% against a target of 95.00%, again this was slightly lower than the 2014/15 rate of 97.04%.
- The total of usable reserves held by the Council reduced by £3.7m (6.28%) over the past year. The Council's value of usable reserves as a percentage of gross expenditure as at 31 March 2016 was 16.07%, compared to 16.93% for the previous year.

Financial Planning

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a major element of the Council's corporate planning process. It brings together resources and spending plans and identifies financial constraints over the medium term. Its purpose is to ensure that resources are properly targeted towards Council priorities, to avoid excessive council tax rises, to deliver a balanced and sustainable budget, and to continue to identify efficiencies.

The public spending austerity programme has had and will continue to have a significant impact upon the Council's finances over the medium term and this has been reflected in the MTFS.

The Council's Efficiency Programme has continued to review services across the Council, changing the way in which the Council delivers services in order to realise efficiencies. In addition, the Council has continued to seek improved procurement, better utilisation of assets, changes to staff terms and conditions, collaborative working with other Councils and partner agencies and increased income from external sources in order to manage costs within the funding constraints imposed by Government.

The MTFS was reported to the Council's Executive Board in December 2015 and subsequently updated as part of the budget report in March 2016. The latest report identified potential shortfalls in funding for the Council over the following three years of approximately £17.5m (17/18), £9.2m (18/19) and £8.1m (19/20).

The 2016/17 net budget requirement of £98.460m was approved by Council on 3 March 2016. The budget will be funded from £41.217m of Council Tax (increase of 3.9% on the 2015/16 Band D level and inclusive of a 2% precept towards the funding shortfall for Adult Social Care), business rates local share of £25.681m, Revenue Support Grant £22.251m, top-up funding of £7.511m and share of the collection fund surplus of £1.800m.

The Local Government Finance Settlement announced on 9 February 2016 confirmed a 9.4% reduction in the Council's Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) for 2016/17. In addition indicative SFA allocations for the following three years were also published showing further cuts to Council funding of 18.4% from the current 2016/17 allocations. Government have made a commitment to local government authorities to offer them a four year settlement period from 2016-2020 based on the indicative amounts.

In addition over the same timeframe there will be cuts to other local government funding including Public Health, Education Services Grant and New Homes Bonus. From 2017/18 the local funding formula covering Dedicated Schools Grant will be replaced by the National Funding Formula, further work will be undertaken on this before the impact on the Council is known.

The funding outlook for Halton over the medium term continues to look very gloomy and significant budget savings will need to be found, which are likely to have a considerable impact upon the services delivered by the Council. A review of Local Government finance is currently being undertaken which will include changes to the business rate retention system and a review of distribution of funds according to relevant needs. From 2020 it is envisaged that councils will keep 100% of business rates they generate. The Liverpool City Region councils have agreed with DCLG to pilot this scheme from 1 April 2017.

Risks to funding resources over the medium term are compounded by spending pressures, these include children in care costs, aging population, impact of the national living wage and the apprenticeship levy.

Conclusion

The Council has continued to be successful in managing its finances and maintaining a sound financial base, to meet the challenging times ahead as well as the increasing demands for services arising and the need to sustain the future development of the Council. I would like to thank all Members and officers who have assisted with this during the year and once again made 2015/16 a success.

Ed Dawson

Operational Director – Finance

Core Financial Statements

Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as at 31st March 2015

		Gross Expenditure 2014/15 £000	Gross Income 2014/15 £000	Net Expenditure 2014/15 £000
Services	Note			
CONTINUING OPERATIONS				
Children's & Education Service		142,967	(107,085)	35,882
Adult Social Care		52,380	(14,822)	37,558
Public Health Services		8,371	(8,804)	(433)
Highways and Transport		21,063	(3,216)	17,847
Cultural & Related Services		19,109	(4,095)	15,014
Environmental & Regulatory Services		13,515	(1,513)	12,002
Planning Services		12,133	(3,594)	8,539
Housing Services		59,272	(57,554)	1,718
Central Services		12,738	(11,919)	819
Corporate & Democratic Core		4,155	(5,685)	(1,530)
Non Distributable Costs		(597)	-	(597)
Net Expenditure of Continuing Operations	1, 4	345,106	(218,287)	126,819
Other Operating Expenditure	6			(2,634)
Financing and Investment Income & Expenditure	7			12,716
Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	8			(125,875)
(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	1			11,026
(Surplus) or Deficit on revaluation of Non-Current Assets	36			(9,297)
(Surplus) or Deficit on revaluation of Available for Sale of Financial Assets	36			-
Remeasurement of net defined benefit liability	36			27,408
Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure				18,111
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME & EXPENDITURE				29,137

Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as at 31st March 2016

		Gross Expenditure 2015/16 £000	Gross Income 2015/16 £000	Net Expenditure 2015/16 £000
Services	Note			
CONTINUING OPERATIONS				
Children's & Education Service		135,691	(104,091)	31,600
Adult Social Care		57,124	(20,224)	36,900
Public Health Services		9,203	(9,623)	(420)
Highways and Transport		20,054	(2,246)	17,808
Cultural & Related Services		23,199	(5,432)	17,767
Environmental & Regulatory Services		13,576	(1,875)	11,701
Planning Services		8,962	(2,979)	5,983
Housing Services		57,539	(56,102)	1,437
Central Services		13,017	(12,867)	150
Corporate & Democratic Core		3,789	(6,182)	(2,393)
Non Distributable Costs		(777)	-	(777)
Net Expenditure of Continuing Operations	1, 4	341,377	(221,621)	119,756
Other Operating Expenditure	6			(1,877)
Financing and Investment Income & Expenditure	7			5,660
Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	8			(115,615)
(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	1			7,924
(Surplus) or Deficit on revaluation of Non-Current Assets	36			(33,769)
(Surplus) or Deficit on revaluation of Available for Sale of Financial Assets	36			88
Remeasurement of net defined benefit liability	36			(70,517)
Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure				(104,198)
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME & EXPENDITURE				(96,274)

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2016

31/03/2015			31/03/2016
£000		Note	£000
337,646	Property Plant & Equipment	15	373,951
1,168	Heritage Assets	17	1,168
10,895	Investment Properties	18	1,679
943	Intangible Assets	19	2,873
-	Assets Held of Sale > 12 months		-
522	Long Term Investments	21	7,413
1,961	Long Term Debtors	22	866
353,135	Total Long Term Assets		387,950
	Current Assets		
222	Inventories		239
1,753	Assets held for Sale < 12 months	20	12,755
20,882	Short Term Debtors	22	20,032
-	Intangible Current Assets		-
170,000	Short Term Investments	21	143,013
44,190	Cash/Cash Equivalents	23	22,046
237,047	Total Current Assets		198,085
	Current Liabilities		
(35,449)	Short Term Borrowing	26	(10,000)
(34,800)	Short Term Creditors	24	(30,684)
(15,873)	Revenue Grants Receipts in Advance	4	(10,465)
(5,157)	Provisions < 1 year	27	(5,653)
-	Bank Overdraft		-
(91,279)	Total Current Liabilities		(56,802)
145,768	Net Current Assets/(Liabilities)		141,283
498,903	Total Net Assets		529,233
(153,000)	Long Term Borrowing	26	(148,664)
(354)	Provisions > 1 year	27	-
(19,481)	Capital Grants Receipts in Advance	4	(21,800)
(149,395)	Other Long Term Liabilities	28	(85,822)
176,673	Total Assets Less Liabilities		272,947
(58,434)	Usable Reserves	35	(54,059)
(118,239)	Unusable Reserves	36	(218,888)
(176,673)	Total Equity		(272,947)

Movement in Reserves Statement as at 31st March 2015

	General Fund	Other Earmarked Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	TOTAL USABLE RESERVES	TOTAL UNUSABLE RESERVES (Note 35)	TOTAL COUNCIL RESOURCES
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
General Fund	(8,648)	(35,324)	(1,926)	(2,566)	(48,464)	(150,758)	(199,222)
Schools Reserves	-	(6,586)	-	-	(6,586)	-	(6,586)
Rounding adjustment	4	(4)	(1)	-	(1)	(1)	(2)
Balance as at 31st March 2014	(8,644)	(41,914)	(1,927)	(2,566)	(55,051)	(150,759)	(205,810)
Movement in Reserves during 2014/15							
(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	11,026	-	-	-	11,026	-	11,026
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	18,111	18,111
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	11,026	-	-	-	11,026	18,111	29,137
Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations (note 33a)	(12,853)	-	(1,438)	(93)	(14,384)	14,384	-
Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Other Reserves	(1,827)	-	(1,438)	(93)	(3,358)	32,495	29,137
Transfer to/from other Earmarked Reserves (notes 34)	1,649	(1,649)	-	-	-	-	-
Other Movements (note 36)	-	-	(26)	-	(26)	26	-
Rounding Adjustment	-	-	1	-	1	(1)	-
(Increase)/Decrease in the year	(178)	(1,649)	(1,463)	(93)	(3,383)	32,520	29,137
Balance Carried Forward	(8,822)	(43,563)	(3,390)	(2,659)	(58,434)	(118,239)	(176,673)
Schools Reserves		(7,461)					
Other Earmarked Reserves		<u>(36,102)</u>					
		<u>(43,563)</u>					

Movement in Reserves Statement as at 31st March 2016

	General Fund	Other Earmarked Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	TOTAL USABLE RESERVES	TOTAL UNUSABLE RESERVES (Note 35)	TOTAL COUNCIL RESOURCES
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
General Fund	(8,822)	(36,102)	(3,390)	(2,659)	(50,973)	(118,239)	(169,212)
Schools Reserves	-	(7,461)	-	-	(7,461)	-	(7,461)
Rounding adjustment					-		-
Balance as at 31st March 2015	(8,822)	(43,563)	(3,390)	(2,659)	(58,434)	(118,239)	(176,673)
Movement in Reserves during 2015/16							
(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	7,924	-	-	-	7,924	-	7,924
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	(104,198)	(104,198)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	7,924	-	-	-	7,924	(104,198)	(96,274)
Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations (note 33b)	(1,610)	-	(912)	(33)	(2,555)	2,555	-
Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Other Reserves	6,314	-	(912)	(33)	5,369	(101,643)	(96,274)
Transfer to/from other Earmarked Reserves (notes 34)	(2,883)	2,883	-	-	-	-	-
Other Movements (note 36)	-	-	(996)	-	(996)	996	-
Rounding adjustment	2				2	(2)	-
(Increase)/Decrease in the year	3,433	2,883	(1,908)	(33)	4,375	(100,649)	(96,274)
Balance Carried Forward	(5,389)	(40,680)	(5,298)	(2,692)	(54,059)	(218,888)	(272,947)
Schools Reserves		(5,718)					
Other Earmarked Reserves		(34,962)					
		<u>(40,680)</u>					

Cash Flow Statement as at 31st March 2016

2014/15 £000		Note	2015/16 £000
11,026	Net (surplus) or deficit on the provision of services		7,924
(95,921)	Adjustment net (surplus) of deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements	37	(23,514)
73,125	Adjust for items in the net (surplus) or deficit on the provision of services	37	23,035
(11,770)	Net cash flows from Operating Activities	38	7,445
108,329	Net cash flows from Investing Activities	39	(13,226)
(111,283)	Net cash flows from Financing Activities	40	27,926
(14,724)	Net (increase)/decrease in cash and cash equivalents		22,145
(29,466)	Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	23	(44,191)
(44,190)	Cash and Cash Equivalents at the end of the reporting period	23	(22,046)

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

1. Amounts Reported for Resource Allocation Decisions

The analysis of income and expenditure by service on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is that specified by the Service Reporting Code of Practice. However, decisions about resource allocation are taken by the Council on the basis of budget reports analysed across directorates. These reports are prepared on a different basis from the accounting policies used in the financial statements. In particular:

- No charges are made in relation to capital expenditure (whereas revaluation and impairment losses in excess of the balance on the Revaluation Reserve are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).
- The cost of retirement benefits is based on cash flows (payments of employer's pension's contributions) rather than current service cost of benefits accrued in the year.

The income and expenditure of the Councils principal directorates recorded in the budget reports for the year is as follows:

Directorate income and expenditure 2014/15

	Communities £000	Children and Enterprise £000	Policy & Resources £000	Total £000
Fees, Charges & Other Service Income	(46,679)	(22,949)	(62,132)	(131,760)
Government Grants	(449)	(97,318)	(72,327)	(170,094)
Total Income	(47,128)	(120,267)	(134,459)	(301,854)
Employee Expenses	27,802	80,303	22,679	130,784
Other Service Expenses	69,730	71,329	101,514	242,573
Support Services Recharges	13,056	8,939	14,566	36,561
Total Operating Expenses	110,588	160,571	138,759	409,918
Cost of Services	63,460	40,304	4,300	108,064

Reconciliation to Net Cost of Services in Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account

	2014/15
	£000
Cost of Services in Service Analysis	108,064
Add services not included in main analysis	650
Add amounts not reported to management	2,306
Remove amounts reported to management not included in Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	15,799
Net Cost of Services in Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	126,819

Directorate income and expenditure 2015/16

	People & Economy £000	Community & Resources £000	Total £000
Fees, Charges & Other Service Income	(60,453)	(81,037)	(141,490)
Government Grants	(96,552)	(70,919)	(167,471)
Total Income	(157,005)	(151,956)	(308,961)
Employee Expenses	95,404	37,884	133,288
Other Service Expenses	123,184	115,371	238,555
Support Services Recharges	16,391	22,112	38,503
Total Operating Expenses	234,979	175,367	410,346
Cost of Services	77,974	23,411	101,385

Reconciliation to Net Cost of Services in Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account

	2015/16
	£000
Cost of Services in Service Analysis	101,385
Add services not included in main analysis	3,500
Add amounts not reported to management	(1,643)
Remove amounts reported to management not included in Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	16,514
Net Cost of Services in Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	119,756

Reconciliation to Subjective Analysis 14/15

This Reconciliation shows how the figures in the analysis of directorate income and expenditure relate to a subjective analysis of the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

2014/15	Service Analysis £000	Services Not In Analysis £000	Amounts Not Reported to Management £000	Amounts Not Included in I&E £000	Allocation of Recharges £000	Net Expenditure of Continuing Operations £000	Corporate Amounts £000	Total £000
Fees Charges & Other Service Income	(131,759)	-	22,173	23,474	36,559	(49,553)	(106)	(49,659)
Interest and Investment Income	-	-	-	718	-	718	(718)	-
Investment Properties Income & Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,359)	(1,359)
Income from Council Tax	-	-	-	-	-	-	(38,912)	(38,912)
Income from Business Rates	-	-	-	-	-	-	(22,578)	(22,578)
Government Grant & Contributions	(170,095)	643	-	-	-	(169,452)	(64,385)	(233,837)
Total Income	(301,854)	643	22,173	24,192	36,559	(218,287)	(128,058)	(346,345)
Employee Expenses	130,784	-	(1,697)	-	-	129,087	-	129,087
Other Service Expenses	220,753	7	(26,266)	(4,241)	3	190,256	-	190,256
Support Services Recharges	36,562	-	-	-	(36,562)	-	-	-
Depreciation, Amortisation & Impairment	21,819	-	8,096	-	-	29,915	-	29,915
Interest Payments	-	-	-	(4,152)	-	(4,152)	3,509	(643)
Precepts	-	-	-	-	-	-	61	61
Levies	-	-	-	-	-	-	286	286
Payments to Housing Capital Pool Receipts	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Movement in value of Assets Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-	-	825	825
Gain or Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	(3,807)	(3,807)
Loss on transfer of academies	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,343	7,343
Pension interest cost and expected return	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,047	4,047
Total Operating Expenses	409,918	7	(19,867)	(8,393)	(36,559)	345,106	12,265	357,371
(Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services	108,064	650	2,306	15,799	-	126,819	(115,793)	11,026

Reconciliation to Subjective Analysis 2015/16

2015/16	Service Analysis £000	Services Not In Analysis £000	Amounts Not Reported to Management £000	Amounts Not Included in I&E £000	Allocation of Recharges £000	Net Expenditure of Continuing Operations £000	Corporate Amounts £000	Total £000
Fees Charges & Other Service Income	(141,490)	3,500	20,649	283	62,016	(55,042)	(95)	(55,137)
Interest and Investment Income	-	-	-	892	-	892	(1,235)	(343)
Investment Properties Income & Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-	(506)	(506)
Income from Council Tax	-	-	-	-	-	-	(40,282)	(40,282)
Income from Business Rates	-	-	-	-	-	-	(27,246)	(27,246)
Government Grant & Contributions	(167,471)	-	-	-	-	(167,471)	(48,087)	(215,558)
Total Income	(308,961)	3,500	20,649	1,175	62,016	(221,621)	(117,451)	(339,072)
Employee Expenses	133,290	-	2,477	-	-	135,767	-	135,767
Other Service Expenses	216,427	-	(21,838)	(3,430)	-	191,159	-	191,159
Support Services Recharges	38,503	-	-	-	(62,016)	(23,513)	-	(23,513)
Depreciation, Amortisation & Impairment	22,126	-	(2,932)	22,126	-	41,320	-	41,320
Interest Payments	-	-	-	(3,356)	-	(3,356)	3,357	1
Precepts	-	-	-	-	-	-	62	62
Levies	-	-	-	-	-	-	282	282
Payments to Housing Capital Pool Receipts	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Movement in value of Assets Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	17
Gain or Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	(2,239)	(2,239)
Loss on transfer of academies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pension interest cost and expected return	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,139	4,139
Total Operating Expenses	410,346	-	(22,293)	15,340	(62,016)	341,377	5,619	346,996
(Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services	101,385	3,500	(1,644)	16,515	-	119,756	(111,832)	7,924

2. Officers' Remuneration

The number of employees whose remuneration, inclusive of redundancy payments and car benefit but excluding pension contributions, was £50,000 or more, grouped in rising bands of £5,000 is shown below. This list is inclusive of officers reported in the senior officer's disclosure note.

Remuneration Band		2014/15		2015/16	
		Number of Employees		Number of Employees	
		Teaching	Non-Teaching	Teaching	Non - Teaching
£50,000	£54,999	23	11	33	16
£55,000	£59,999	23	12	21	19
£60,000	£64,999	10	12	11	14
£65,000	£69,999	6	4	8	8
£70,000	£74,999	3	2	4	2
£75,000	£79,999	2	3	2	5
£80,000	£84,999	1	4	-	5
£85,000	£89,999	-	2	-	7
£90,000	£94,999	1	2	-	2
£95,000	£99,999	-	-	1	-
£100,000	£104,999	1	-	-	-
£105,000	£109,999	-	1	1	-
£110,000	£114,999	1	-	-	2
£115,000	£119,999	-	-	-	-
£120,000	£124,999	-	1	-	-
£125,000	£129,999	-	-	-	-
£130,000	£134,999	-	-	-	-
£135,000	£139,999	-	-	-	-
£140,000	£144,999	-	1	-	1
£145,000	£149,999	-	-	-	-
£150,000	£154,999	-	-	-	-
£155,000	£159,999	-	-	-	-
£160,000	£164,999	-	-	-	-
£165,000	£169,999	-	-	-	1
£170,000	£174,999	-	1	-	-
£175,000	£179,999	-	-	-	-
		71	56	81	82

Halton Borough Council is required to disclose to local taxpayers the total remuneration package for the senior officers charged with the stewardship of the organisation.

A senior employee has a significant level of responsibility for contributing to the strategic decision making of the Council. Senior officers will include those that have a statutory duty under legislation.

Senior employees whose salary is between £50,000 and £150,000 are disclosed by job title. Senior employees whose salary is more than £150,000 are disclosed by job title and name.

These notes refer to the detailed note overleaf:

Note 1: During 2015/16, the Strategic Director People & Economy performed the additional role of Director of Children's Services at Cheshire West and Chester Council on a part-time basis at a total remuneration cost of £92,400. The payments in relation to that additional role have been made by Halton Borough Council and are included in the salary and remuneration figures detailed overleaf, however, the Council has been fully reimbursed for these costs by Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Note 2: During 2015/16, the Strategic Director Communities performed the additional role of Director of Adult Services at Sefton Council on a part-time basis at a total remuneration cost of £47,200. The payments in relation to that additional role have been made by Halton Borough Council and are included in the salary and remuneration figures detailed overleaf, however, the Council has been fully reimbursed for these costs by Sefton Council. During 2015/16 the Strategic Director Communities left Halton Borough Council and the Directorates have subsequently been restructured.

Note 3: During 2015/16, the Operational Director Legal & Democratic Services worked one day per week for Chester West and Chester Council as their Monitoring Officer. He was awarded an honorarium for this which is included in the remuneration figures overleaf. This will be reimbursed from Chester West and Chester Council. This arrangement ceased in May 2015.

Note 4: The Operational Director for Learning and Achievement left Halton Borough Council on 20/01/15.

Note 5: The Operational Director for Commissioning & Complex Care commenced part-time working on the 01/06/2013. Their annualised salary on a full-time basis is £83,200

Note 6: During 2015/16, the Operational Director ICT & Support Services continued the implementation of a new finance system at Sefton Council. He was awarded an honorarium for this which is included in the remuneration figures overleaf. This will be reimbursed from Sefton Council.

Post Title		Salary (including fees & Allowances)		Compensation for loss of employment		Benefits in Kind		Total Remuneration excluding pension contributions		Employers Pension contributions		Total Remuneration including pension contributions	
		2014/15	2015/16	2014/15	2015/16	2014/15	2015/16	2014/15	2015/16	2014/15	2015/16	2014/15	2015/16
Chief Executive – David Parr		167,600	168,900	-	-	2,500	-	170,100	168,900	34,300	35,100	204,400	204,000
People & Economy	1	138,200	138,500	-	-	2,500	1,900	140,700	140,400	28,400	29,100	169,100	169,500
Community & Resources		104,100	114,000	-	-	2,000	-	106,100	114,000	21,400	23,800	127,500	137,800
Communities (before restructure)	2	120,900	63,700	-	-	-	-	120,900	63,700	24,500	13,100	145,400	76,800
Policy, Planning & Transportation		82,800	82,600	-	-	2,200	2,600	85,000	85,200	16,700	17,300	101,700	102,500
Legal & Democratic Services	3	88,300	83,800	-	-	2,700	3,500	91,000	87,300	18,200	17,700	109,200	105,000
Learning & Achievement Services	4	63,200	-	-	-	800	-	64,000	-	12,900	-	76,900	-
Prevention & Assessment		81,900	88,800	-	-	-	-	81,900	88,800	16,600	18,500	98,500	107,300
Children & Families Services		75,800	78,900	-	-	-	-	75,800	78,900	15,400	16,400	91,200	95,300
Commissioning & Complex Care	5	45,500	47,000	-	-	-	-	45,500	47,000	9,200	9,700	54,700	56,700
Children’s Organisation & Provision		81,700	83,100	-	-	600	-	82,300	83,100	16,700	17,300	99,000	100,400
Finance		75,800	79,000	-	-	-	-	75,800	79,000	15,400	16,400	91,200	95,400
ICT & Support Services	6	89,400	92,500	-	-	-	-	89,400	92,500	18,000	19,200	107,400	111,700
Economy, Enterprise & Property		79,600	82,500	-	-	2,300	2,700	81,900	85,200	16,200	17,300	98,100	102,500
Community & Environment		81,400	83,100	-	-	1,800	-	83,200	83,100	15,700	15,400	98,900	98,500
Public Health		92,500	92,500	-	-	-	-	92,500	92,500	12,500	12,900	105,000	105,400
		1,468,700	1,378,900	-	-	17,400	10,700	1,486,100	1,389,600	292,100	279,200	1,778,200	1,668,800

3. Exit Packages

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

Exit package cost band	Number of compulsory redundancies		Number of voluntary redundancies		Number of early retirements		Total of number of exit packages by cost band		Total cost of exit packages in each band	
	2014/15	2015/16	2014/15	2015/16	2014/15	2015/16	2014/15	2015/16	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000
£0 - £20,000	9	5	31	40	2	-	42	45	292	456
£20,001 - £40,000	1	-	4	25	2	-	7	25	204	713
£40,001 - £60,000	-	-	1	10	1	-	2	10	86	445
£60,001 - £80,000	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	6	-	416
£80,001 - £100,000	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	447
£100,001 - £150,000	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	353
£150,001 - £200,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
£200,001 - £250,000	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	428
£250,001 - £300,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	10	5	36	91	5	-	51	96	582	3,258

The total cost of redundancies in 2015/16 is £3.258m (2014/15 - £0.449m) charged to the authority's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES). Costs associated with redundancies include officers aged 55 or over being able to access their pensions immediately, the costs of which amounted to £1.354m, charged to the CIES in 2015/16). There were no early retirements taken in 2015/16 (2014/15 - £0.133m).

4. Grant Income

The Council has received a number of grants and contributions that have yet to be recognised as income. At the balance sheet date, conditions existed which remain to be satisfied. The balances at year end are as follows:

	31 March 2015 £000	31 March 2016 £000
Capital Grants Receipts in Advance		
Grant – Communities and Local Government	(13,907)	(13,097)
Grant – Department of Transport	(122)	-
Grant – Department of Health	(160)	-
Grant – Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs	(13)	(46)
Grant – Department for Education	(511)	(386)
Grant – Other Grants	(128)	(1,269)
Contributions	(4,640)	(7,002)
	(19,481)	(21,800)

	31 March 2015 £000	31 March 2016 £000
Revenue Grants Receipts in Advance		
Grant – Department for Education	(6,170)	(8,147)
Grant – Communities and Local Government	-	-
Grant – Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs	(136)	(42)
Grant - DECC	(36)	-
Grant – Dedicated Schools Grant	(2,626)	(22)
Grant - Department of Health	-	(100)
Grant - Department for Work & Pensions	-	(31)
Grant - Department for Transport	-	(107)
Grant – Other Grants	(193)	(658)
Contributions	(6,019)	(281)
Other Creditors	(693)	(1,077)
	(15,873)	(10,465)

The Council credited the following grants, contributions and donations to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in 2015/16.

	2014/15	2015/16
	£000	£000
Credited to Services		
Revenue Grant – Communities & Local Government	(4,329)	(5,968)
Revenue Grant – Dedicated Schools Grant	(79,311)	(77,624)
Revenue Grant – Department for Education	(18,052)	(17,271)
Revenue Grant – Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs	(20)	(23)
Revenue Grant – Department for Transport	(1,784)	(1,014)
Revenue Grant – Department for Works & Pensions	(2,540)	(2,020)
Revenue Grant – Department of Health	(9,064)	(9,790)
Revenue Grant – Home Office	(140)	(91)
Revenue Grant – Department of Energy & Climate Change	(28)	(16)
Revenue Grant – Other Grants	(1,324)	(1,783)
Revenue Grant – Rent Allowance Subsidy	(52,841)	(51,871)
Revenue Grants	(169,433)	(167,471)
Contribution – PCT, CCG & Other Local Authorities	(2,315)	(11,676)
Other Contributions	(1,515)	(2,077)
Contributions	(3,830)	(13,753)
Reimbursements	(12,401)	(8,636)
Sales, Fees & Rents	(22,127)	(21,720)
Other Income	(7,035)	(6,294)
Capital Grants Impaired	(2,815)	(3,161)
Revenue Expenditure Funded by Capital Grants Under Statue	(646)	(586)
Other Income	(45,024)	(40,397)
	(218,287)	(221,621)

5. Material Items of Income and Expenditure

There are no material items of Income and Expenditure within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for 2015/16

6. Other Operating Expenditure

2014/15		2015/16
£000		£000
61	Parish Council Precepts	62
286	Levies	282
1	Payments to the Government Housing Capital Receipts Pool	1
825	Movement in value of Assets Held for Sale	17
(3,807)	(Gains)/Losses on the Disposal of non-current assets	(2,239)
(2,634)	Total	(1,877)

7. Financing and Investment Income

2014/15		2015/16
£000		£000
3,509	Interest payable and similar charges	3,357
4,047	Net interest on the net defined benefit liability	4,139
(718)	Interest receivable and similar charges	(1,235)
(1,359)	Income & Expenditure in relation to Investment Properties and changes in their fair value	(506)
7,343	Loss on transfer of academies	-
(106)	Other investment income	(95)
12,716	Total	5,660

8. Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income

2014/15		2015/16
£000		£000
(38,912)	Council tax income	(40,282)
(22,578)	Non domestic rates	(27,246)
(38,988)	Non-ringfenced government grants	(28,261)
(7,309)	NNDR Top Up Grant	(7,449)
(18,088)	Capital grants and contributions	(12,377)
(125,875)	Total	(115,615)

9. Pooled Budgets

Better Care

In 2015 the Government introduced a £3.8 billion pooled budget for health and social care services, shared between the NHS and local authorities, to deliver better outcomes and greater efficiencies through more integrated services for older and disabled people.

From April 2015 the pool budget between Halton Borough Council (HBC) and the Halton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) was expanded to incorporate this Better Care Fund under a Section 75 agreement for health and social care services provided to the residents of Halton. The pooled budget continued to provide a fully integrated system enabling resources to be used efficiently and effectively in the delivery of personalised, responsive and holistic care to those who are most in need within the community. This results in the alignment of systems, improve pathways, speeding up discharge processes, transforming patient/care satisfaction and ensuring the future sustainability of meeting the needs of people with complex needs.

In addition to the BCF allocation, the Council and Clinical Commissioning Group each contributed funds equal to 60% and 40% respectively of the Better Care Pool budget for 2015/16. The same proportions are used to meet any deficit or share any surplus arising on the pooled budget at the end of the financial year.

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

	2014/15		2015/16
	£000		£000
Balance Brought Forward	(158)		(7)
Funding provided to the pooled budget:			
- Halton Borough Council	(20,996)		(18,583)
- Halton Clinical Commissioning Group	(13,540)		(12,346)
- Better Care Fund	-		(9,450)
	(34,536)		(40,379)
Income raised through the pooled budget:			
- Halton Borough Council	(8,093)		(7,338)
	(8,093)		(7,338)
Expenditure met from the pooled budget:			
- Halton Borough Council	29,177		25,923
- Halton Clinical Commissioning Group	13,603		12,348
- Better Care Fund	-		9,450
	42,780		47,721
Net (surplus)/deficit arising on the pooled budget during the year	151		4
Share of the (surplus)/deficit for the year:			
- Halton Borough Council	61% 88	60%	2
- Halton Clinical Commissioning Group	39% 63	40%	2
	151		4

10. Members Allowances

During the year £748,232 (2014/15 £738,116) was paid to Members including Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral allowances.

11. External Audit Fees

The Council incurred the following fees relating to external audit and inspection.

	2014/15	2015/16
	£000	£000
Fees payable for		
- Audit	127	105
- Grants and returns	9	24
- Other	3	-
- Non-audit work	26	11
	165	140

Due to the timing of the audit of grant claims, the audit fee for Grants and Returns' is based on an estimate and may include amounts relating to previous years.

12. Disclosure of Deployment of Dedicated Schools Grant

The Council's expenditure on schools is funded by grant monies provided by the Department for Education, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). DSG is ring-fenced and can only be applied to meet expenditure properly included in the Schools Budget. The Schools Budget includes elements for a restricted range of services provided on an authority-wide basis and for the Individual Schools Budget, which is divided into a budget share for each school. Overspends and underspends on the two elements are required to be accounted for separately.

Details of the deployment of DSG receivable for 2015/16 are shown below:

Total 2014/15 £000		Central Expenditure 2015/16 £000	Individual Schools Budget 2015/16 £000	Total 2015/16 £000
(100,963)	Final DSG before academy recoupment			(102,799)
21,590	Academy figure recouped in year			25,175
(79,373)	Total DSG after academy recoupment			(77,624)
(3,836)	Plus brought forward			(2,388)
-	Less Carry Forward agreed in advance			-
(83,209)	Agreed budgeted distribution	(14,581)	(65,431)	(80,012)
-	In Year Adjustments	916	(916)	-
(83,209)	Final Budget Distribution	(13,665)	(66,347)	(80,012)
12,455	Less actual central expenditure	12,081	-	12,081
68,366	Less actual ISB deployed to schools	-	66,347	66,347
	Plus Council Contribution	-	-	-
(2,388)	Carry Forward	(1,584)	-	(1,584)

13. Related Party Transactions

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

Once these relationships are brought to the attention of users, transactions are disclosed so that readers can assess for themselves whether these relationships might have had an effect or could have an effect in the future.

Central Government

UK Central Government has significant influence over the general operations of the Council. It is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Council operates, provides the majority of its funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Council has with other parties (e.g. council tax bills, housing benefits).

Grants received from government departments are set out in the subjective analysis in note 1 on reporting for resource allocation decisions and year end government grant debtors and creditors are included in notes 4, 22 and 24.

Members and Officers

Members of the Council have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies. The Council operates a system of self-regulation which requires each Executive Director and Member to complete a declaration highlighting whether they or any members of their family have been involved in any material financial transactions between the Council and any external bodies they are affiliated to during the financial year.

The total of members allowances paid in 2015/16 is shown in note 10. The total of senior officers remuneration paid in 2015/16 is shown in note 2.

For 2015/16 the system has highlighted that 22 Members had interests in various organisations and voluntary sector bodies involving payments worth £2.580m and receipts worth £0.904m for various works and services.

In 2015/16, the declarations also showed that one Executive Officer represented the Council on the boards of three bodies within the borough. Payments between HBC and those bodies totalled £4.729m and receipts totalled £0.041m in 2015/16.

Other Public Bodies

The Council had one pooled budget arrangements with Halton Clinical Commissioning Group during 2015/16 under section 75 of the Health Act 2006. Transactions and balances are highlighted in note 9.

Entities Controlled or Significantly Influenced by the Council

Details of the Council's interests in companies are disclosed as part Note 40 – Interest in Companies and other Entities.

14. Events after the Balance Sheet Date

These accounts have been authorised for issue by the Operational Director Finance, on the 30th June 2016 and reflect all known events for the financial year. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statements or notes.

Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing at 31st March 2016, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect the impact of this information.

At the time of authorisation there were no material post balance sheet events.

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15. Non-Current Assets, Property, Plant and Equipment

Movements during 2014/15

	Land and Buildings £000	Community Assets £000	Infrastructure Assets £000	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment £000	Surplus £000	Under Construction / Development £000	Total 2014/15 £000	Service Concession Assets included in PPE £000
Cost or Valuation								
As at 31 st March 2014	188,900	7,013	169,551	15,608	10,885	63,652	455,609	17,705
Additions and Enhancements	2,300	850	5,737	2,344	1,711	18,179	31,121	-
Revaluations Recognised in the Revaluations Reserve	1,970	-	-	-	(1,473)	-	497	-
Revaluations Recognised in the Provision Services	(969)	-	-	-	(3,757)	(5,233)	(9,959)	-
Derecognition – Disposals	(10,968)	-	-	(400)	(350)	-	(11,718)	-
Derecognition – Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assets Reclassified (to)/from held for sale	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Movements	3	-	(7,819)	-	12,024	(4,206)	2	-
As at 31st March 2014	181,236	7,863	167,469	17,552	19,040	72,392	465,552	17,705
Depreciation								
As at 31 st March 2014	(19,991)	(2,655)	(89,056)	(8,910)	(167)	-	(120,779)	-
Depreciation for the year	(8,855)	(460)	(9,370)	(2,222)	(554)	-	(21,461)	(482)
Depreciation written out to revaluation reserve	7,008	-	-	-	1,791	-	8,799	-
Depreciation written out to Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	1,341	-	-	-	523	-	1,864	-
Derecognition – Disposals	3,267	-	-	395	7	-	3,669	-
Derecognition – Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other movements in depreciation	2	-	2,236	-	(2,236)	-	2	-
As at 31st March 2014	(17,228)	(3,115)	(96,190)	(10,737)	(636)	-	(127,906)	(482)
Balance Sheet Amount as at 31st March 15	164,008	4,748	71,279	6,815	18,404	72,392	337,646	17,223
Balance Sheet Amount as at 1st April 14	168,909	4,358	80,494	6,698	10,718	63,652	334,829	17,705

Movements during 2015/16

	Land and Buildings £000	Community Assets £000	Infrastructure Assets £000	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment £000	Surplus £000	Under Construction / Development £000	Total 2015/16 £000	Service Concession Assets included in PPE £000
Cost or Valuation								
As at 31st March 2015	181,236	7,863	167,469	17,552	19,040	72,392	465,552	17,705
Additions and Enhancements	1,751	868	4,913	2,213	741	16,512	26,998	-
Revaluations Recognised in the Revaluations Reserve	19,282	-	-	-	1,099	-	20,381	37
Revaluations Recognised in the Provision Services	3,963	-	-	-	861	(4,806)	18	4,821
Derecognition – Disposals	(972)	-	-	(173)	(2,797)	-	(3,942)	-
Derecognition – Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assets Reclassified (to)/from held for sale	(3,164)	-	-	-	(8,379)	-	(11,543)	-
Other Movements	10,575	173	-	-	(23)	(2,054)	8,671	-
As at 31st March 2016	212,671	8,904	172,382	19,592	10,542	82,044	506,135	22,563
Depreciation								
As at 31st March 2015	(17,228)	(3,115)	(96,190)	(10,737)	(636)	-	(127,906)	(482)
Depreciation for the year	(9,250)	(519)	(8,722)	(2,160)	(1,142)	-	(21,793)	(482)
Depreciation written out to revaluation reserve	13,089	-	-	-	300	-	13,389	-
Depreciation written out to Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	2,619	-	-	-	293	-	2,912	964
Derecognition – Disposals	240	-	-	50	924	-	1,214	-
Derecognition – Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other movements in depreciation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
As at 31st March 2016	(10,530)	(3,634)	(104,912)	(12,847)	(261)	-	(132,184)	-
Balance Sheet Amount as at 31st March 16	202,141	5,270	67,470	6,745	10,281	82,044	373,951	22,563
Balance Sheet Amount as at 1st April 15	164,008	4,748	71,279	6,815	18,404	72,392	337,646	17,223

Depreciation

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

Buildings and Other Operational Properties	10-60 years
Infrastructure and Community Assets	15 years
Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	3-10 years
Intangible Assets	5 years

Capital Commitments

At 31st March 2016, the Council has entered into a number of contracts for the construction or enhancement of Property, Plant and Equipment.

The major commitments are:

Widnes Waterfront	£1.00m
3MG Regeneration	£2.81m
Fairfield Primary School	£1.8m
Norton Priory	£3.26m
SciTech Daresbury	£10.95m
Mersey Gateway Construction Interest	£5.44m
Mersey Gateway Crossings Board	£5.56m
Mersey Gateway Liquidity Fund	£10.00m
Mersey Gateway Land Acquisitions	£10.99m
Mersey Gateway Construction Costs	£102.5m
Peelhouse Lane Cemetery	£0.2m

At 31st March 2016 the capital commitments totalled £154.51m

Revaluations

The Council carries out a rolling programme that ensures all Property, Plant and Equipment required to be measured at fair value is revalued at least every 5 years using the rota below with 2015/16 being year 5 in the cycle. All valuations are carried out internally by the Council's in-house valuer Peter O'Donnell MRICS. Valuations of land and buildings were carried out in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. Valuations of vehicles, plant and equipment are based on current prices where there is an active second-hand market or latest list prices adjusted for the condition of the asset.

Year 1 – Amendments and general updates

Year 2 – Corporate Properties

Year 3 – Children's centres, Children's homes and miscellaneous properties, land and open spaces

Year 4 – Day care centres, homes, leisure centres, sports fields and changing rooms, allotments, community centres, libraries and cemeteries

Year 5 – Nursery, infant, junior, primary, secondary, special and PRU schools.

All assets are subject to an annual review to ensure valuations have not materially changed in the years they are not valued and that the carrying value is not significantly different to their fair value.

Assets which were subject to a revaluation in 2015/16 are dated the 1st April 2015. The valuation report which is used in the preparation of the Council's Statement of Accounts takes account of all known events throughout 2015/16 which could subsequently affect the assets value and is therefore dated the 31st March 2016.

Land & Buildings

Non specialised property is valued at Fair Value – Existing Use Value. Specialised Property is valued on the basis of Depreciated Replacement Costs.

Community Assets

This group includes parks, cemetery land and other identifiable assets held in perpetuity, usually at Depreciated Historic Cost.

Infrastructure

These are included on the balance sheet at Depreciated Historical Costs in accordance with the guidelines contained in the RICS Appraisal and Valuation Standards.

Vehicles, Plant and Equipment

The majority of the Council's plant and equipment is included in the valuation of the buildings. The vehicles and other equipment are valued at Depreciated Historical Cost.

Intangible Assets

This group consists mainly of software licences for computer systems held at Depreciated Historical Cost.

Surplus Assets

Assets held for sale have strict criteria to be met before any assets can be included under this heading. Where assets are not in use but do not meet the criteria, they are accommodated within surplus assets. They are held at highest and best use value.

Assets under Construction/Development

These schemes are held temporarily on the balance sheet at Historical Cost, until the asset is completed, when it is replaced with a formal valuation.

Fair Value Hierarchy for Investment Properties, Surplus Assets and Assets Held for Sale

Investment Properties, Surplus Assets and Assets Held for Sale have been value assessed as Level 2 on the fair value hierarchy for valuation purposes (see Policies note 10 – Fair Value).

Valuation Techniques Used to Determine Level 2 Fair Values.

The fair value of Investment Properties, Surplus Assets and Assets Held for Sale have been measured using a market approach, which takes into account quoted prices for the existing or similar assets in active markets, existing lease terms and rentals, research into market

evidence including market rentals and yields, the covenant strength for existing tenants, and data and market knowledge gained in managing the Council's Asset portfolio. This information is contained within the Valuation Assumptions and Evidence note agreed between the authority's Asset Manager and professional staff. 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 as level 2 on the fair value hierarchy.

There has been no change in the valuation techniques used during the year for Investment Properties, Surplus Assets or Assets Held for Sale.

Highest and Best Use

In estimating the fair value of the Council's Investment Properties, the highest and best use is their current use, though Assets Held for Sale have been valued taking their development potential into account.

De-minimis Assets

At 31st March 2016, the Council had 165 assets that fell below its de-minimis level of £35,000 which totalled £1.292m. These assets are not recorded on the Balance Sheet.

Private Finance Initiatives

Halton Grange School PFI Scheme

On 20 June 2011 the council entered into a 25 year Private Finance Initiative (PFI) arrangement with HTP Grange Ltd for the provision of 1 new high school. There is a 25 year PFI contract for the construction, maintenance, and facilities management of Grange School. The new school building was handed over to the Council on 15th April 2013. The school is one of the Council's Community Schools.

The contract specifies minimum standards for the services provided by the contractor to the school. The contractor took on the obligation to construct the school and maintain it in a minimum acceptable condition and to procure and maintain the plant and equipment needed to operate the school. The buildings and any plant and equipment installed in them at the end of the contract will be transferred to the Council for nil consideration. The Council only has rights to terminate the contract if it compensates the contractor in full for the costs incurred and future profits that would have been generated over the remaining term of the contract.

Property, Plant and Equipment

The assets used to provide services at the school are recognised on the Council's Balance Sheet.

Payments

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

Payments remaining to be made under the PFI contract at 31 March 2016 (excluding any estimation of inflation and availability/performance deductions) are as follows:

	Payment for Services £000	Reimbursements of Capital Expenditure £000	Interest £000	Total £000
Payment in 2016/17	942	534	1,804	3,280
Payable within 2 to 5 years	4,091	2,290	6,737	13,118
Payable within 6 to 10 years	6,050	3,007	7,341	16,398
Payable within 11-15 years	5,815	4,826	5,757	16,398
Payable within 16 – 20 years	6,342	6,663	3,393	16,398
Payable within 21 - 25 years	2,359	3,711	489	6,559
Total	25,599	21,031	25,521	72,151

Although the payments made to the contractor are described as unitary payments, they have been calculated to compensate the contractor for the fair value for the services they provide, the capital expenditure incurred and interest payable whilst the capital expenditure remains to be reimbursed. The liability outstanding to pay the liability to the contractor for capital expenditure incurred is as follows:

	£000
Balance outstanding at 1st April 2015	21,533
Payments during the year	(502)
Capital expenditure incurred in the year	-
Balance outstanding at 31st March 2016	21,031

The carrying value of the PFI liability is the present value of the payments due using the interest rate implicit in the contract. It is considered, therefore, that the carrying value of the liability is the same as the fair value.

16. Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing

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

	2014/15	2015/16
	£000	£000
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	106,807	107,660
Capital Investment:		
Property, Plant & Equipment	31,164	26,991
Investment Properties	162	-
Intangible Assets	408	2,264
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute	647	586
Source of Finance:		
Capital Receipts	(5,408)	(4,494)
Government Grants & Other Contributions	(21,457)	(15,974)
Direct Revenue Contributions	(1,505)	(2,279)
Minimum Revenue Provision	(3,158)	(3,148)
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	107,660	111,606
Explanation of movement in year:		
Increase in underlying need to borrow	3,787	6,740
Minimum Revenue Provision statutory set a side	(3,158)	(3,148)
Deferred Liability Voluntary set a side	-	-
Assets acquired under Finance Leases	224	354
Assets acquired under PFI/PPP contracts	-	-
Increase/(Decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement	853	3,946

The table above shows the Council spent £29.841m on capital during 2015/16 (including £0.354m for assets acquired under finance leases). This represents 79% delivery of the revised capital programme, for which 20% slippage had been anticipated.

The highlights of the programme are detailed below:

	2015/16 £000	2015/16 £000
Construction or Purchase of Assets		
Mersey Gateway Acquisitions	4,760	
Mersey Gateway Development Costs	5,643	
IT Rolling Programme	2,728	
Travellers' Site - Warrington Road	1,302	
Frank Myler Sports & Recreation Centre	585	
Fleet Replacements	1,155	16,173
Improving, Maintaining or Extending Assets		
Norton Priory	1,135	
Highway/Bridge Maintenance	3,136	
Street Lighting Upgrades	694	4,965
Other Works		
Regeneration – 3MG	684	
Playgrounds/Open Spaces	1,057	1,741

Disposal of Assets/Capital Receipts

Land/Dwellings/Recovered Advances – the Council received £5.785m from the sale of land and various properties.

Under residual arrangements, the Council received £0.178m (£0.079m in 2014/15) from Halton Housing Trust for the sale of homes during the year, and a further £0.342m (£0.563m in 2014/15) under VAT Shelter arrangements.

Capitalisation of Borrowing Costs

The Council has undertaken borrowing of £113m in 2014-15 in advance of need to secure favourable interest rates available from the Public Works Loans Board. These loans will be invested until the payments are made to Merseylink Consortium during 2016/17 and 2017/18 to fund the contribution from the Council towards Mersey Gateway Crossing construction costs.

The funds borrowed, and invested for the scheme have been held separately and the interest capitalised has been based on the actual net costs during 2015/16 as shown below:

2014/15		2015/16
£000		£000
(432)	Interest received	(786)
2,426	Interest paid	4,382
1,994	Net interest capitalised	3,596

17. Heritage Assets

Reconciliation of the Carrying Value of Heritage Assets Held by the Council

	2014/15			2015/16		
	Civic Regalia	Outdoor Sculpture	Total	Civic Regalia	Outdoor Sculpture	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or Valuation						
1st April	858	265	1,123	858	310	1,168
Additions	-	45	45	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment Losses/(reversals) Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impairment Losses/(reversals) Recognised in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	-	-	-	-	-
31st March	858	310	1,168	858	310	1,168

Other Heritage Assets

For the following classes of Heritage Assets no valuation is held as the records for the cost of acquisition / construction are no longer available and they are not insured as individual items and therefore are not recorded on the Council's balance sheet.

War Memorials
 Duck Decoy (Hale Village)
 Outdoor works of Art
 Halton Castle

18. Investment Properties

The following items of income and expense have been accounted for in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Please note the 2014-15 figures have been amended due to a presentational error in the 2014/15 Statement of Accounts:

2014/15		2015/16
Restated		
£000		£000
(1,137)	Rental income from Investment Property	(848)
381	Direct operating expenses arising from investment property	616
(756)		(232)

Investment Properties are not directly involved in the delivery of a service. They are valued annually by the Council's in-house valuer.

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 obligations to purchase, construct or develop investment property or repairs, maintenance or enhancement.

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

	2014/15	2015/16
	£000	£000
Balance at the start of the year	12,249	10,895
Additions:		
- Purchases	161	-
- Construction	-	-
- Subsequent expenditure	-	-
Disposals	(2,036)	(818)
Net gain/losses from fair value adjustments	521	279
Transfers:		
- (To)/from Inventories	-	-
- (To)/from Property, Plant and Equipment	-	(8,677)
Other changes		
	10,895	1,679

For details of the fair value valuations used for Investment Properties, see note 15.

19. Intangible Assets

The Council accounts for its software as intangible assets, with the exception of software which is an integral part of a particular IT system and accounted for as part of the hardware item of Property, Plant and Equipment.

All software is given a finite life, based on assessments of the period that the software is expected to be of use to the Council. The useful lives assigned to the major software suites used by the Council are:

Useful Life	Internally Generated Assets	Other Assets
5 years	None	Software Licenses

The carrying amounts of intangible assets are amortised on a straight-line basis. The amortisation of £0.333m charged to revenue in 2015/16 was charged to various cost centres and then absorbed as an overhead across all service headings in the Net Cost of Services.

The movement on Intangible Asset balances during the year as follows:

	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000
Balance at start of year:		
Gross carrying amounts	5,393	5,801
Accumulated amortisation	(4,500)	(4,858)
Net carrying amount at start of year	893	943
Additions:		
Purchases	408	2,263
Amortisation for the period	(358)	(333)
Net carrying amount at end of year	943	2,873
Comprising:		
Gross carrying amounts	5,801	8,064
Accumulated amortisation	(4,858)	(5,191)
	943	2,873

20. Assets Held for Sale

	2014/15	2015/16
	£000	£000
Balance outstanding at start of Year	2,802	1,753
Assets newly classified as held for sale:		
- Property, Plant and Equipment	-	11,543
- Intangible Assets	-	-
Revaluation Losses	(825)	(17)
Revaluation Gains	1	-
Impairment Losses	-	-
Assets declassified as held for sale:		
- Property, Plant and Equipment	-	-
- Intangible Assets	-	-
Assets Sold	(225)	(524)
Transfers from non-current to current	-	-
Other Movements	-	-
Balance outstanding at year-end	1,753	12,755

For details of the fair value valuations used for Assets Held for Sale, see note 15.

Please note all Assets Held for Sale are due to be sold within a year and are shown as Current Assets on the Balance sheet.

21. Investments

Long term investments consist of:

	Balance at 31/03/2015	Balance at 31/03/2016
	£000	£000
Halton Borough Transport Ltd		
- Share Capital	430	430
- Debenture 1	11	4
- Debenture 2	71	57
Municipal Bonds Agency	10	10
CCLA Property Fund	-	1,912
Mersey Gateway Share Capital - de minimis	-	-
Halton Development Partnership Limited – de minimis	-	-
Widnes Regeneration Limited – de minimis	-	-
Long Term Deposits	-	5,000
	522	7,413

Halton Borough Transport Ltd was set up in October 1986 as a public transport undertaking, with an issued share capital of £430,100, wholly owned by Halton Borough Council. There are currently two debentures being repaid with interest. Debenture 1 is being repaid at

£7,000 per annum and Debenture 2 repaid at £14,286 per annum. Extracts from their accounts are detailed below:

	31/03/2015 Restated £000	31/03/2016 £000
Profit and Loss Account		
Turnover	(6,100)	(6,295)
Operating and Other Expenditure	6,122	6,310
Net (Profit)/Loss (before Taxation)	22	15
Taxation	60	(2)
(Profit) / Loss for Financial Year	82	13
Balance Sheet as at 31st March		
Fixed Assets	2,916	2,555
Current Assets less Current Liabilities	(873)	(750)
Net Current Assets	2,043	1,805
Long Term Liabilities	(1,230)	(1,007)
Provisions for Liabilities and Charges	(117)	(115)
Pension Scheme Liability	-	
	696	683
Represented by:		
Share Capital	(430)	(430)
Profit and Loss Account	(266)	(253)
	(696)	(683)

Please note that as the Halton Borough Transport Ltd's accounts were not finalised by 30th June 2016, the figures above have been produced using draft accounts from Halton Borough Transport. The 2014/15 figures shown above have been restated to reflect the final audited accounts.

Further details can be obtained from Halton Borough Transport Limited, Moor Lane, Widnes. Telephone 0151 423 3333.

Mersey Gateway Crossings Board Limited was set up in October 2013 with an issued share capital of £100, wholly owned by Halton Borough Council. Extracts from their accounts are detailed below:

	31/03/2015	31/03/2016
	Restated	
	£000	£000
Profit and Loss Account		
Turnover	(2,134)	(2,478)
Operating and Other Expenditure	2,170	2,517
Net (Profit)/Loss	36	39
Other Comprehensive Income	156	(296)
Total Comprehensive loss	192	(257)
Balance Sheet as at 31st March		
Fixed Assets	1	1
Current Assets less Current Liabilities	(11)	(1)
Net Current Assets	(10)	-
Long Term Liabilities	-	-
Provisions for Liabilities and Charges	-	-
Pension Scheme Liability	(536)	(289)
	(546)	(289)
Represented by:		
Share Capital	-	-
Profit and Loss Account	546	289
	546	289

Please note that as Mersey Gateway Crossing Board Limited's accounts were not finalised by 30th June 2016, the figures above have been produced using draft accounts for 2015/16. The 2014/15 figures shown above have been restated to reflect the final audited accounts.

Further details can be obtained from Mersey Gateway Crossings Board Limited, Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes. Telephone 0151 511 8377.

Short term investments consist of:

	31/03/2015	31/03/2016
	£000	£000
Nationalised Banks		
Royal Bank of Scotland Plc	30,000	10,000
UK Banks & Building Societies		
Coventry Building Society	-	15,000
Goldman Sachs	-	8,000
Leeds Building Society	-	5,000
Lloyds/Bank of Scotland Plc	30,000	10,000
Nationwide	-	20,000
Santander	10,000	10,013
Standard Chartered	10,000	-
Non-UK Banks		
Bank of Montreal	10,000	-
Bank of Nova Scotia	10,000	10,000
Commonwealth Bank Australia	10,000	10,000
Development Bank of Singapore	10,000	-
National Australia Bank	10,000	10,000
Overseas Chinese Banking Corporation	10,000	-
Rabobank	10,000	10,000
Toronto Dominion	10,000	10,000
United Overseas Bank	5,000	5,000
Local Authorities		
Darlington Borough Council	5,000	-
Lancashire County Council	-	10,000
	170,000	143,013

22. Debtors

	Gross Debtors	Impairment	Net Debtors	Gross Debtors	Impairment	Net Debtors
	31 st March 2015			31 st March 2016		
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Short Term						
Central Government Bodies	6,131	-	6,131	3,011	-	3,011
Mersey Gateway Grant (DfT)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Local Authorities	928	-	928	1,440	-	1,440
NHS Bodies	156	-	156	995	-	995
Public Corporations & Trading Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Entities & Individuals	21,019	(7,352)	13,667	22,413	(7,827)	14,586
	28,234	(7,352)	20,882	27,859	(7,827)	20,032
Long Term						
Mortgagors – Council House Sales	2	-	2	-	-	-
Housing Associations	1,259	-	1,259	266	-	266
Mersey Gateway working capital	700	-	700	600	-	600
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
	1,961	-	1,961	866	-	866

23. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	31/03/2015	31/03/2016
	Restated	
	£000	£000
Cash held by the Council	47	46
Bank current accounts	3,643	2,895
Short-term deposits	40,500	19,105
	44,190	22,046

Please note that the 2014/15 figures have been restated. As part of the 2014/15 audit, the cash and cash equivalent figures were corrected on the Balance Sheet, but the supporting notes were not. This change ensures the supporting notes match the main statement for 2014/15

24. Creditors

	31/03/2015	31/03/2016
	Restated	
	£000	£000
Central Government Bodies	(8,874)	(10,194)
Other Local Authorities	(2,299)	(3,616)
NHS Bodies	(1,613)	(2,369)
Public Corporations & Trading Funds	(2)	(2)
Other Entities & Individuals	(22,012)	(14,503)
	(34,800)	(30,684)

Please note that the 2014/15 figures have been restated. As part of the 2014/15 audit, the creditor figures were corrected on the Balance Sheet, but the supporting notes were not. This change ensures the supporting notes match the main statement for 2014/15.

25. Leases

Operating Leases – Authority as lessee

The Council has acquired a number of properties by entering into operating leases.

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

	31/03/2015	31/03/2016
	£000	£000
Not later than one year	751	366
Later than one year not later than five years	1,598	1,069
Later than five years	10,580	10,789
	12,929	12,224

Operating Leases - Authority as a Lessor

The Council leases out property under operating leases to supplement the Council's income, to allow short term use of assets being retained for longer term asset strategy and to allow the use of the Council assets by the third sector.

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

	31/03/2015	31/03/2016
	£000	£000
Not later than one year	2,059	2,057
Later than one year not later than five years	2,604	2,961
Later than five years	11,371	12,833
	16,034	17,851

26. Borrowings

Short term borrowings consist of:

	31/03/2015 £000	31/03/2016 £000
Source of loans:		
Public Works Loans Board	(10,000)	(10,000)
West Midlands Police	(5,000)	-
Portsmouth CC	(10,000)	-
London Borough of Havering	(5,000)	-
Liverpool City Region - LEP	(5,449)	-
	(35,449)	(10,000)

Long term borrowings consist of:

	31/03/2015 £000	31/03/2016 £000
Source of loans:		
Public Works Loan Board	(143,000)	(133,000)
Eurohypo	(10,000)	(10,000)
Liverpool City Region - LEP	-	(5,664)
	(153,000)	(148,664)
Analysis of loans by maturity:		
Maturing in 1-2 years	(10,000)	(10,000)
Maturing in 2-5 years	(10,000)	(5,664)
Maturing in 5-10 years	-	-
Maturing in more than 10 years	(133,000)	(133,000)
	(153,000)	(148,664)

27. Provisions

	NNDR Appeals £000	Other Short Term Provisions £000	Long Term Provisions
Balance at 1 April 2015	(4,512)	(645)	(354)
Additional provisions made in year	(619)		
Amount used in year	132	59	286
Amounts reclassified as <12 months			
Amounts reclassified from >12 months		(68)	68
Unused amounts reversed in year			
Balance at 31 March 2016	(4,999)	(654)	-

NNDR Appeals

The Council is required to make a provision for NNDR valuation appeal claims. It is thought that all these claims will be settled during 2016/17.

28. Other Long Term Liabilities

	31/03/2015 £000	31/03/2016 £000
Defined Benefit Pension liability	(127,655)	(64,719)
Finance PFI Lease liability due more than 12 months	(21,143)	(20,494)
Finance Leases liability due more than 12 months	(509)	(531)
Deferred liabilities	(88)	(78)
	(149,395)	(85,822)

29. Pension Schemes

Disclosure of Net Pensions Asset/Liability

Participation in pension schemes

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its officers and other employees, the council makes contributions towards the cost of post-employment retirement 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 entitlement.

The Council participates in three pension schemes, all of which offer defined benefit schemes:

The Local Government Pension Scheme administered by Cheshire West and Chester Council - this is a funded defined benefit final salary scheme, meaning that the Council and its employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pensions liabilities with investment assets.

- the Cheshire Pension Fund is operated under the regulatory framework for the Local Government Pension Scheme and the governance of the Fund is the responsibility of the full Council within Cheshire West and Chester Council, supported by the Pension Fund Committee. The Fund's policies and investment strategy are set by the Committee and administered by the Director of Finance from Cheshire West and Chester.

The Teacher's Pension Scheme – This is a centralised scheme administered by Teachers Pensions Agency. Although the scheme is unfunded, the Agency uses a notional fund as the basis for calculating the employers' contribution rate paid by Local Education Authorities.

The NHS pension scheme relates to 49 employees. The scheme operates on a similar basis to the Teacher's pension scheme

Local Government Pension Scheme

Halton Borough Transport Ltd

As a wholly owned subsidiary of Halton Borough Council, the liabilities of Halton Borough Transport Ltd (HBT Ltd) rest, in the last resort, with the Council. As a result it has been agreed that, from and including the financial year 2009/10, the Council will be liable for the past service deficit of the Cheshire Pension Fund relating to HBT Ltd. This cost will be transferred to the Council and will be included within its annual employers contribution rate. HBT Ltd will remain liable for the payment of the future service rate to the Cheshire Pension Fund.

Transactions Relating to Post-Employment Benefits

In 2015/16, the Council paid an employer's contribution to the Cheshire Pension Fund of £13.084m (£12.099m in 2014/15), representing 21.1% (20.6% in 2014/15) of pensionable pay.

The cost of retirement benefits is recognised in the Net Cost of Services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge that is required to be made 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 Movement in Reserves Statement. The following transactions have been made in the General Fund Balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year:

	2014/15	2015/16
	£000	£000
Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement		
Cost of Services		
Current Service Costs	12,330	15,887
Past Service Costs/(Gain)	38	761
Losses/(Gains) from Settlements	(832)	(121)
Finance & Investment Income & Expenditure		
Net interest expense	4,047	4,139
Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	15,583	20,666
Other Post-employment Benefits charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		
Re-measurement of the net defined benefit liability comprising:		
Return on plan assets (excluding the amount included in the net interest expense)	(45,592)	(9,178)
Actuarial (gains) and losses arising on changes in demographic assumptions	-	-
Actuarial (gains) and losses arising on changes in financial assumptions	77,314	(54,358)
Other experience	(4,314)	(6,981)
Total Post-employment Benefits charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	27,408	(70,517)
Movement in Reserves Statement		
Reversal of net charges made to the Surplus or Deficit on the provision of Services for post-employment benefits in accordance with the Code	(15,583)	(20,666)
Actual amount charged against the General Fund Balance for pensions in the year:		
Employers' contributions payable to scheme	12,099	13,084

Pension Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

The amount included in the Balance Sheet arising from the Council's obligation in respect of its defined benefit plans is as follows

	2014/15	2015/16
	£000	£000
Present value of the defined benefit obligation	579,821	541,510
Fair value of plan assets	(452,166)	(476,791)
Sub Total	127,655	64,719
Other movement in the liability / (asset)	-	-
Net liability arising from defined benefit obligation	127,655	64,719

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

	2014/15	2015/16
	£000	£000
Opening fair value of scheme assets	392,130	452,166
Interest income	16,848	14,483
Remeasurement gain / (loss)	-	-
The return on plan assets, excluding the amount included in the net interest expense	45,592	9,178
Contributions from employer	12,099	13,084
Contribution from employees into the scheme	3,364	3,455
Benefits Paid	(15,548)	(15,403)
Effect of Settlements	(2,319)	(172)
Closing fair value of scheme assets	452,166	476,791

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

	2014/15	2015/16
	£000	£000
Opening balance at 1 April	488,893	579,821
Current service cost	12,330	15,887
Interest Cost	20,895	18,622
Contribution from scheme participants	3,364	3,455
Remeasurement (gains) and losses:		
- Actuarial gains / losses arising from changes in demographic assumptions	-	-
- Actuarial gains / losses arising from changes in financial assumptions	77,314	(54,359)
- Other	(4,314)	(6,981)
Past service cost	38	761
Benefits paid	(15,548)	(15,403)
Liabilities extinguished on settlements	(3,151)	(293)
Closing balance at 31 March	579,821	541,510

Local Government Pension Scheme assets comprised

	Fair value of scheme assets 2014/15			Fair value of scheme assets 2015/16		
	Quoted prices in active markets £000	Quoted prices not in active markets £000	Total £000	Quoted prices in active markets £000	Quoted prices not in active markets £000	Total £000
Cash and cash equivalents	-	10,801	10,801	-	10,248	10,248
Equity securities						
- Consumer	43,921	-	43,921	14,568	-	14,568
- Manufacturing	12,623	-	12,623	11,124	-	11,124
- Energy & utilities	1,982	-	1,982	2,873	-	2,873
- Financial institutions	13,338	-	13,338	14,342	-	14,342
- Health & Care	4,228	-	4,228	3,866	-	3,866
- Information technology	13,152	-	13,152	42,754	-	42,754
- Other	4,274	-	4,274	1,954	-	1,954
Sub-total equity	93,518	-	93,518	91,481	-	91,481
Debt Securities						
- Corporate Bonds	-	-	-	-	-	-
- Government Bonds	-	-	-	-	-	-
- Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-total bonds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Property						
- UK property	-	35,443	35,443	-	37,689	37,689
- Overseas property	-	1,061	1,061	-	828	828
Sub-total property	-	36,504	36,504	-	38,517	38,517
Private Equity	-	21,494	21,494	-	25,080	25,080
Other investment funds						
- Equities	44,077	-	44,077	60,444	-	60,444
- Bonds	158,130	-	158,130	129,361	33,331	162,692
- Hedge funds	-	62,186	62,186	-	62,996	62,996
- Other	-	25,456	25,456	-	25,333	25,333
Sub-total investment funds	202,207	87,642	289,849	189,805	121,660	311,465
Total Assets	295,725	156,441	452,166	281,286	195,505	476,791

Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, etc. The liabilities have been assessed by Hymans Robertson LLP, an independent firm of actuaries.

The principal assumptions used by the actuary are shown below:

	2014/15	2015/16
Long-term expected rate of return on assets in the scheme		
Investment Returns		
- Equity Investments	3.2%	3.5%
- Bonds	3.2%	3.5%
- Property	3.2%	3.5%
- Cash	3.2%	3.5%
Mortality Assumptions		
Longevity at 65 for current pensioners:		
- Men	22.3 years	22.3 years
- Women	24.4 years	24.4 years
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners:		
- Men	24.1 years	24.1 years
- Women	26.7 years	26.7 years
Rate of inflation	2.4%	2.2%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.3%	3.2%
Rate of increase in pensions	2.4%	2.2%
Rate for discounting scheme liabilities	3.2%	3.5%
Take-up of option to convert annual pension into retirement lump sum		
- Service to April 2008	50%	50%
- Service from April 2008	75%	75%

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

	Approximate % increase to Employer Liability	Approximate monetary amount £000
Change in assumptions at 31 March 2016		
0.5% decrease in Real Discount Rate	11%	57,801
1 year increase in member life expectancy	3%	16,245
0.5% increase in the Salary Increase Rate	3%	17,399
0.5% increase in the Pension Increase Rate	7%	39,637

Impact on the Authority's Cash Flows

The objectives of the scheme are to keep employers' contribution at a constant rate as possible. The Council has agreed a strategy with the scheme's actuary to achieve a funding level of 100% over the 20 years following the last valuation. Funding levels are monitored on an annual basis and the next triennial valuation has been completed on 31 March 2016, with rates applicable from 1 April 2017.

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 other main existing public service schemes may not provide benefits in relation to service after 31 March 2014 (or service after 31 March 2015 for other main existing public service pension schemes in England and Wales). The Act provides for scheme regulations to be made within a common framework, to establish new career average revalued earnings schemes to pay pensions and other benefits.

The authority is anticipated to pay contributions of £11.684m to the scheme in 2016/17.

The weighted average duration of the defined benefit obligation for scheme members is 18.5 years in 2015/16 (18.5 years in 2014/15)

Further information can be found in Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council's Pension Funds Annual Report which is available from Cheshire Pension Fund, Cheshire West and Chester Council, HQ, Nicholas Street, Chester, CH1 2NP.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

Defined Contribution Scheme

In 2015/16, the Council paid an employers' contribution to the Teachers' Pension Agency of £4.526m (£4.193m in 2014/15) in respect of teachers' pension costs. The contribution rate from September 2015 was 16.5% (14.1% in 2014/15) of teachers' pensionable pay.

The scheme is a defined benefit scheme. Although the scheme is unfunded, Teachers' Pensions use a notional fund as the basis for calculating the employers' contribution rate paid by Local Education Authorities. It is not possible for the Council to identify a share of the underlying liabilities in the scheme attributable to its own employees. For the purpose of the statement of accounts, it is therefore accounted for on the same basis as a defined contribution scheme.

The Council is responsible for any additional benefits granted upon early retirement, outside the standard terms of the scheme. For the year 2015/16 the cost was £0.131m (£0.129m in 2014/15).

NHS Pension Scheme

Defined Contribution Scheme

In 2015/16 the Council paid an employers' contribution to the National Health Service Pensions Scheme in respect of 49 employees, the amount paid was £0.169m (£0.121m in 2014/15) in respect of these former NHS employees' pension costs. The contribution rate was 14.3% (14.0% in 2014/15) of pensionable pay.

The scheme is a defined benefit scheme. Although the scheme is unfunded, NHS use a notional fund as the basis for calculating the employers' contribution rate paid by local authorities.

It is not possible for the Council to identify a share of the underlying liabilities in the scheme attributable to its own employees. For the purposes of this Statement of Accounts, it is therefore accounted for on the same basis as a defined contribution scheme.

30. Financial Instruments

Please note that some 2014/15 figures have been restated. As part of the 2014/15 audit, the cash and cash equivalent figures were corrected on the Balance Sheet, but the supporting notes were not. This change ensures the supporting notes match the main statement for 2014/15

Nature and Extent of Risks from Financial Instruments

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 enough funds available to meet its commitments to make payments

Market Risk – the possibility that financial loss might arise for the Council as a result of changes in such measures as interest rates and stock market movements

The Council's overall risk management programme focuses on the unpredictability of financial markets and seeks to minimise potential adverse effects on the resources available to fund services. Risk management is carried out by the treasury management section, under policies approved by the Council in the treasury management strategy. The Council provides written principles for overall risk management, as well as written policies covering specific areas, such as interest risk, credit risk and the investment of surplus cash.

Fair Value

The Code requires that each class of financial asset and liability should disclose the “fair value” in a way that permits it to be compared with its carrying amount, as well as the method used in determining such fair values. The Council has used Capita Asset Services, its treasury management advisors to calculate these values and they have based the calculation on the appropriate PWLB rate for new loans as at 31st March 2016. The fair value of the Council’s Certificates of Deposit (CDs) have been provided by King & Shaxson.

Credit Risk

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

Risks are minimised through the Annual Investment Strategy by ensuring that cash deposits are only placed with financial institutions identified on the Council’s Approved List of Counterparties that meet identified minimum credit criteria and imposes a maximum sum to be invested with a financial institution located within each category. This list was established as one of the series of controls recommended by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) which the Council has adopted. The Annual Investment Strategy is regularly reviewed, as is the approved counterparty list, to help minimise the Council’s exposure to risk.

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

The Council’s maximum exposure to credit risk in relation to its investments held in banks, building societies and property funds of £169m 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-recoverability applies to all Council deposits, but there was no evidence at 31st March 2016 that this was likely to crystallise.

During the year the Council complied fully with the requirements laid out in the Code and no counterparty indicated any problem with repaying any deposit placed by the Council.

The counterparties on the Councils’ list are grouped and ranked by a mixture of credit ratings and size and are set out below:

Maximum Deposit per institution £000	Counterparties	Exposure at 31/03/2016 £000
40,000	UK Government	-
40,000	Nationalised and Part Nationalised Banks - Minimum Rating A	10,700
30,000	UK Banks and Building Societies - Minimum Rating AAA	-
25,000	- Minimum Rating AA	81,418
20,000	- Minimum Rating A	-
20,000	Foreign Banks (with Sovereign Rating of AAA) - Minimum Rating AAA	-
10,000	- Minimum Rating AA	55,000
5,000	- Minimum Rating A	5,000
20,000	Money Market Funds (minimum rating AAA)	1,912
40,000	Local Authorities	15,000
		169,030

The counterparties on the list are under constant assessment using a variety of sources including rating agencies and professional advice.

The following table analyses the Council's potential maximum exposure to credit risk on other financial assets, based on experience of default and non-collection over recent financial years, adjusted to reflect current market conditions.

	Estimated maximum exposure to default and non-collection at 31/03/2015 £000	Amount Outstanding at 31/03/2016 £000	Historical experience of default %	Estimated maximum exposure to default and non-collection at 31/03/2016 £000
Deposits with Banks	-	112,118	0.00	-
Deposits with Building Societies	-	40,000	0.00	-
Deposits with Local Authorities	-	15,000	0.00	-
Deposits with Property Funds	-	1,912	0.00	-
Customers/Clients	189	8,141	2.50	204
	189			204

None of the Council's counterparties had any difficulty in repaying their liabilities during 2015/16. There has been no impairment of any financial assets during the course of the year. The Council does not anticipate any losses due to non-performance of its counterparties.

An analysis of the customer/client debt is shown below. As at 31st March 2016 £6.7m of this debt is overdue:

	31/03/2015 £000	31/03/2016 £000
Less than 3 months	3,709	3,961
3 to 6 months	631	846
6 months to 1 year	715	737
More than 1 year	2,511	2,597
	7,566	8,141
Provision for non-payment	(2,977)	(2,925)

Liquidity Risk

The Council has a comprehensive cash flow management system that seeks to ensure that cash is available as needed. If unexpected movements happen, the Council has ready access to borrowings from the money markets and Public Works Loans Board (PWLb). There is no significant risk that the Council will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments under financial instruments. Instead, the risk is that the Council will be bound to replenish a significant proportion of its borrowings at a time of unfavourable interest rates. The Council sets limits on the proportion of its fixed rate borrowing during specified periods.

The maturity analysis of financial liabilities is as follows:

	31/03/2015	31/03/2016
	Restated	
	£000	£000
Less than 1 year	62,868	31,304
Between 1 and 2 years	10,000	10,000
Between 2 and 5 years	10,000	5,664
More than 5 years	133,000	133,000
	215,868	179,968

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 interest rate movements on its borrowing and investments. Movements in interest rates can have a complex impact on the Council. For example a rise in interest rates would have the following effects:

Borrowing at variable rates – the interest expense charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement will rise

Borrowing at fixed rates – the fair value of liabilities will fall (with no impact on revenue balances)

Investment at variable rates – the interest income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise

Investment at fixed rates – the fair value of assets will fall (with no impact on revenue balances)

Borrowings are not carried at fair value on the Balance Sheet, so nominal gains and losses on fixed rate borrowings would not impact on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. However, changes to interest payable and receivable on variable rate borrowings and investments are posted to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and affect the General Fund Balance. Movements in the fair value of fixed rate investments that have a quoted market price will be reflected in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

The Council has a number of strategies for managing interest rate risk. The Annual Treasury Management Strategy draws together the Councils' prudential and treasury indicators and its expected treasury operations, including an expectation of interest rate movements. From this strategy, a treasury management section monitor interest rates within the year and adjust exposures accordingly. During periods of falling interest rates, and where economic circumstances make it favourable, fixed rate loans will be repaid early to limit exposure to losses and fixed rate investments may be taken for longer periods to secure better long term results, similarly the drawing of longer term fixed rate borrowing would be postponed.

According to an assessment strategy at 31st March 2016, if interest rates had been 1% higher with all other variables held constant, the financial effect would be:

	2015/16
	£000
Increase in interest payable on variable rate borrowings	-
Increase in interest receivable on variable rate investments	(1,665)
Impact upon Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(1,665)

The impact of a 1% fall in interest rates would be as shown previously but with movements being reversed.

The Council has not taken any short term or variable borrowings in year so there was no interest payable for variable rate borrowings in 2015/16.

Price Risk

The Council invested £2m in the CCLA property fund in 2015/16. The price of our investment is subject to potential gains and losses based on market volatility. The investment is shown in the accounts at its value as at 31st March 2016 and any gains or losses relating to this investment are shown in the Available for Sale reserve (see note 40).

The Council have no other holdings that are subject to market volatility, an example of which would be shares traded on the equity market.

Foreign Exchange Risk

The Council has no financial assets or liabilities, denominated in foreign currencies and thus has no exposure to loss or movement in exchange rates.

Financial Instrument Balances

Categories of Financial Instrument

The following categories of financial instrument are carried in the Balance Sheet:

	Long Term 31/03/2015 £000	Current Restated 31/03/2015 £000	Long Term 31/03/2016 £000	Current 31/03/2016 £000
Investments				
Loans and receivables	-	170,000	5,000	143,013
Available for Sale Financial Assets	-	-	1,912	-
Unquoted equity investment at cost	522	-	501	-
Total	522	170,000	7,413	143,013
Assets				
Cash & Cash Equivalents	-	44,190	-	22,046
Loans and receivables	1,803	16,749	774	13,035
Total	1,803	60,939	774	35,081
Borrowings				
Financial liabilities at amortised cost	(153,000)	(35,449)	(148,664)	(10,000)
Other liabilities				
Finance lease liabilities & PFI	(21,429)	(893)	(20,670)	(909)
Current Liabilities				
Financial liabilities at amortised cost	-	(27,419)	-	(21,304)

Material Soft Loans Made by the Council

There were no material soft loans made by Halton Borough Council in 2015/16 (£0 2014/15)

Reclassifications

There were no reclassifications of financial instruments made by Halton Borough Council in 2015/16 (£0 2014/15).

Income, Expense, Gains and Losses

	2014/15			2015/16		
	Financial Liabilities measured at amortised cost £000	Financial Assets: Loans and Receivables £000	Total £000	Financial Liabilities measured at amortised cost £000	Financial Assets: Loans and Receivables £000	Total £000
Interest expense	5,935	-	5,935	7,739	-	7,739
Interest income	-	(1,150)	(1,150)	-	(2,021)	(2,021)
Net Gain/(Loss)	5,935	(1,150)	4,785	7,739	(2,021)	5,718

Fair values of Financial Assets

Some of the authority's financial assets are measured at fair value on a recurring basis and are described in the following table, including the valuation techniques used to measure them:

Recurring fair value measurements	Input level in fair value hierarchy £000	Valuation technique used to measure fair value £000	31/03/2015 £000	31/03/2016 £000
Available for Sale: Property Fund	Level 1	Unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical shares	-	1,912

Gains and losses included in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure for the current year relate to the valuation of the above asset and are taken to the Available for Sale Financial Instruments Reserve. These are reported in the surplus or deficit on the revaluation of available for sale financial assets line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

There have been no transfers between input levels during the year, and no change in the valuation technique used.

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

Except for the financial assets carried at fair value (described in the table above), all other financial liabilities and financial assets held by the authority are classified as loans and receivables and long-term debtors and creditors are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost. Their fair value can be assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that will take place over the remaining term of the instruments (level 2), using the following assumptions:

- Estimated ranges of interest rates at 31st March 2016 for loans from PWLB and other loans receivable and payable based on new lending rates for equivalent loans at that date.
- Certificates of Deposit are measured at mid-market price on 31st March 2016.
- PFI Valuation is assumed to be carried at fair value (see note 15 for further details).

- No early repayment or impairment is recognised for loans or investments.
- Cash and Cash Equivalents are held at carrying value
- The fair value of trade and other receivables is taken to be the invoiced or billed amount less a provision for impairment.
- Short term creditors are carried at cost

The fair values are shown below:

	2014/15		2015/16	
	Carrying Amount Restated	Fair Value Restated	Carrying Amount	Fair Value
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Financial Liabilities - short term				
Borrowings	(35,449)	(35,607)	(10,000)	(10,155)
Finance lease liabilities & PFI	(893)	(893)	(909)	(909)
Other financial liabilities	(27,419)	(27,419)	(21,304)	(21,304)
Financial Liabilities - long term				
Borrowings	(153,000)	(174,262)	(148,664)	(170,573)
Finance lease liabilities & PFI	(21,429)	(21,429)	(20,670)	(20,670)
Other financial liabilities	-	-	-	-

The fair values of the liabilities is higher than the carrying amount because the Council's portfolio of loans includes a number of fixed rate loans where the interest rate payable is higher than the prevailing rates at the Balance Sheet date. This shows a notional future loss (based on economic conditions at 31st March 2016) arising from a commitment to pay interest to lenders above current market rates.

	2014/15		2015/16	
	Carrying Amount Restated	Fair Value Restated	Carrying Amount	Fair Value
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Financial Assets - short term				
Investments - loans and receivables	170,000	170,622	143,013	143,569
Cash and Cash Equivalents	44,190	44,197	22,046	22,046
Loans and receivables	16,749	16,749	13,035	13,035
Financial Assets - long term				
Unquoted equity investment at cost	522	522	501	501
Loans and receivables	1,803	1,803	3,862	3,862

The fair value of assets is higher than the carrying amount because the Council's portfolio of investments includes a number of fixed rate investments where the interest receivable is higher than the rates available for similar loans at the Balance Sheet date. This shows a

notional future gain (based on economic conditions at the 31st March 2016) attributable to the commitment to receive interest above current market rates.

31. Termination Benefits

As part of the council's on-going efficiency review there were a total number of 96 redundancies in 2015/16, some of whom were 55 or over and, as a result, accessed their pension early at a cost to the council. In addition the Council incurs liabilities for past early retirements, which are charged to the authority's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement over a period of five years, incurring total liabilities of £4.315m (2014/15 1.678m) Please see note 3 for the number of exit packages and the cost per band.

Termination costs are split between service areas as follows:

	2015/16
	£000
Adult Social Care	523
Central Services	1,049
Children's & Education Services	700
Corporate & Democratic Core	288
Culture & Related Services	567
Environmental & Regulatory Services	519
Highways & Transport Services	503
Housing Services	80
Planning Services	86
Total	4,315

32. Contingent Liabilities

At 31st March 2016, the Council had 2 categories of material Contingent Liabilities:

Mersey Gateway

The Mersey Gateway project is a major capital scheme currently progressing with the construction of a new six lane toll bridge over the river Mersey. The new bridge will provide a multitude of economic and regional benefits whilst relieving the congested and ageing Silver Jubilee Bridge.

Under an agreement with Merseylink, the organisation awarded the contract to deliver the Mersey Gateway Project, Halton Borough Council have a maximum liability of £7m towards the cost of remediation work in respect of contamination on any of the land that falls within the Mersey Gateway Project.

Halton Borough Council also have a maximum liability of £3m in respect of additional project costs arising from changes in technology used by Merseyside Integrated Transport

Authority in the tolling of the Mersey Tunnels, in so far as such changes impact on the technology to be used for the tolling of the Mersey Gateway and Silver Jubilee Bridge.

At the 31st March 2016, the actual amount of any possible obligations is unknown.

NHS and Foundation Trusts Applications for Mandatory Relief from Business Rates

A hereditament that is wholly or mainly used for charitable purposes is entitled to 80% mandatory relief from business rates. There is an ongoing issue as to whether NHS and Foundation trusts fall into this category. Under Local Government Act 1988 the central issue is whether a foundation trust or NHS trust is an “institution or other organisation established for charitable purposes only.” If so such establishments would be entitled to 80% mandatory relief.

Legal advice has been received from the LGA which concludes that NHS Trusts and Foundations are not charities and therefore are not entitled to mandatory rating relief regardless of the precise use being made of the hereditament in question. The Council has received a small number of applications from health trusts for mandatory relief which have to date all been refused. However, if any applications were successful there would be a potential liability of approximately £0.8m with claims being backdated over six years.

33 (a). Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under regulation – for year ended 31/03/15

This note details the adjustments that are made to total comprehensive income and expenditure recognised by the Council in the year in accordance with proper accounting practice to the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Council to meet future capital and revenue expenditure.

	General Fund Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Movement in Usable Reserves	Movement in Unusable Reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Capital adjustment account reversal of items debited or credited to the CIES:					
Charges for depreciation and impairment on non-current assets	(21,461)	-	-	(21,461)	21,461
Revaluation losses on Property, Plant and Equipment	(7,451)	-	-	(7,451)	7,451
Movements in the Market Value of Investment Properties	521	-	-	521	(521)
Amortisation of Intangible Assets	(358)	-	-	(358)	358
Capital Grants and Contributions applied	21,457	-	-	21,457	(21,457)
REFCUS	(647)	-	-	(647)	647
Amounts written off on disposal of Academies to CIES	(7,343)	-	-	(7,343)	7,343
Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as gain/loss on disposal to the CIES	2,413	(6,847)	-	(4,434)	4,434
Insertion of items not debited or credited to the CIES:					
Statutory provision for the financing of Capital investment	3,158	-	-	3,158	(3,158)
Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund Balance	1,505	-	-	1,505	(1,505)
Other					
Transfer between CAA and RR for depreciation that is based on CV rather than HC	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Grants Unapplied Account					
Capital Grants and Contributions unapplied credited to the CIES	93	-	(93)	-	-
Application of Grants to Capital Financing transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account	-	-	-	-	-

	General Fund Balance £000	Capital Receipts Reserve £000	Capital Grants Unapplied £000	Movement in Usable Reserves £000	Movement in Unusable Reserves £000
Capital Receipts Reserve					
Transfer of cash sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the CIES	-	-	-	-	-
Use of Capital Receipts Reserve to Finance new Capital Expenditure	-	5,408	-	5,408	(5,408)
Contribution from the Capital Receipts Reserve towards the administration cost of non-current asset disposals	-	-	-	-	-
Contribution from the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance the payments to the Government Capital Receipts pool	(1)	1	-	-	-
Transfer from the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve upon the receipt of cash	-	-	-	-	-
Pensions Reserve					
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited/credited to the CIES	(15,583)	-	-	(15,583)	15,583
Employers pension contributions and direct payments to pensioners	12,099	-	-	12,099	(12,099)
Collection Fund Adjustment					
Amount by which council tax income credited to the CIES is different from council tax income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(1,165)	-	-	(1,165)	1,165
Accumulated Absences Account					
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the CIES on an accruals basis is different from remuneration with statutory requirements	(90)	-	-	(90)	90
TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS	(12,853)	(1,438)	(93)	(14,384)	14,384

33 (b). Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under regulation – for year ended 31/03/16

This note details the adjustments that are made to total comprehensive income and expenditure recognised by the Council in the year in accordance with proper accounting practice to the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Council to meet future capital and revenue expenditure.

	General Fund Balance £000	Capital Receipts Reserve £000	Capital Grants Unapplied £000	Movement in Usable Reserves £000	Movement in Unusable Reserves £000
Capital adjustment account reversal of items debited or credited to the CIES:					
Charges for depreciation and impairment on non-current assets	(21,793)	-	-	(21,793)	21,793
Revaluation losses on Property, Plant and Equipment	2,912	-	-	2,912	(2,912)
Movements in the Market Value of Investment Properties	279	-	-	279	(279)
Amortisation of Intangible Assets	(333)	-	-	(333)	333
Capital Grants and Contributions applied	15,974	-	-	15,974	(15,974)
REFCUS	(586)	-	-	(586)	586
Amounts written off on disposal of Academies to CIES	-	-	-	-	-
Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the CIES	2,235	(5,407)	-	(3,172)	3,172
Insertion of items not debited or credited to the CIES:					
Statutory provision for the financing of Capital investment	3,148	-	-	3,148	(3,148)
Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund Balance	2,279	-	-	2,279	(2,279)
Other					
Transfer between CAA and RR for depreciation that is based on CV rather than HC	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Grants Unapplied Account					
Capital Grants and Contributions unapplied credited to the CIES	33	-	(33)	-	-
Application of Grants to Capital Financing transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account	-	-	-	-	-

	General Fund Balance £000	Capital Receipts Reserve £000	Capital Grants Unapplied £000	Movement in Usable Reserves £000	Movement in Unusable Reserves £000
Capital Receipts Reserve					
Transfer of cash sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the CIES	-	-	-	-	-
Use of Capital Receipts Reserve to Finance new Capital Expenditure	-	4,494	-	4,494	(4,494)
Contribution from the Capital Receipts Reserve towards the administration cost of non-current asset disposals	-	-	-	-	-
Contribution from the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance the payments to the Government Capital Receipts pool	(1)	1	-	-	-
Transfer from the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve upon the receipt of cash	-	-	-	-	-
Pensions Reserve					
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited/credited to the CIES	(20,666)	-	-	(20,666)	20,666
Employers pension contributions and direct payments to pensioners	13,084	-	-	13,084	(13,084)
Collection Fund Adjustment					
Amount by which council tax income credited to the CIES is different from council tax income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	1,724	-	-	1,724	(1,724)
Accumulated Absences Account					
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the CIES on an accruals basis is different from remuneration with statutory requirements	101	-	-	101	(101)
TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS	(1,610)	(912)	(33)	(2,555)	2,555

34. Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves

This note sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund in earmarked reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans and the amounts posted back from earmarked reserves to meet General Fund expenditure in 2015/16.

	Balance at 31 st March 2014 £000	Movement (to) / from Reserve £000	Balance at 31 st March 2015 £000	Movement (to) / from Reserve £000	Balance at 31 st March 2016 £000
General Fund					
Schools Reserves (Balances held by schools under the scheme of delegation)	(6,590)	(871)	(7,461)	1,743	(5,718)
Capital (To support Capital Programme)	(2,896)	(970)	(3,866)	(1,180)	(5,046)
Insurance General Fund (To fund self possible self insured claims)	(3,802)	(300)	(4,102)	717	(3,385)
Insurance Former HRA Properties (To offset pre LSVT claims)	(1,177)	1,177	-	-	-
Building Schools for the Future Capital (To fund future capital costs)	(342)	(1,130)	(1,472)	(259)	(1,731)
Invest to Save (To fund investments in revenue saving initiatives)	(1,397)	189	(1,208)	471	(737)
Supporting People (Earmarked to fund future schemes)	(805)	94	(711)	(92)	(803)
Enterprise and Employment (To fund E&E activities for future years)	(295)	(354)	(649)	(174)	(823)
Health & Community (To support 2016/17 revenue budget)	(1,015)	(83)	(1,098)	(456)	(1,554)
Equal Pay (To fund costs arising from equal pay claims)	(3,442)	578	(2,864)	500	(2,364)
Revenues & Benefits Development (To fund ongoing systems development and benefits reform changes)	(463)	(273)	(736)	-	(736)
Home Office Community Safety (To be spent on specified community safety initiatives)	(525)	83	(442)	56	(386)

General Fund	Balance at 31st March 2014 £000	Movement (to) / from Reserve £000	Balance at 31st March 2015 £000	Movement (to) / from Reserve £000	Balance at 31st March 2016 £000
Learning & Achievement (To finance budgets which span the academic year into 2016/17)	(534)	(58)	(592)	351	(241)
Children's Organisation & Provision (To finance specialist services and projects that run into 2016/17)	(2,008)	1,857	(151)	12	(139)
A&C Section 256 Monies (Contribution from H&StH PCT with joint outcomes)	(770)	-	(770)	-	(770)
A&C Savings (To help finance A&C budget)	(3,369)	1,749	(1,620)	(951)	(2,571)
Transformation Fund (To fund costs arising from future efficiency reviews)	(2,215)	(112)	(2,327)	1,580	(747)
Policy & Resources (Contribution to Savings Target)	(1,659)	(1,100)	(2,759)	163	(2,596)
Public Health Transitional Costs (Start- up funding to help Council with new PH responsibilities)	(820)	(554)	(1,374)	22	(1,352)
Records Management Unit (To fund the dedicated records management unit for the Council)	(500)	(530)	(1,030)	1,030	-
Fleet Replacement (Rolling replacement programme for Council fleet vehicle)	(1,121)	(320)	(1,441)	(327)	(1,768)
Superfast Broadband (To provide matched funding to the Superfast Broadband project)	(356)	(166)	(522)	3	(519)
European Match Funding 2014- 2020 (Contribution to the European 2014-2020 Programme)	(2,187)	252	(1,935)	(181)	(2,116)
Discretionary Social Fund (To continue to provide the hardship fund once Government support ceases)	(580)	(362)	(942)	9	(933)
Troubled Families (Will be utilised during 16/17 to deliver various services)	-	(505)	(505)	46	(459)
Other Earmarked Reserves (Total of reserves under £500k)	(3,046)	60	(2,986)	(200)	(3,186)
TOTAL ALL RESERVES	(41,914)	(1,649)	(43,563)	2,883	(40,680)

In order to streamline the note any reserves under £500k have been summarised as 'Other Earmarked Reserves' in the table above.

35. Usable Reserves

Usable reserves are those reserves that contain resources that the Council can apply to the provision of services, either by incurring expenses or undertaking capital investment. Usable reserves include the General Fund Balance, any earmarked reserves under the General Fund umbrella and the Capital Receipts Reserve.

General Fund Balance

The General Fund Balance records the Council's accumulated income over expenditure for each financial year. The fund manages the reversal of a number of transactions that are required to be included in the preparation of the financial statements but the subsequently removed under statutory mitigation.

Earmarked Reserves

These reserves help to meet specific known or predicted future requirements and are legally part of the General Fund Reserve. The earmarked reserves also include unspent school balances of budgets delegated to individual schools. The opening and closing balance is split between the Council and Schools in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The movements in earmarked reserves are analysed in note 34.

Capital Receipts Reserve

This reserve holds the proceeds from the sale of assets and can only be used for funding capital investment or the repayment of borrowing.

Movements in the Council's usable reserves are detailed in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

36. Unusable Reserves

2014/15		2015/16
£000		£000
(58,907)	Revaluation Reserve	(83,044)
-	Available for Sale Financial Instruments Reserve	88
127,655	Pensions Reserve	64,720
(185,836)	Capital Adjustment Account	(197,772)
(1,262)	Deferred Capital Receipts	(1,164)
(1,892)	Collection Fund Adjustment Account	(3,616)
2,006	Accumulated Absences Account	1,905
(3)	Rounding Adjustment	(5)
(118,239)	Total Unusable Reserves	(218,888)

Revaluation Reserve

The revaluation reserve contains the gains and losses made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment (and Intangible Assets). The balance is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

Revalued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost.

Used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation.

Disposed of and the gains are realised.

The reserve contains only revaluation gains accumulated since 1st 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.

2014/15 £000		£000	2015/16 £000
(54,292)	Balance at 1 April		(58,907)
(10,288)	Upward revaluation of assets	(35,530)	
991	Downward revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services	1,761	
(9,297)	Surplus or deficit on revaluation of non-current assets not posted to the Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services		(33,769)
3,214	Difference between fair value depreciation and historical cost depreciation	8,354	
1,313	Accumulated gain on academies transferred	-	
155	Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	1,278	
4,682	Amount written off to the Capital Adjustment Account		9,632
(58,907)	Balance at 31 March		(83,044)

Capital Adjustment Account

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

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

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

2014/15		£000	2015/16
(190,799)		£000	£000
	Balance at 1 April		(185,836)
	Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:		
21,461	Charges for depreciation and impairment of non-current assets	21,793	
7,451	Revaluation losses on Property, Plant and Equipment	(2,912)	
358	Amortisation of intangible assets	333	
647	Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	586	
6,030	Carrying value of Academies transferred	-	
4,279	Carrying amount of non-current assets sold	4,070	
40,226			23,870
(3,214)	Adjusting amounts written out of the Revaluation Reserve		(9,632)
37,012	Net written out amount of the cost of non-current assets consumed in the year		14,238
	Capital financing applied in the year:		
(5,408)	Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	(4,494)	
(21,457)	Capital grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	(15,974)	
-	Application of grants to capital financing from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account		
(3,158)	Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment charged against the General Fund	(3,148)	
(1,505)	Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund	(2,279)	
(31,528)			(25,895)
(521)	Movements in the market value of investment properties debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		(279)
-	Movement in the Donated Assets Account credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		-
(185,836)	Balance at 31st March		(197,772)

Pension Reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Council accounts for post-employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs.

However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Council makes employers contributions to pension funds or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit 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 the funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

2014/15 £000		£000	2015/16 £000
96,763	Balance at 1st April		127,655
	Re-measurement of the net defined benefit liability comprising:		
-	Changes in demographic assumptions	-	
77,314	Changes in financial assumptions	(54,358)	
(4,314)	Other experience	(6,981)	
(45,592)	Returns on assets excluding amounts included in net interest	(9,178)	
27,408			(70,517)
15,583	Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		20,666
(12,099)	Employers pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year		(13,084)
127,655	Balance at 31st March		64,720

Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve

Deferred Capital Receipts are amounts derived from the sale of assets which will be received in instalments over agreed periods of time.

2014/15		2015/16
£000		£000
(2)	Mortgages – Former Right to Buy	-
(994)	Housing Associations	-
(266)	Castlefields Equity Advances	(266)
-	- Former recreation ground, Liverpool Road	(898)
(1,262)		(1,164)

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

2014/15		2015/16
£000		£000
(1,288)	Balance at 1 April	(1,262)
-	Transfer of deferred sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(898)
26	Transfer to the Capital Receipts Reserve upon receipt of cash	996
(1,262)	Balance at 31 March	(1,164)

Collection Fund Adjustment

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

2014/15 £000		2015/16 £000
(3,057)	Balance at 1 April	(1,892)
(1,519)	Amount by which council tax income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from council tax income collected in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	980
2,684	Amount by which Non Domestic Rates income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from Non Domestic Rates income collected in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(2,704)
(1,892)	Balance at 31 March	(3,616)

Accumulated Absences Account

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

2014/15 £000		2015/16 £000
1,916	Balance at 1 April	2,006
(1,916)	Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of the preceding year	(2,006)
2,006	Amount accrued at the end of the current year	1,905
(90)	Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(101)
2,006	Balance at 31 March	1,905

Available for Sale Financial Instruments Reserve

The Available for Sale Financial Instruments Reserves contains the gains and losses made by the Authority arising from changes in the value of its investments that have quoted market prices or otherwise do not have fixed or determinable payments. The gain or loss will not be realised until the investments are sold (though the asset could be impaired if there is a prolonged decline in the unit price under which the asset was purchased.)

2014/15		2015/16
£000		£000
-	Balance at 1 April	-
-	Upward revaluation of investments	-
-	Downward revaluation of investments not charged to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	88
-	Accumulated gains on assets sold and maturing assets written out to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Other Investment	
-	Income	-
-	Balance at 31 March	88

37. Cash Flow Statement – Operating Activities

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

2014/15		2015/16
£000		£000
(21,461)	Depreciation	(21,793)
(7,451)	Impairment and downward valuation	4,774
(358)	Amortisation of Intangible Assets	(333)
521	Movement in market value of investment properties	279
374	Impairment Debtors	(476)
(4,565)	(Increase)/Decrease in Creditors and Receipts in Advance	8,646
(44,961)	Increase/(Decrease) in Debtors	(1,469)
(115)	Increase/(Decrease) in Inventories	17
(3,484)	Movement in Pension Liability	(7,582)
(1,788)	Contributions (to)/from Provisions	(142)
(2,967)	Carrying amount of non-current assets and non-current assets held for sale, sold or de-recognised	(4,070)
(7,343)	Loss on transfer to academies	-
(1,424)	Other non-cash adjustments	(1,365)
(95,022)	Total non-cash movements	(23,514)

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

2014/15		2015/16
£000		£000
67,113	Capital Grants credited to the surplus or deficit on the provisions of services	13,993
6,847	Proceeds from the sale of non-current assets	6,305
(3,437)	Billing Authorities - Council Tax and NDR adjustments	2,737
-	Other cash flows from investing or financing activities	-
70,523	Net Cash flows from investing or financing activities	23,035

The cash flows for operating activities includes the following items:

2014/15		2015/16
£000		£000
(417)	Interest received	(1,620)
4,037	Interest paid	6,004
-	Dividends received	-
3,620		4,384

38. Cash Flow Statement – Investing Activities

2014/15		2015/16
£000		£000
31,510	Purchase of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	29,487
319,010	Purchase of short term and long term investments	227,925
-	Other payments for investing activities	-
(6,847)	Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	(6,305)
(164,022)	Proceeds from short term and long term investments	(248,021)
(71,322)	Other receipts from investing activities	(16,312)
108,329	Net Cash flows from Investing Activities	(13,226)

39. Cash Flow Statement – Financing Activities

2014/15		2015/16
£000		£000
(113,048)	Cash receipts of short and long term borrowing	(215)
835	Other receipts from financing activities	(2,737)
930	Cash payments from the reduction of the outstanding liabilities relating to finance leases and on balance sheet PFI contracts	878
-	Repayments of short term and long term borrowing	-
-	Other payments for financing activities	30,000
(111,283)	Net Cash flows from Financing Activities	27,926

40. Interest in Companies and Other Entities

The Council is involved with several companies over which it has varying degrees of control and influence. The Council is required to classify the entities according to whether they are subsidiaries, associates or joint ventures

Subsidiary

An entity is only a subsidiary if the Council has power over the entity, exposure, or rights, to variable returns from its involvement with the entity and ability to use its power over the entity to affect the amount of the Council's returns.

As at 31st March 2016 the following were subsidiaries of the Council:-

- Halton Borough Transport Ltd - In accordance with the Transport Act 1985, Halton Borough Transport became a separate legal entity from the Council, with the Council holding 100% of the shares within the company.
- Mersey Gateway Crossings Board Ltd - The principal activity of the company is to deliver the Mersey Gateway Bridge project, and to administer and oversee the construction and maintenance of the new tolled crossings, including the tolling of the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge. The Council holds 100% of the shares issued by the company. For 2015/16 the Council reduced the level of working capital to £0.6m (0.7m 2014/15) and this amount is held as a long term debtor on the Council's Balance Sheet.

In accordance with paragraph 9.1.1.6 of the Code, the subsidiaries have not been consolidated into group accounts as they are not considered to be of material value.

For more information on the financial performance of the above two companies, see note 21, where a summary of the companies accounts are provided.

Joint Ventures

These are arrangements under which two or more parties have contractually agreed to share control, such that decisions about activities that significantly affect returns require the unanimous consent of the parties sharing control, and joint parties have rights to the net assets of the arrangement.

As at 31st March 2016 the Council were party to the following joint ventures:-

- Daresbury Science & Innovation Campus Ltd - The principal activity of the company was to assist, promote, encourage, and develop the Science Park at Daresbury, Cheshire. The company is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee having no share capital. The Council is currently in the process of terminating the joint venture.

- Daresbury Science & Innovation Campus (Pub Sec) LLP - The principal activity of the company during the year was to assist, promote, encourage, and secure the development of the International Science Park at Daresbury, Cheshire. Members of the partnership are Halton Borough Council and the Science and Technology Facilities Council.

In accordance with paragraph 9.1.1.6 of the Code, the Councils equity within the joint ventures has not been consolidated into group accounts as it is not considered to be of material value.

Associates

Associates are entities for which the Council is an investor and has significant influence. The Council can have an associate relationship with an entity that is a joint venture under the control of other investors.

As at 31st March 2016 the Council had associate relationships with the following:-

- Daresbury Science & Innovation Campus LLP - The principal activity of the LLP is the management and development of the Sci-Tech Daresbury Campus. Designated members of the partnership are Langtree Daresbury Ltd and Daresbury Science & Innovation Campus (Pub Sec) LLP, for which the Council is an equal partner in.

In accordance with paragraph 9.1.1.6 of the Code, the Councils equity within the associate relationship has not been consolidated into group accounts as it is not considered to be of material value.

Note that although the Council does have an investment in Widnes Regeneration Ltd and Halton Development Partnership, it was determined that there is no group relationship as the Council does not have a significant influence over the organisations and holds only a minority shareholding in the entities.

Collection Fund

The Collection Fund is an agents 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 the distribution to local authorities and the Government in relation to Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates.

As from 1st April 2014, Warrington, Halton and St Helens authorities formed a business rates pooling arrangement known as the Mid Merseyside Pool. This arrangement allows the pool to keep any excess growth that had previously been paid over to the government as a levy. But, it also means that any breach of the safety net arrangements by the pool would be met by the pool authorities, rather than Central Government. Warrington is the administrating authority for the pool, and for the financial year 2015/16 there was no levy distributed to the pool, nor any breach of safety net arrangements.

Collection Fund Statement

2014/15				2015/16		
Council Tax £000	Non Domestic Rates £000	Total £000		Council Tax £000	Non Domestic Rates £000	Total £000
(46,770)		(46,770)	Income	(48,525)		(48,525)
	(51,347)	(51,347)	Council Tax		(57,291)	(57,291)
	306	306	Non Domestic Rates		90	90
			Transitional Protection Payment			
(46,770)	(51,041)	(97,811)		(48,525)	(57,201)	(105,726)
			Expenditure			
			<u>Precepts, Demands & Shares</u>			
	25,132	25,132	Central Government	-	26,112	26,112
37,101	24,780	61,881	Halton Borough Council	38,649	25,747	64,396
4,811		4,811	Cheshire Police Authority	5,015		5,015
2,169	506	2,675	Cheshire Fire Service	2,262	525	2,787
61		61	Parish Precept	63		63
			<u>Apportionment of Previous Year's Surplus</u>			
	492	492	Central Government	-	(1,230)	(1,230)
231	482	713	Halton Borough Council	2,551	(1,206)	1,345
31		31	Cheshire Police Authority	330	-	330
13	10	23	Cheshire Fire Service	148	(25)	123
			<u>Charges to Collection Fund</u>			
105	487	592	Write off uncollectable amounts	229	(4)	225
446	(357)	89	Increase / (Decrease) in Bad Debt Provision	441	433	874
	4,408	4,408	Increase / (Decrease) in Appeals Provision		994	994
	167	167	Cost of Collection		166	166
	291	291	Disregarded Amounts		160	160
44,968	56,398	101,366		49,688	51,672	101,360
(3,314)	(323)	(3,637)	Balance Brought Forward	(5,116)	5,034	(82)
(1,802)	5,357	3,555	Movement on Fund Balance	1,163	(5,529)	(4,366)
(5,116)	5,034	(82)	Balance Carried Forward	(3,953)	(495)	(4,448)

Collection Fund Balance Sheet

2014/15				Council Tax	2015/16			
Halton BC £000	Cheshire P&CC £000	Cheshire Fire £000	Total £000		Halton BC £000	Cheshire P&CC £000	Cheshire Fire £000	Total £000
4,339	563	254	5,156	Arrears	4,865	628	279	5,772
(2,456)	(319)	(144)	(2,919)	Provision for Doubtful Debts	(2,832)	(365)	(163)	(3,360)
(394)	(51)	(23)	(468)	Overpayments / Prepayments	(455)	(59)	(26)	(540)
(4,309)	(558)	(251)	(5,118)	(Surplus)/Deficit	(3,329)	(432)	(194)	(3,955)
2,820	365	164	3,349	Cash	1,751	228	104	2,083
-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-

2014/15				Non-Domestic Rates	2015/16			
Central Gov £000	Halton BC £000	Cheshire Fire £000	Total £000		Central Gov £000	Halton BC £000	Cheshire Fire £000	Total £000
1,819	1,782	36	3,637	Arrears	2,205	2,161	44	4,410
(1,177)	(1,153)	(24)	(2,354)	Provision for Doubtful Debts	(1,393)	(1,365)	(28)	(2,786)
(4,604)	(4,512)	(91)	(9,207)	Appeals Provision	(5,102)	(5,000)	(102)	(10,204)
(637)	(624)	(13)	(1,274)	Overpayments / Prepayments	(471)	(462)	(9)	(942)
2,568	2,417	49	5,034	(Surplus)/Deficit	(201)	(287)	(6)	(494)
2,031	2,090	43	4,164	Cash	4,962	4,953	101	10,016
-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-

Notes to the Collection Fund

1. Introduction of the Council Tax

The property based Council Tax was introduced on the 1st April 1993, replacing the personal liability Community Charge. The Council determined its Band D equivalent tax base for 2015/16 at 32,100 (2014/15 - 31,400)

2. The Council Tax Base Determination

Band	Properties	Ratio	Band D Equivalents
Disabled	80	5/9	44
A	22,388	6/9	14,925
B	10,689	7/9	8,314
C	7,152	8/9	6,357
D	4,439	9/9	4,439
E	3,209	11/9	3,922
F	1,001	13/9	1,446
G	335	15/9	558
H	30	18/9	60
Total	49,323		40,065
Reductions relating to Non-Collection and changes in assumptions			(7,965)
Tax Base set for 2015/16			32,100

The parishes' individual tax bases are shown below:

	2014/15	2015/16
Hale	643	649
Daresbury	150	153
Moore	316	320
Preston Brook	319	324
Halebank	494	488
Sandymoor	950	948

3. Precepting Authorities

Halton Borough Council has two precepting authorities, Cheshire Police & Crime Commissioner and Cheshire Fire Authority. The Band D charge and total precept are shown in the table below:

	2014/15	2015/16
	£	£
Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner		
- Band D Charge	153.21	156.23
- Precept	4,810,795	5,014,983
Cheshire Fire Authority		
- Band D Charge	69.09	70.46
- Precept	2,169,426	2,261,766

4. Non-Domestic Rates

The non-domestic rate replaced locally fixed rates from 1st April 1990. The rateable value at 31st March and the business rate multiplier, which is fixed by the Government, are shown in the table below:

	2014/15	2015/16
	£	£
Rateable value at 31st March	133,211,495	135,810,326
Non Domestic rating multiplier	48.2	49.3
Small Business Non Domestic rating multiplier	47.1	48.0

Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts

The Council’s Responsibilities

The Council is required:

To make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this Council, the Operational Director – Financial Services has that responsibility;

To manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets;

To approve the Statement of Accounts.

The Operational Director – Finance Responsibilities

The Operational Director – Finance is responsible for the preparation of the Council’s statement of accounts which, in terms of CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in Great Britain (“the Code of Practice”), is required to present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year (ended 31st March 2016).

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, the Operational Director – Financial Services has:

Selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;

Adopted the principal of “True and Fair” regarding the Council’s financial position;

Made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;

Complied with the Code of Practice.

The Operational Director – Finance has also:

Kept proper accounting records which were kept up to date;

Taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

I certify that this Statement of Accounts presents a true and fair view of the financial position and income and expenditure of Halton Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2016

Signed by:
Operational Director – Finance

Date:

Statement of Accounting Policies

1. General

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2015/16 financial year and its position at the year-ending 31 March 2016.

Halton Borough Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, which require to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice of Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2015/16 and the Service Reporting Code of Practice 2015/16, supported by International Financing 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. Changes to the 2015/16 Accounting Policies

The Council's accounting policies are subject to regular review arising from changes in the way costs are accounted for and changes in the requirements of the Code of Practice.

3. Accruals of Income and Expenditure

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

3(a) Revenue Recognition

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when the Council transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership to the purchaser and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council. Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the Council can measure reliably the percentage of completion of the transaction and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council.

3(b) Employee Costs

The full cost of employees is charged to the period which the employees worked. Accruals are made for wages earned but unpaid and pay awards awaiting settlement at the year end. Short term benefits arising from leave, flexi-time and time off in lieu which remain unpaid at the end of the financial year are accrued into the cost of services for that year. To ensure that the actual costs to the Council falls in the year in which they are paid a transfer is made to an Employee Benefit Reserve.

3(c) 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. A charge is made on an accruals basis to the

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when the Council is committed to the termination of employment.

3(d) Interest

Interest payable on external borrowings and interest receivable on investments is accrued and accounted for on a basis which reflects the costs and benefits of the treasury management activity during the period.

3(e) Supplies and Services

Supplies and services are accounted for in the period that they are consumed or received. Accruals are made for all material sums unpaid at year end for goods and services received or works completed.

3(f) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that mature within 3 months or less from the date of acquisition and are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change of value.

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

3(g) Debtors and Creditors

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.

Known uncollectable debt is written off with a charge being made to the Bad Debt Provision.

4. Acquired/Discontinued Operations

Income and expenditure relating to acquired or discontinued operations will be shown separately on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement under the heading of acquired/discontinued operations. Any liabilities in respect of discontinued operations will be disclosed separately in the notes to the Balance Sheet.

5. Contingent Assets

A contingent asset arises where an event has taken place that gives the Council a possible asset whose existence can 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 on the Balance Sheet but by way of notes to the accounts where it is probable that there will be an inflow of economic benefit or service potential.

6. 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 are not recognised on the Balance Sheet but disclosed by way of notes to the accounts.

7. The Collection Fund

The Council is required by statute to maintain a separate fund for the collection and distribution of amounts due in respect of Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates.

7(a) Council Tax Income

In its capacity as a billing authority the Council acts as an agent. It collects council tax income on behalf of the major preceptors (The Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire and Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service) and itself.

7(b) National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

As part of Business Rate Retention Scheme the Council acts as an agent and collects National Non Domestic Rates on behalf of Central Government, Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service and itself.

7(c) Accounting for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates in the Core Financial Statements

While the council tax and non-domestic rates income for the year credited to the Collection Fund is the accrued income for the year, regulations determine when it should be released from the Collection Fund and transferred to the General Fund. The amount credited to the General Fund under statute is the Councils demand for the year plus the Councils share of the surplus (or less its share of the deficit) on the Collection Fund for the year.

The difference between the income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the amount required 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 within Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under regulations.

The Councils Cash Flow Statement includes within Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities, only its share of council tax and NNDR cash collected from the debtors in the year.

8. Events after the Reporting Period

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

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

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

9. Financial Instruments

The Council invests and borrows money as part of its day to day business and Treasury Management Strategy. It is required to present on the balance sheet at fair value its outstanding financial obligations and assets in relation to these transactions. Assets exclude short term investments i.e. invested for periods of less than 3 months at inception and not due for repayment at balance sheet date. These investments are treated as cash equivalents due to their liquid nature.

The Council uses Capita Asset Services to provide independent valuations of the position at the period end.

Capita uses the Net Present Value valuation technique to value borrowings. The discount rate used within the calculation is the Public Works Loans Board new borrowing rate.

9(a) Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are initially measured at fair value and carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. Financial liabilities due to be settled within 12 months of the Balance Sheet date, along with accrued interest on all financial liabilities is recorded as a current liability.

9(b) Financial Assets

Financial assets are classified into two types:

Loans and receivables – assets that have fixed or determinable payments but are not quoted in an active market.

Available-for-sale assets – assets that have a quoted market price and/or do not have fixed or determinable payments.

9(c) Loans and Receivables

Loans and receivables are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and carried at their amortised cost.

10. Fair Value

The Council measures some of its assets and liabilities at fair value at the end of the reporting period. 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:

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

Inputs to the valuation techniques in respect of the Council's fair value measurement of its assets and liabilities are categorised within the fair value hierarchy as follows:

- Level 1 – quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the authority 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

11. Foreign Currency

Where the Council enters into a transaction denominated in a foreign currency, the transaction is converted into £ sterling at the exchange rate applicable on the date the transaction was effective. Where amounts are outstanding at the year-end, they are reconverted at the spot exchange rate at 31 March.

12. Government Grants, Other Contributions and Donated Assets

Whether paid on account, by instalments or arrears, government grants and third party contributions and donations are recognised as due to the Council when there is reasonable assurance that:

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

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

Monies advanced as grants or contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried on the Balance Sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or

contribution is credited to the relevant service line (attributable revenue grants and contributions) or Taxation and Non-specific Grant Income (non-ring-fenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant is yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Unapplied reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Grants Unapplied reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund expenditure.

13. Interest in Companies and Other Entities

The Council has an interest in subsidiaries, joint ventures and associated entities that would require it to prepare group accounts. As the transactions relating to group entities are not material, no group financial statements are being produced for the 2015/16 accounts.

The definition of materiality as per the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting is:

The relevance of information contained in the financial statements is affected by its nature and materiality. Omissions or misstatements of items are material if they could, individually or collectively, influence the decisions or assessments of users made on the basis of the financial statements. Materiality depends on the nature or size of the omission or misstatement judged in the surrounding circumstances. The nature or size of the item, or a combination of both, could be the determining factor. Therefore, materiality provides a threshold or cut-off point rather than a primary qualitative characteristic which information must have if it is to be useful. An authority need not comply with the Code, as to both disclosure and accounting principles, if the information is not material to the true and fair view of the financial statements and to the understanding of users.

In assessing the materiality of group entities an assessment has been undertaken of the following quantitative and qualitative factors:

Quantitative Factor

- The activities of group entities are not significant to the representation of the operational activities of the authority as a whole.
- Gross Value of the investments in gross entities are not significant in terms of the balance sheet of HBC.
- Gross Value of the borrowings or other liabilities of group entities are not significant to the balance sheet of HBC.
- An adjustment to usable reserves that would arise on consolidation would not be significant.

Qualitative Factor

- The authority does not depend significantly on group entities for continued provision of statutory services.
- There is no concern to which the Council has passed on control of its assets to other parties.

- There is no concern about the extent to which the Council is exposed to commercial risk.
- Not consolidating group entities does not mask significant trends.
- Grouping the accounts would not provide any more useful disclosures.

14. Intangible Assets

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

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

15. Inventories

Inventories are included in the Balance Sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

16. Leases

16(a) Finance Leases

Leases are classified as Finance Leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee.

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

Although the Code is not prescriptive it gives examples of situations which would lead to a lease being classified as a finance lease. These are:

1. The lease transfers ownership of the asset to the lessee by the end of the lease term
2. The lessee has the option to purchase the asset at a price that is expected to be sufficiently lower than the fair value so as to make it reasonably certain the option will be exercised
3. The lease term is for the major part of the economic life of the asset
4. The present value of the minimum lease payments amounts to at least substantially all of the fair value of the leased asset, and
5. The leased assets are of such a specialised nature that only the lessee can use them without major modifications.

Property, plant and equipment held under finance leases is recognised on the Balance Sheet at the commencement of the lease at its fair value measured at the leases inception (or the present value of the minimum lease payments, if lower). The asset recognised is matched by

a liability for the obligation to pay the lessor. Initial direct costs of the Council are added to the carrying amount of the asset. Premiums paid on entry into a lease are applied to writing down the lease liability. Contingent rents are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

Rental payments under finance leases are apportioned between the finance charge and the reduction of the outstanding liability. The finance charge is allocated to the Finance and Investment Income line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Depreciation is charged to cost of services over the life of the asset. Any receipts are subject to the same test.

For the purposes of assessment of finance leases for plant, vehicles and equipment it is taken that consumption of greater than 75% of the economic life of the asset will constitute the major part of the economic life of the asset. There is also a de-minimis of £5,000 net present value of the future lease payments at the inception of the lease where the lease will not be treated as a finance lease.

16(b) Operating Leases

Operating leases are all leases which are not categorised as finance leases. Rentals payable under operating leases are charged to Net Cost of Services on a straight line basis over the term of the lease. Receipts are treated as revenue income.

17. Non-Current Assets, Property, Plant and Equipment

17(a) Recognition

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

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of a non-current asset is capitalised on an accruals basis. Expenditure is only capitalised when it adds to or extends, and not merely maintains the value of an existing asset.

17(b) Measurement

Acquired non-current assets are initially measured at cost, which includes costs that are directly attributable to bringing the asset into working condition for its intended use. Non-current assets acquired by finance lease are valued at discounted present value of future lease payments using PWLB rates for annuities at the date of acquisition. Whilst acquired infrastructure assets, vehicles, plant, equipment and community assets remain in the balance sheet at historical costs net of depreciation, other assets will be subject to periodic revaluation of no more than five years using the appropriate method for that class of asset.

The cost of assets acquired other than by purchase is deemed to be its fair value, unless the acquisition does not have commercial substance (ie it will not lead to a variation in the cash flows of the Council). Where an asset is acquired via an exchange, the cost of the acquisition is the carrying amount of the asset given up by the Council.

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

- Infrastructure is measured on the basis of depreciated historic cost.
- Assets under construction are measured on the basis of historic cost.
- Community assets (assets that the Council intends to hold in perpetuity and have no determinable useful life) are valued at historic cost or a nominal value where the historic cost is not known.
- Surplus asset, investment properties and assets held for sale are based on their fair value, estimated at highest and best use from a market participant's perspective. (See Policy 10 – Fair Value).
- All other assets are measured at current value which is determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use ("existing use value" – EUV).

Where there is no market-based evidence of fair value because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost (DRC) is used as an estimate of fair value. For non-property assets (e.g. vehicles, plant and equipment) that have short useful lives or low values (or both) depreciated historical cost basis is used as a proxy for fair value.

In the absence of historical information regarding the cost of acquisition or construction of various community assets, they have been reclassified and given a zero valuation from 1st April 2005.

Assets are subject to an annual impairment check. A proportion of the assets will be subject to revaluation each year to allow for the workload of revaluation to be more evenly spread and the balance sheet to be more accurate. Each asset will be re-valued on a 5 year cycle.

All assets are subject to an annual review to ensure valuations have not materially changed in the years they are not valued and that the carrying value is not significantly different to their fair value.

Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains. Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services where they arise from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service.

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

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

The Council operates a de-minimis level of £35,000, in respect of land and property, and a qualified valuer certifies the valuation. In respect of vehicles, plant & equipment these are carried at depreciated historic cost subject to an initial recognition de-minimis of £5,000.

17(c) Impairment

Assets are assessed at 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, the carrying amount of the asset is written down first against the accumulated gains in the revaluation reserve.

Where there is no longer a balance in the revaluation reserve to consume the loss, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service lines in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

When an impairment loss is reversed, the reversal is credited to the relevant services lines in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, up to the amount of the original loss and adjusted for depreciation that would have been charged if the loss had never been recognised.

17(d) Non-Current Assets Held for Sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered through the sale of a 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 at highest and best use, less costs to sell. Where there is a subsequent decrease to fair value less costs to sell, the loss is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any previous losses recognised in the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services. Depreciation is not charged on Assets Held for Sale.

To be classified as held for sale an asset must meet all of the following criteria:

- The asset (or disposal group) must be available for immediate sale in its present condition subject to terms that are usual and customary for sales of such assets (or disposal groups).
- The sale must be highly probable; the appropriate level of management must be committed to a plan to sell the asset (or disposal group) and an active programme to locate a buyer and complete the plan must have been initiated.
- The asset (or disposal group) must be actively marketed for a sale at a price that is reasonable in relation to its current value.
- The sale should be expected to qualify for recognition as a completed sale within one year of the date of classification and action required to complete the plan should indicate that it is unlikely that significant changes to the plan will be made or that the plan will be withdrawn.

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 carrying amount before they were classified as held for sale; adjusted for depreciation, amortisation or revaluations

that would have been recognised had the asset not been classified as held for sale, and their recoverable amount at the date of the decision not to sell.

Receipts from the disposal of PPE assets greater than £10,000 are credited to the useable capital receipts reserve on an accruals basis. Lower amounts are treated as de-minimis and credited to the revenue account.

17(e) Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all assets with a finite useful life. The provision for depreciation is calculated by allocating the cost less any estimated residual value of the asset over its useful life. The useful lives of assets are estimated on a realistic basis and reviewed regularly, and where necessary revised.

The estimated useful lives of assets by class are as follows:

Buildings & Other Operational Properties	Up to 60 years
Infrastructure and Community Assets	15 years
Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	3-10 years
Intangible Assets	5-10 years
Finance Leases – vehicles, plant and equipment of lease	3-10 years equal to length
Finance Leases – buildings	Up to 60 years

All assets are depreciated on a straight line basis, with depreciation commencing the year after acquisition. In exceptional circumstances, for example, if a particularly expensive asset is acquired with a short life expectancy, then a charge may be levied in the year of acquisition to ensure the charge to the service is more in line with the consumption of the asset.

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

An exception to depreciation is made for assets without a determinable finite useful life (ie freehold land and certain community assets) and assets that are not yet available for use (ie assets under construction), these are not depreciated.

17(f) Charges to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

As defined in CIPFA's Service Reporting Code of Practice, each service is charged with a capital charge for the consumption of all assets used in the provision of the service. The charge is the annual provision for depreciation or impairment.

Finance costs (interest payable) are a direct charge to Financing and Investment Income within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, whilst repairs and maintenance are charged to the appropriate service revenue account.

17(g) Investment Property

Investment property is property (land or a building – or part of a building – or both) held solely to earn rentals or for capital appreciation or both, rather than for:

- (a) Use in the production or supply of goods or services or for administrative purposes; or
- (b) Sale in the ordinary course of operations.

Investment properties are initially measured at cost and subsequently 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. Properties are not depreciated but revalued annually according to market conditions at the year end. Gains and losses on revaluation are posted to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

Rentals received in relation to investment properties are credited to the Financing and Investment Income line and result in a gain to the General Fund balance. Revaluation and disposal gains and losses are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the General Fund balance. The gains and losses are reversed out of the General Fund in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account.

17(h) Componentisation

The objective of component accounting is to follow proper accounting practice by ensuring that items of Property, Plant and Equipment are accurately and fairly included in the Balance Sheet and the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Consumption of economic benefits should be properly reflected over the assets individual useful lives, through depreciation charges.

The overall value of an asset must be fairly apportioned over significant components, which need to be accounted for separately, with their useful lives and the method of depreciation being determined on a reasonable and consistent basis.

Having identified individual material assets or groups of similar assets with similar characteristics, each component part of an item of Property, Plant and Equipment with a cost that is significant in relation to the total cost of the asset shall be depreciated separately. The Council has set a de-minimus threshold of £500,000 above which it will consider assets for componentisation.

Once individual material assets and asset groups have been identified, items of Property, Plant and Equipment will be categorised as follows based on their significance, useful life and depreciation method:

Component	Detail
Superstructure and substructure	Frame, upper floors, roof, stairs, external walls, external windows and doors, internal walls and partitions, internal doors
Internal Finishes and Fittings	Wall, floor, ceiling finishes, fittings and furnishings
Services	Sanitary appliances, services equipment, disposal installations, water installations, heat source, space heating and air conditioning, ventilating systems, electrical installations, fuel installations, fire and lightning protection, communication and security installations, builders work in connection and management and commissioning of services
Land	Land upon which the property is constructed

The basis upon which the calculation of the value of components will be made is replacement cost. In general, the expected split for components would be 50-60% for Superstructure and Substructure, 20% for Internal Finishes and Fittings and 20-30% for Services. The actual split will be determined following individual valuation of the property.

Land is a separate component in its own right, but is not considered for depreciation purposes. Generally, land is considered to have an infinite life.

When an asset is enhanced or replaced, the cost of the replacement component is compared with the cost of the total asset. If the cost of the enhancement or replacement is above 15% or £35,000 of the overall cost of the asset, a proportion of the relevant component's carrying value is derecognised and replaced by the cost of the new replacement asset.

When an asset is acquired or re-valued, the cost of its component parts will be broken down into Superstructure and Substructure, Internal Finishes and Fittings and Services providing that that asset exceeds the de-minimis threshold of £500,000. Land will be identified as a separate component in its own right.

17(i) Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets

Services are debited with depreciation, downward valuations and impairment losses where there are no accumulated gains in the revaluation reserve against which the losses can be written off and amortisation of intangible non-current assets.

The Council does not raise council tax to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisations. However, the Council is required to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Council in accordance with statutory guidance.

Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisations are therefore replaced by the contribution in the General Fund balance from Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement known as the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP).

17(j) Schools (Land & Buildings)

Section 20 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 established the following categories of maintained schools in England and Wales:

- (a) Community Schools
- (b) Foundation Schools
- (c) Voluntary Schools comprising Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled
- (d) Community Special Schools, and
- (e) Foundation Special Schools

In order to recognise a non-current school's asset on the Council's Balance Sheet, the Council has followed the recognition criteria of the Code and determined the extent to which the Council has control of the service potential associated with the schools assets.

The Council has concluded that a) Community Schools and d) Community Special Schools will form part of the Council's non-current Assets.

For all other schools the Council is merely using the non-current asset under licence. A licence passes no interest in the non-current asset to the Council and is always revocable, therefore these schools will not form part of the Council's non-current assets.

17(k) Accounting for Schools Transferring to Academy Status

The new accounting standards on group accounts and consolidation mean all types of school are now considered to be entities controlled by the Council. When a school transfers to academy status this control is transferred to a third party. As a result the school as an entity needs to be derecognised in the Council's accounts by writing off the net assets of the school to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

18 Overheads and Support Services

The costs of overheads and support services are charged to those that benefit from the supply and service in accordance with the costing principals of the CIPFA Service Reporting Code of Practice 2015/16. The total absorption costing principal is used – the full cost of overheads and support services are shared between users in proportion to the benefits received.

The costs of the Corporate and Democratic Core and Non-Distributed Costs are allocated to separate objective expenditure heads and are not apportioned to other divisions of service. These items are clearly disclosed in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

19 Pension Costs

General

The cost of providing pensions for employees is charged in accordance with the requirements of IAS19 Retirement Benefits subject to the interpretation set out in the Code governing the pension schemes. The Council pays an employer's contribution to the Cheshire Pension Fund; Teachers' Pension Agency and National Health Service Pension Scheme.

Pensions Reserve

Where there is a difference between the amount charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year and the amount payable to the pension funds, that sum is taken to the Pension Reserve. This additional debit or credit to the services is shown as a reconciling item in the Movement in Reserves Statement within the Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under regulations note.

Classification of Schemes

Defined Benefit Schemes

Accounting policies set out as below apply in respect of pension costs arising from the Local Government Pension Scheme and unfunded discretionary benefits paid:

- (i) The liabilities of the Cheshire pension fund attributable to the Authority are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method – ie 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.
- (ii) Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate of 3.5%
- (iii) The assets of Cheshire pension fund attributable to the Authority are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value
 - a. Quoted securities – current bid price
 - b. Unquoted securities – professional estimate
 - c. Unitised securities – current bid price
 - d. Property – market value
- (iv) The change in the net pensions liabilities is analysed into the following components:
 - a. Service cost comprising:
 - i. Current services cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year – allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement of the services for which the employees worked
 - ii. Past service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of services earned in earlier years – debited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Non Distributed Costs

- iii. Net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset), ie net interest expense for the authority – the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability (asset) that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – this is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability (asset) at the beginning of the period – taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability (asset) during the period as a result of the contribution and benefit payments.
 - b. Remeasurements comprising:
 - i. The return on plan assets – excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset) – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
 - ii. 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 associations – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
 - c. Contribution paid to the Cheshire Pension Fund – cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities: not accounted for as an expense.
- (v) In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provision require the General Fund Balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Authority to the pension fund or directly to pensions in the year, not the amount calculated according the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, this means that there are transfers 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 Pension Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the General Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

Defined Contribution Schemes

The arrangements for the Teacher's Pension Scheme and the NHS Pension Scheme means that liabilities for these benefits cannot ordinarily be specified by the Council. The scheme is therefore accounted for as if it were a defined contribution scheme and no liability for future payments or benefits is recognised on the Balance Sheet. The relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is charged with the Council's contributions payable to Teachers Pensions and NHS Pension Scheme in the year.

20 Pooled Budgets

Under Section 75 of the Health Act, the Council is able to establish joint working arrangements with NHS bodies and other Councils to pool funds from both organisations to create a single pot. Where pooled budgets are established, the Councils accounts reflect only the Councils share of the overall pot and exclude the share attributable to partner organisations.

21 Prior Period Adjustments

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

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

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

22 Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Council a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. Provisions are created by a charge to a service and as such appear in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the Cost of Services in the year the Council becomes aware of the obligation, and are measured at the best estimate at the Balance Sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking account of risks and uncertainties. Where it becomes apparent that a lower settlement is anticipated than first thought, the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet.

23 Repurchase of Borrowing

Gains or losses arising on the repurchase or early settlement are charged in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the period during which the repurchase is made. If the repurchase was coupled with refinancing or restructuring, gains or losses are charged over the life of the replacement loan.

24 Reserves

The Council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by apportioning amounts out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When expenditure to be financed from the reserve is incurred, it is charged to the apportionment service in that year to score against the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The reserve is then appropriated back in the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement so that there is no net charge against Council Tax for the expenditure.

The Council maintains two kinds of reserve, Usable and Unusable Reserves.

Usable reserves comprise:

- Usable Capital Receipts Reserve
- General Fund Balance
- Schools Balances
- Earmarked Reserves
- Capital Grants Unapplied

Unusable reserves comprise:

- Revaluation Reserve
- Available for sale Financial Instruments Reserve
- Capital Adjustment Account
- Financial Instruments Adjustment Account
- Pensions Reserve
- Collection Fund adjustment Account
- Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve
- Employee Benefit Reserve

Usable reserves are available to fund expenditure, either revenue or capital incurred by the Council. Unusable reserves are not available to fund expenditure since they do not represent new resources available to the Council.

25 Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute

Legislation allows some expenditure to be classified as capital for funding purposes when it does not result in the creation on a non-current asset on the Balance Sheet. Such expenditure is charged to the appropriate service account within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in accordance with the provisions of the Code.

Where the Council has determined to meet the cost of this expenditure from existing capital resources or borrowing, a transfer in the Movement in Reserves Statement from the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account then reverses the amounts charged so that there is no impact on the Council Tax.

26 Segmental Reporting

To ensure consistent reporting across Councils, the Code requires that the Council analyses the financial performance of their operations in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement using the analysis included in the Service Reporting Code of Practice. This is not in line with the management structure of the Council.

The Council's chief operating decision maker is the Chief Officers Management Team comprising of the Chief Executive supported by two Strategic Directors. In order to provide more meaningful information the cost of services shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is presented in the Segmental Analysis in line with this decision making structure. As specified in the Code this includes over 75% of the net expenditure of

continuing operations. A summary reconciliation is provided to balance it back to the Net Cost of Services.

The subjective analysis represents a more detailed reconciliation between segmental reporting and the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. This identifies the differences between internal management reporting and the requirements of the Code. For example neither, adjustments for IAS19 (Accounting for Retirement Benefits) or capital charges (with the exception of depreciation) are reported to management however, they are included within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Internal recharges are reported within the management structure but are removed from the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

27 Senior Officers

The Council is required to disclose senior officers who are paid a salary of more than £150,000 by name. The requirement also extends to those officers whose salary is more than £50,000 and have a statutory role defined by legislation or is responsible for directing and controlling the day-to-day operations of the Council.

28 Service Concessions

PFI and similar contracts are agreements to receive services, where the responsibility for making available the property, plant and equipment needed to provide the services passes to the PFI contractor. As the Council is deemed to control the services that are provided under PFI schemes, and as ownership of the property, plant and equipment will pass to the Council at the end of the contracts for no additional charge, the Council carries the assets used under the contracts on its Balance Sheet as part of Property, Plant and Equipment.

The original recognition of these assets at fair value (based on the cost to purchase the property, plant and equipment) is balanced by the recognition of a liability for amounts due to the scheme operator to pay for the capital investment.

Non-current assets recognised on the Balance Sheet are re-valued and depreciated in the same way as property, plant and equipment owned by the Council.

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

- Fair value of the services received during the year – debited to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- Finance cost – an interest charge on the outstanding Balance Sheet liability, debited to the financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- Contingent rent – increases in the amount to be paid for the property arising during the contract, debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- Payment towards liability – applied to write down the Balance Sheet liability towards the PFI operator (the profile of write-downs is calculated using the same principles as for a finance lease)

- Life cycle replacement costs – where material, a proportion of the amounts payable is posted to the Balance Sheet as a prepayment and then recognised as additions to Property, Plant and Equipment when the relevant works are eventually carried out.

29 Value Added Tax

VAT is included in income and expenditure accounts, whether of a capital or revenue nature, only to the extent that it is irrecoverable from the HM Revenue and Customs.

30 Accounting Standards that have been issued but not yet adopted

Under the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2015/16 (the Code), the Council is required to disclose information setting out the impact of an accounting change required by a new accounting standard that has been issued but not yet adopted by the Code. The following amendments will be adopted and will apply from 01 April 2016.

Code Of Practice on Transport Infrastructure Assets

This change to the code will require the establishment of a separate class of assets for transport infrastructure assets measured at depreciated replacement cost. It will consist of seven components including carriageways, footways and cycle tracks, structures, lighting, traffic management, street furniture and land.

The valuation held in the Council's balance sheet will be held on a depreciated replacement cost basis as opposed to infrastructure assets held currently on a historic depreciated basis. This will have a significant impact on the balance sheet, it is estimated infrastructure assets will increase from approximately £80m to £3.76bn.

No retrospective changes to the financial statements are required as a result of the above.

Other Accounting Standards

There are a number of other accounting standards which will be adopted by the code in 2016/17. It is not anticipated these will have a material impact on the Council's financial statements.

31 Heritage Assets

Heritage assets are defined as assets that have historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that are held by the Council principally for their contribution to knowledge or culture. The heritage assets held by the Council include:

Civic Regalia

Paintings

Artefacts

And other items donated or purchased

Where applicable, heritage assets are measured at insurance valuation on the Balance Sheet. Due to the unique nature of some heritage assets it is not always possible to

establish a valuation for the asset, appropriate disclosure is made to this type of asset but it is not recognised on the Balance Sheet.

Unlike other non-current assets depreciation is not required on heritage assets which have infinite useful lives. Similarly, impairment reviews are only required in limited circumstances, for example if a heritage asset has suffered breakage of physical deterioration.

There are assets which the Council holds which fall under the definition of heritage assets but contributable towards the operation of a service, these are included on the Balance Sheet under Non-Current Assets, Property, Plant and Equipment.

32 Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

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

Future levels of funding

There is a high degree of uncertainty about future levels of funding for local government. The Council has determined that this uncertainty is not yet sufficient to provide an indication that the assets of the Council might be impaired as a result of a need to close facilities and reduce levels of service provision.

Mersey Gateway Development Costs

A prudent approach has been taken to the capitalisation of development expenditure for 2015-16. The Council has analysed development expenditure into different areas of work. Each area of work has been reviewed in order to decide whether the expenditure is capital or revenue in nature and has been accounted for accordingly.

For all areas of work that were considered to be capital in nature, invoices have been reviewed and discussions held to ascertain whether the work carried out would form part of the final asset and could therefore be fully or part capitalised as per the Code. Areas of work that were considered to be mainly revenue have been treated as revenue expenditure.

33 Assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Council about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made by taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because some 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 2016 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Property, Plant and Equipment

The carrying amount in the Balance Sheet at the 31 March 2016 is £374.0m.

Assets are depreciated over useful lives that are dependent on assumptions about the level of repairs and maintenance that will be incurred in relation to individual assets. The current economic climate makes it uncertain that the Council will be able to sustain its spending on repairs and maintenance, bringing into doubt the useful lives of those assets.

If the useful life of assets is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying amount of the asset falls. It is estimated that the annual depreciation charge for buildings could increase between 10%-15% equating to an additional £2.18m to £3.27m for every year that useful lives had been reduced.

Pensions Liability

The carrying amount in the Balance Sheet at the 31 March 2016 is £64.72m.

Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. Hymans Robertson LLP is engaged on behalf of the Council by Cheshire West and Chester Council to provide expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.

Glossary of Terms

For the purposes of the Code of Practice the following definitions have been adopted:

Accruals

The concept that income and expenditure are recognised as they are earned or incurred, not as money is received or paid.

Accounting Policies

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

- (a) Recognising;
- (b) Selecting and measurement bases for; and
- (c) Presenting.

Assets, liabilities, gains, losses and changes to reserves.

Accounting policies do not include estimation techniques.

Accounting policies define the process whereby transactions and other events are reflected in financial statements. For example, an accounting policy for a particular type of expenditure may specify whether an asset or a loss is to be recognised; the basis on which it is to be [measured](#); and where in the Income and Expenditure account or Balance Sheet it is to be presented.

Acquired Operations

Operations comprise services and divisions of service as defined in SerCOP. Acquired operations are those operations of the Council that are acquired in the period.

Actuarial Gains and Losses

For a defined benefit pension scheme, the changes in actuarial deficits or surpluses that arise because:

- (a) Events have not coincided with the actuarial assumptions made for the last valuation (experience gains and losses); or
- (b) The actuarial assumptions have changed.

Capital Expenditure

Expenditure on the acquisition of a non-current asset or expenditure which adds to and not merely maintains the value of an existing non-current asset.

Class of Non-Current Assets

The classes of non-current assets required to be included in the accounting statements are:

Property, Plant and Equipment:

- Other land and buildings
- Vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment
- Infrastructure assets
- Community assets
- Assets under construction
- Surplus assets

Other classes of assets:

- Investment properties
- Assets held for sale
- Heritage assets

Community Assets

Assets that the Council intends to hold in perpetuity, that have no determinable useful life, and that may have restrictions on their disposal. Examples of community assets are parks and historic buildings.

Consistency

The concept that the accounting treatment of like items within an accounting period and from one period to the next are the same.

Constructive Obligation

An obligation that derives from a Council's actions where:

- (a) By an established pattern of past practice, published policies or a sufficiently specific current statement, the Council has indicated to other parties that it will accept certain responsibilities; and
- (b) As a result, the Council has created a valid expectation on the part of those other parties that it will discharge those responsibilities.

Contingent Asset

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

Contribution

A contribution may be received from a partner to help perform a particular function (i.e. PCT and third sector in health/education, S106 developers etc...)

Contingent Liability

A contingency liability is either:

- (a) A possible obligation arising from past events whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the Council's control; or
- (b) A present obligation arising from past events where it is not probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Corporate and Democratic Core

The corporate and democratic core comprises all activities which Local Authorities engage in specifically because they are elected multi-purpose Authorities. The cost of these activities are thus over and above those which would be incurred by a series of independent, single purpose, nominated bodies managing the same services. There is therefore no basis for apportioning these costs over or across services.

Current Service Cost (Pensions)

The increase in the present value of a defined benefit scheme's liabilities expected to arise from employee service in the current period.

Curtailment

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

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

Deferred Charges

Expenditure which may properly be deferred, but which does not result in, or remain matched with, tangible assets. Examples of deferred charges are expenditure on items such as improvement grants and the expenses of private acts.

Defined Benefit Scheme

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

Defined Contribution Scheme

A pension other retirement benefit scheme into which an employer pays regular contributions fixed as an amount or as percentage of pay and will have no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions if the scheme does not have sufficient assets to pay all employee benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Depreciation

The measure of cost or revalued amount of the benefits of the non-current asset that have been consumed during the period.

Consumption includes the wearing out, using up or other reduction in the useful life of a non-current asset whether arising from use, effluxion of time or obsolescence through either changes in technology or demand for the goods or services produced by the asset.

Discontinued Operations

Operations comprise services and divisions of service as defined in CIPFA's Standard Classification of Income and Expenditure. An operation should be classified as discontinued if all of the following conditions are met:

- (a) The termination of the operation is completed either in the period before the earlier of three months after the commencement of the subsequent period and the date on which the financial statements are approved;
- (b) The activities related to the operation have ceased permanently;
- (c) The termination of the operation has a material effect on the nature and focus of the Local Authority's operations and represents a material reduction in its provision of services resulting either from its withdrawal from a particular activity (whether a service or division of service or its provision in a specific geographical area) or from a material reduction in net expenditure in the Local Authority's continuing operations;
- (d) The assets, liabilities, income and expenditure of operations and activities are clearly distinguishable physically, operationally and for financial reporting purposes

Operations not satisfying all the conditions are classified as continuing.

Discretionary Benefits

Retirement benefits which the employer has no legal, contractual or constructive obligation to award which are awarded under the Council's discretionary powers, such as The Local Government (Discretionary Payments) Regulations 1996, the Local Government (Discretionary Payments and Injury Benefits) (Scotland) Regulations 1998, or the Local Government (Discretionary Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001.

Estimation Techniques

The methods adopted by an entity to arrive at estimated monetary amounts, corresponding to the measurement bases selected, for assets, liabilities, gains losses and changes to reserves.

Estimation techniques implement the measurement aspects of accounting policies. An accounting policy will specify the basis on which an item is to be measured; where there is uncertainty over the monetary amount corresponding to that basis, the amount will be arrived at by using an estimation technique. Estimation techniques include, for example:

- (a) Methods of depreciation, such as straight-line and reducing balance, applied in the context of a particular measurement basis, used to estimate the proportion of the economic benefits of a tangible non-current asset consumed in a period
- (b) Different methods used to estimate the proportion of debts that will not be recovered, particularly where such methods consider a population as a whole rather than individual balances.

Events after the Balance Sheet Date

Those events, both favourable and unfavourable, which occur between the balance sheet date and the date on which the Statement of Accounts is signed by the responsible financial officer.

Exceptional Items

Material items which derive from events or transactions that fall within the ordinary activities of the Council and which need to be disclosed separately by virtue of their size or incidence to give a fair presentation of the accounts.

Exit Packages

Exit packages are defined as amounts payable as a result of either an employer's decision to terminate an employee's employment before the normal retirement date, or an employee's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for those benefits. Exit packages also include enhancement of retirement benefits, when an employee retires early without actuarial reduction of pension.

Expected Rate of Return on Pensions Assets

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

Extraordinary Items

Material items, possessing a high degree of abnormality, which derive from events or transactions that fall outside the ordinary activities of the Council and which are not expected to recur. They do not include exceptional items nor do they include prior period items merely because they relate to a prior period.

Fair Value

The fair value of an asset is the price at which it could be exchanged in an arm's length transaction less, where applicable, any grants receivable towards the purchase of use of the asset.

Finance Lease

A finance lease is one where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee. A lease would be classified as finance lease if:

- The lease transfers ownership of the asset to the lessee by the end of the lease term.
- The lessee has the option to purchase the asset at a price that is expected to be sufficiently lower than the fair value so as to make it reasonably certain the option will be exercised.
- The lease term is for the major part of the economic life of the asset.
- The present value of minimum lease payments amounts to at least substantially all of the fair value of the leased asset.
- The leased assets are of such a specialised nature that only the lessee can use them without major modifications.

Notwithstanding the fact that the lease meets the definitions above, the presumption that an asset should be classified as a finance lease may in exceptional circumstances be rebutted if it can be clearly demonstrated that the lease in question does not transfer substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership (other than legal title) to the lessee.

Going Concern

The concept that the Council will remain in operational existence for the foreseeable future, in particular that the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet assume no intention to curtail significantly the scale of the operations.

Government Grants

Assistance by Government and Inter-Government Agencies and similar bodies, whether local, national or international, in the form of cash or transfers of assets to a Council in return for past or future compliance with certain conditions relating to the activities of the Council.

Heritage Assets

Heritage Assets are assets that have historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities. Examples of heritage assets held by the Council include civic regalia, paintings and artefacts.

Impairment

A reduction in the value of a non-current asset below its carrying amount on the Balance Sheet.

Infrastructure Assets

Non-current assets that are inalienable, expenditure on which is recoverable only by continued use if the asset created. Examples of infrastructure assets are highways and footpaths.

Interest Cost (Pensions)

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

Inventories

The amount of unused or unconsumed stocks held in exception of future use. Comprise the following categories:

- (a) goods or other assets purchased for re-sale;
- (b) consumable stores;
- (c) raw materials and components purchased for incorporation into products for sale;
- (d) products and services in intermediate stages of completion;
- (e) long-term contract balances; and
- (f) finished goods.

Investments (Non-Pensions Fund)

A long-term investment is an investment that is intended to be held for use on a continuing basis in the activities of the Council. Investments should be classified only where an intention to hold the investment for the long term can clearly be demonstrated or where there are restrictions as to the investor's ability to dispose of the investment.

Investments, other than those in relation to the pensions fund, that do not meet the above criteria should be classified as current assets.

Investments (Pensions Fund)

The investments of the Pensions Fund will be accounted for in the statements of that Fund. However, councils are also required to disclose, as part of the transitional disclosures relating to retirement benefits, the attributable share of the pension scheme assets associated with their underlying obligations.

Investments Properties

Interest in land and/or buildings:

- (a) In respect of which construction work and development have been completed; and
- (b) Which is held for its investment potential, and rental income being negotiated at arm's length.

Liquid Resources

Current asset investments that are readily disposable by the Council without disrupting its business and are either readily convertible to known amounts of cash or close to the carrying amount, or traded in an active market.

Long-Term Contracts

A contract entered into for the design, manufacture or construction of a single substantial asset or the provision of a service (or a combination of assets or services which together constitute a single project), where the time taken substantially to complete the contract is such that the contract activity falls into different accounting periods. Some contracts with a shorter duration than one year should be accounted for as long-term contracts if they are sufficiently material to the activity of the period.

Net Book Value

The amount at which non-current assets are included in the balance sheet, i.e. their historical cost or current value less the cumulative amounts provided for depreciation.

Net Current Replacement Cost

The cost of replacing or recreating the particular asset in its existing condition and in its existing use, i.e. the cost of replacement or of the nearest equivalent asset, adjusted to reflect the current condition of the existing asset.

Net Debt

The Council's borrowings less cash and liquid resources. Where cash and liquid resources exceed borrowings, reference should be to net funds rather than debt.

Net Realisable Value

The open market value of the asset in its existing use (or open market value in case of non-operational assets), less the expenses to be incurred in realising the asset.

Operating Lease

A lease other than a finance lease.

Past Service Cost

For a defined benefit scheme, the increase in the present value of the scheme liabilities related to employee service in prior periods arising in the current period as a result of the introduction of, or improvements to, retirement benefits.

Prior Period Adjustments

Those material adjustments applicable to prior years arising from changes in accounting policies or from the correction of fundamental errors. A fundamental error is one that is of

such significance as to destroy the validity of the financial statements. They do not include normal recurring corrections or adjustments of accounting estimates made in prior years.

Projected Unit Method

An accrued benefits valuation method in which the scheme liabilities make allowance for projected earnings. An accrued benefit valuation method is a valuation method in which the scheme liabilities at the valuation date relate to:

- (a) The benefits for pensioners and deferred pensioners (i.e. individuals who have ceased to be active members but are entitled to benefits payable at a later date) and their dependants, allowing where appropriate for future increases; and
- (b) The accrued benefits for members in service on the valuation date.

The accrued benefits are the benefits for service up to a given point in time, whether vested rights or not. Guidance on the projected unit method is given in the Guidance Note GN26 issued by the Faculty and Institute of Actuaries.

Related Parties

Two or more parties are related parties when at any time during the financial period:

- (a) A party has direct or indirect control of the other party; or
- (b) The parties are subject to common control from the same source; or
- (c) One party has influence over the financial and operational policies of the other party to an extent that the other party might be inhibited from pursuing at all times its own separate interests; or
- (d) The parties, in entering a transaction, are subject to influence from the same source to such an extent that one of the parties to the transaction has subordinated its own separate interest.

Examples of related parties of a Council include:

- (a) Central government;
- (b) Local authorities and other bodies precepting or levying demands on the Council Tax;
- (c) Its subsidiary and associated companies;
- (d) Its joint ventures and joint ventures partners;
- (e) Its members
- (f) Its chief officers; and
- (g) Its pension fund.

Examples of related parties of a pension fund include its:

- (a) Administering authority and its related parties
- (b) Scheduled bodies and their related parties; and
- (c) Trustees and advisors

This list is not intended to be comprehensive.

For individuals identified as related parties, the following are also presumed to be related parties:

- (a) Members of the close family, or the same household; and
- (b) Partnerships, companies, trusts or other entities in which the individual, or a member of their close family or the same household, has a controlling interest.

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

- (a) The purchase, sale, lease rental or hire of assets between related parties;
- (b) The provision by a pension fund to a related party of assets or loans, irrespective of any direct economic benefit to the pension fund;
- (c) The provision of a guarantee to a third party in relation to a liability or obligation of a related party;
- (d) The provision of services to a related party, including the provision of pension fund administration services;
- (e) Transactions with individuals who are related parties of the Council or a pension fund, except those applicable to other members of the community or the pension fund, such as council tax, rents and repayments of benefits.

This list is not intended to be comprehensive.

The materiality of related party transactions should be judged not only in terms of their significance to the Council, but also in relation to its related party.

Remuneration

All sums paid to or receivable by an employee and sums due by way of expenses allowances and the money value of any other benefits received other than in cash. Pension contributions payable by the employee are excluded.

Residual Value

The net realisable value of an asset at the end of its useful life. Residual values are based on prices prevailing at the date of acquisition (or revaluation) of the asset and do not take account of expected future prices.

Retirement Benefits

All forms of consideration given by an employer in exchange for services rendered by employees that are payable after completion of employment. Retirement benefits do not include termination benefits payable as a result of either (i) an employer's decision to terminate an employee's employment before the normal retirement date, or (ii) an employee's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for those benefits, because these are not given in exchange for services rendered by employees.

Scheme Liabilities

The liabilities of a defined benefit scheme for outgoings due after the valuation date. Scheme liabilities measured using the projected unit method reflect the benefits that the employer is committed to provide for service up to the valuation date.

Settlement

An irrevocable action that relieves the employee (or the defined benefit scheme) of the primary responsibility for a pension obligation and eliminates significant risks relating to the obligation and the assets used to effect the settlement. Settlements include:

- (a) A lump-sum cash payment to scheme members in exchange for their rights to receive specified pension benefits;
- (b) The purchase of an irrevocable annuity contract sufficient to cover vested benefits; and
- (c) The transfer of scheme assets and liabilities relating to a group of employees leaving the scheme.

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.

Total Cost

The total cost of a service or activity includes all costs which relate to the provision of the service (directly or bought in) or to the undertaking of the activity. Gross total cost includes employee costs, expenditure relating to premises and transport, supplies and services, third party payments, transfer payments, support services and capital charges. This includes an appropriate share of all support services and overheads, which need to be apportioned.

Useful Life

The period over which the Council will derive benefits from the use of a non-current asset.

Vested Rights

In relation to a defined benefit scheme, these are:

- (a) For active members, benefits to which they would unconditionally be entitled on leaving the scheme;
- (b) For deferred pensioners, their preserved benefits;
- (c) For pensioners, pensions to which they are entitled.

Vested rights include where appropriate the related benefits for spouses or other dependants.

The Audit Findings for Halton Borough Council

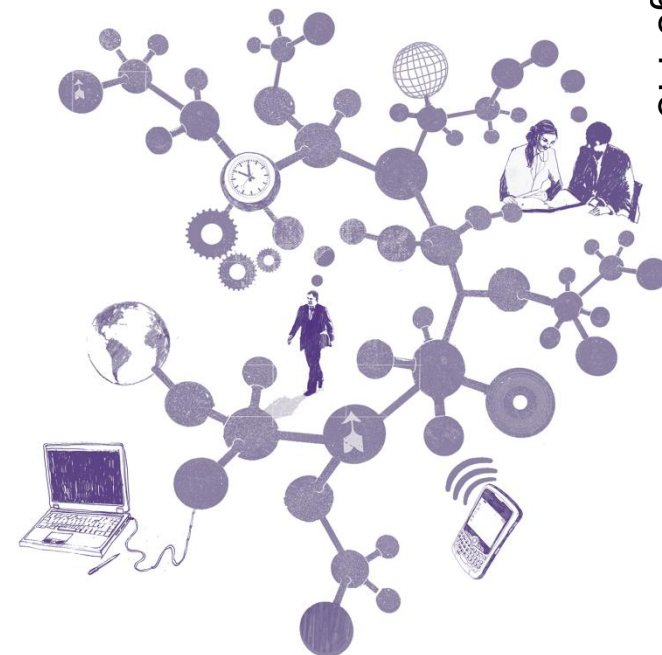
Year ended 31 March 2016

September 2016

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September 2016

Dear Members of the Business Efficiency Board

Audit Findings for Halton Borough Council for the year ending 31 March 2016

This Audit Findings report highlights the key findings arising from the audit for the benefit of those charged with governance (in the case of Halton Borough Council, the Business Efficiency Board), as required by International Standard on Auditing (UK & Ireland) 260, the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice. Its contents have been discussed with officers.

As auditors we are responsible for performing the audit, in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland), which is directed towards forming and expressing an opinion on the financial statements that have been prepared by management with the oversight of those charged with governance. The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or those charged with governance of their responsibilities for the preparation of the financial statements.

The contents of this report relate only to those matters which came to our attention during the conduct of our normal audit procedures which are designed primarily for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements and giving a value for money conclusion. Our audit is not designed to test all internal controls or identify all areas of control weakness. However, where, as part of our testing, we identify any control weaknesses, we will report these to you. In consequence, our work cannot be relied upon to disclose defalcations or other irregularities, or to include all possible improvements in internal control that a more extensive special examination might identify. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned to any third party acting, or refraining from acting on the basis of the content of this report, as this report was not prepared for, nor intended for, any other purpose.

We would like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation for the kind assistance provided by the finance team and other staff during our audit.

Yours sincerely

Mark Heap

Engagement Lead

Chartered Accountants

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Appendices

A Audit opinion

Section 1: Executive summary

01. Executive summary

02. Audit findings

03. Value for Money

04. Other statutory powers and duties

05. Fees, non audit services and independence

06. Communication of audit matters

Purpose of this report

This report highlights the key issues affecting the results of Halton Borough Council ('the Council') and the preparation of the Council's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016. It is also used to report our audit findings to management and those charged with governance in accordance with the requirements of International Standard on Auditing (UK & Ireland) 260, and the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ('the Act').

Under the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'), we are required to report whether, in our opinion, the Council's financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council and its income and expenditure for the year and whether they have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

We are also required to consider other information published together with the audited financial statements, whether it is consistent with the financial statements and in line with required guidance.

We are required to carry out sufficient work to satisfy ourselves as to whether the Council has made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources ('the value for money (VFM) conclusion').

Auditor Guidance Note 7 (AGN07) clarifies our reporting requirements in the Code and the Act. We are required to provide a conclusion whether in all significant respects, the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of its resources for the relevant period.

The Act also details the following additional powers and duties for local government auditors, which we are required to report to you if applied:

- a public interest report if we identify any matter that comes to our attention in the course of the audit that in our opinion should be considered by the Council or brought to the public's attention (section 24 of the Act);

- written recommendations which should be considered by the Council and responded to publicly (section 24 of the Act);
- application to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law (section 28 of the Act);
- issue of an advisory notice (section 29 of the Act); and
- application for judicial review (section 31 of the Act)

We are also required to give electors the opportunity to raise questions about the accounts and consider and decide upon objections received in relation to the accounts under sections 26 and 27 of the Act.

Introduction

In the conduct of our audit we have not had to alter or change our audit approach, which we communicated to you in our Audit Plan dated May 2016.

Our audit is substantially complete although at the time of writing we are finalising our procedures in the following areas:

- a few final items of testing for housing benefit and property, plant and equipment,
- review of the final version of the financial statements
- obtaining and reviewing the management letter of representation
- updating our post balance sheet events review, to the date of signing the opinion.

We received draft financial statements and accompanying working papers in accordance with the agreed timetable.

Key audit and financial reporting issues

Financial statements opinion

We have identified one adjustment affecting the Council's reported financial position (details are recorded in section two of this report). The draft financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2016 recorded net expenditure of £119,051k; the audited financial statements show net expenditure of £119,756k. This change is primarily driven by a change made to the cash balance in relation to a school which transferred to academy status, but the cash relating to the school was not written out of the accounts.

Overall the financial statements were well presented and officers responded in a timely manner to our requests for information and queries.

We anticipate providing a unqualified audit opinion in respect of the financial statements (see Appendix A).

Other financial statement responsibilities

As well as an opinion on the financial statements, we are required to give an opinion on whether other information published together with the audited financial statements is consistent with the financial statements. This includes:

- if the Annual Governance Statement does not meet the disclosure requirements set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance or is misleading or inconsistent with the information of which we are aware from our audit.

We have nothing to report in respect of the Annual Governance Statement.

Controls

Roles and responsibilities

The Council's management is responsible for the identification, assessment, management and monitoring of risk, and for developing, operating and monitoring the system of internal control.

Our audit is not designed to test all internal controls or identify all areas of control weakness. However, where, as part of our testing, we identify any control weaknesses, we report these to the Council.

Findings

Our work has not identified any control weaknesses which we wish to highlight for your attention.

Value for Money

Based on our review, we are satisfied that, in all significant respects, the Council had proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Further detail of our work on Value for Money are set out in section three of this report.

Other statutory powers and duties

We have not identified any issues that have required us to apply our statutory powers and duties under the Act.

Grant certification

In addition to our responsibilities under the Code, we are required to certify the Council's Housing Benefit subsidy claim on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions. At present our work on this claim is in progress and is not due to be finalised until 30 November 2016. We will report the outcome of this certification work through a separate report to the Business and Efficiency Board once the work is complete.

The way forward

Matters arising from the financial statements audit and our review of the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources have been discussed with the Operational Director – Finance.

Acknowledgement

We would like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation for the assistance provided by the finance team and other staff during our audit.

Grant Thornton UK LLP
September 2016

Section 2: Audit findings

- 01. Executive summary
- 02. Audit findings**
- 03. Value for Money
- 04. Other statutory powers and duties
- 05. Fees, non audit services and independence
- 06. Communication of audit matters

Materiality

In performing our audit, we apply the concept of materiality, following the requirements of International Standard on Auditing (UK & Ireland) (ISA) 320: Materiality in planning and performing an audit. The standard states that 'misstatements, including omissions, are considered to be material if they, individually or in the aggregate, could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements'.

As we reported in our audit plan, we determined overall materiality to be £6,173k (being 1.8% of gross revenue expenditure). We have considered whether this level remained appropriate during the course of the audit and have made no changes to our overall materiality

We also set an amount below which misstatements would be clearly trivial and would not need to be accumulated or reported to those charged with governance because we would not expect that the accumulated effect of such amounts would have a material impact on the financial statements. We have defined the amount below which misstatements would be clearly trivial to be £300k. This remains the same as reported in our audit plan.

As we reported in our audit plan, we identified the following items where we decided that separate materiality levels were appropriate. These remain the same as reported in our audit plan.

Balance/transaction/disclosure	Explanation	Materiality level
Disclosures of officers' remuneration, salary bandings and exit packages in notes to the statements	Due to public interest in these disclosures and the statutory requirement for them to be made.	We will ensure these disclosures are correctly disclosed subject to rounding and banding classification
Disclosure of auditors' remuneration in notes to the statements	Due to public interest in these disclosures and the statutory requirement for them to be made.	We will ensure this is correctly stated, subject to rounding.
Related Party Transactions	Due to public interest in these disclosures.	We will determine materiality taking account of the size of the third party.

Audit findings against significant risks

"Significant risks often relate to significant non-routine transactions and judgmental matters. Non-routine transactions are transactions that are unusual, either due to size or nature, and that therefore occur infrequently. Judgmental matters may include the development of accounting estimates for which there is significant measurement uncertainty" (ISA (UK&I) 315).

In this section we detail our response to the significant risks of material misstatement which we identified in the Audit Plan. As we noted in our plan, there are two presumed significant risks which are applicable to all audits under auditing standards.

	Risks identified in our audit plan	Work completed	Assurance gained and issues arising
1.	<p>The revenue cycle includes fraudulent transactions</p> <p>Under ISA 240 there is a presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to the improper recognition of revenue.</p> <p>This presumption can be rebutted if the auditor concludes that there is no risk of material misstatement due to fraud relating to revenue recognition.</p> <p>For this Council, we have concluded that the greatest risk of material misstatement relates to the occurrence/existence of other income and receivables.</p>	<p>Having considered the risk factors set out in ISA240 and the nature of the revenue streams at Halton Borough Council, we have determined that the risk of fraud arising from revenue recognition for income can be rebutted, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is little incentive to manipulate revenue recognition • opportunities to manipulate revenue recognition are very limited • the culture and ethical frameworks of local authorities, including Halton Borough Council, mean that all forms of fraud are seen as unacceptable. <p>We consider the risk for revenue recognition relates to occurrence/existence of expenditure and payables.</p> <p>As part of our audit work we have completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and documentation of the processes and controls in place around expenditure at the Council • Testing of journal entries, control environment review and walkthrough • Testing of non pay expenditure as set out within 'Operating Expenses' on page 12 • Review of unusual significant transactions 	<p>Our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of revenue recognition.</p>

Audit findings against significant risks

	Risks identified in our audit plan	Work completed	Assurance gained and issues arising
2.	<p>Management over-ride of controls</p> <p>Under ISA (UK&I) 240 it is presumed that the risk of management over-ride of controls is present in all entities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing of journal entries • Review of accounting estimates, judgments and decisions made by management • Review of unusual significant transactions 	<p>Our audit work has not identified any evidence of management over-ride of controls. In particular the findings of our review of journal controls and testing of journal entries has not identified any significant issues.</p> <p>We set out later in this section of the report our work and findings on key accounting estimates and judgements.</p>
3	<p>Valuation of pension fund net liability</p> <p>The Council's pension fund asset and liability as reflected in its balance sheet represent significant estimates in the financial statements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the controls put in place by management to ensure that the pension fund liability is not materially misstated. Assessment of whether these controls were implemented as expected and whether they are sufficient to mitigate the risk of material misstatement. • Review of the competence, expertise and objectivity of the actuary who carried out your pension fund valuation. Gained an understanding of the basis on which the valuation is carried out. • Undertook procedures to confirm the reasonableness of the actuarial assumptions made. • Reviewed the consistency of the pension fund asset and liability and disclosures in notes to the financial statements with the actuarial report from your actuary. 	<p>Our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of revenue recognition.</p>

Audit findings against other risks

In this section we detail our response to the other risks of material misstatement which we identified in the Audit Plan.

Transaction cycle	Description of risk	Work completed	Assurance gained & issues arising
Operating expenses	Creditors understated or not recorded in the correct period (Operating expenses understated)	<p>We have undertaken the following work in relation to this risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and documentation of the processes and controls in place around operating expenditure at the Council • Walkthrough of a sample item to confirm our understanding • Substantive testing of a sample of non-pay expenditure • Reconciliation of accounts payable systems to general ledger and financial statements • Review of accruals process and substantive testing of a sample of manual accruals and creditor balances • Sample testing of payments around the year-end • Review and testing of other items of expenditure and disclosures including Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and members' allowances 	Our audit work has not identified any significant issues in relation to the risk identified.

Audit findings against other risks

In this section we detail our response to the other risks of material misstatement which we identified in the Audit Plan.

Transaction cycle	Description of risk	Work completed	Assurance gained & issues arising
Employee remuneration	Employee remuneration accruals understated (Remuneration expenses not correct)	We have undertaken the following work in relation to this risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and documentation of the processes and controls in place around employee remuneration at the Council • Walkthrough of a sample item to confirm our understanding • Substantive testing of a sample of payroll transactions • Reconciliation of payroll data to general ledger and financial statements • Substantive analytical review of payroll costs for the year • Substantive testing of senior officer remuneration disclosures • Review and testing of other pay disclosures including exit packages notes 	Our audit work has not identified any significant issues in relation to the risk identified.

Audit findings against other risks

In this section we detail our response to the other risks of material misstatement which we identified in the Audit Plan.

Transaction cycle	Description of risk	Work completed	Assurance gained & issues arising
Welfare benefit	Welfare benefit expenditure improperly computed	<p>We have undertaken the following work in relation to this risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and documentation of the processes and controls in place around welfare benefit payments at the Council • Walkthrough of a sample item to confirm our understanding • Substantive testing of claimant eligibility for a sample of welfare benefit payments • Reconciliation between Northgate welfare benefits system, the general ledger and the financial statements and supporting notes • Additional substantive testing on selected welfare benefit sample • Testing of Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim using the Audit Commission HB COUNT approach. 	Our audit work has not identified any significant issues in relation to the risk identified.



Audit findings against other risks

In this section we detail our response to the other risks of material misstatement which we identified in the Audit Plan.

Transaction cycle	Description of risk	Work completed	Assurance gained & issues arising
<p>Valuation of property, plant and equipment</p>	<p>The Council revalues its assets on a rolling basis over a five year period. The Code requires that the Council ensures that the carrying value at the balance sheet date is not materially different from current value. This represents a significant estimate by management in the financial statements.</p>	<p>We have undertaken the following work in relation to this risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of management's processes and assumptions for the calculation of the estimate. • Review of the competence, expertise and objectivity of any management experts used. • Review of the instructions issued to valuation experts and the scope of their work • Discussions with the valuer about the basis on which the valuation is carried out and challenge of the key assumptions. • Review and challenge of the information used by the valuer to ensure it is robust and consistent with our understanding. • Testing of revaluations made during the year to ensure they are input correctly into the Council's asset register • Evaluation of the assumptions made by management for those assets not revalued during the year and how management has satisfied themselves that these are not materially different to current value.. 	<p>Our audit work has not identified any significant issues in relation to the risk identified.</p>

Accounting policies, estimates and judgements

In this section we report on our consideration of accounting policies, in particular revenue recognition policies, and key estimates and judgements made and included with the Council's financial statements.

Accounting area	Summary of policy	Comments	Assessment
<p>Revenue recognition</p>	<p>The Council's accounting policy for income is as follows:</p> <p>Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when the Council transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership to the purchaser and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council. Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the Council can measure reliably the percentage of completion of the transaction and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council.</p>	<p>The Council's accounting policy is in line with the requirements of the CIPFA code and is adequately disclosed in the accounts.</p> <p>Our testing of income, grants income and debtors confirmed that the Council is recognising income in line with its accounting policy.</p>	
<p>Judgements and estimates</p>	<p>Key estimates and judgements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Useful life of Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) – Revaluations – Impairments – Accruals – Valuation of pension fund net liability – Provision for National Non Domestic Rates (NDR) appeals 	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewed the estimates and judgements made in the accounts as part of our work with no matters arising • sample tested valuations undertaken in the year to confirm they are appropriately included in the statement of accounts • reviewed the calculation of your provision for business rate appeals • reviewed assumptions and information in relation to the pension fund liability to assess reasonableness and check the liability figures are accurately reflected in the accounts. <p>No issues were identified from our work on the above.</p>	



Assessment

● Marginal accounting policy which could potentially attract attention from regulators
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● Accounting policy appropriate but scope for improved disclosure

● Accounting policy appropriate and disclosures sufficient

Accounting policies, estimates and judgements continued

Accounting area	Summary of policy	Comments	Assessment
Going concern	The Operational Director - Finance has a reasonable expectation that the services provided by the Council will continue for the foreseeable future. Members concur with this view. For this reason, the Council continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.	We have reviewed the Council's assessment and are satisfied with management's assessment that the going concern basis is appropriate for the 2015/16 financial statements.	
Other accounting policies		We have reviewed the Council's policies against the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice. The Council's accounting policies are appropriate and consistent with previous years and with Code requirements.	

Assessment

● Marginal accounting policy which could potentially attract attention from regulators
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● Accounting policy appropriate but scope for improved disclosure

● Accounting policy appropriate and disclosures sufficient

Other communication requirements

We set out below details of other matters which we, as auditors, are required by auditing standards and the Code to communicate to those charged with governance.

	Issue	Commentary
1.	Matters in relation to fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have previously discussed the risk of fraud with the Audit and Governance Committee. We have not been made aware of any incidents in the period. No other issues have been identified during the course of our audit procedures.
2.	Matters in relation to related parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the work we carried out, we have not identified any related party transactions which have not been disclosed
3.	Matters in relation to laws and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have not made us aware of any significant incidences of non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations and we have not identified any incidences from our audit work.
4.	Written representations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A standard letter of representation has been requested from the Council.
5.	Confirmation requests from third parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have previously requested from management permission to send confirmation requests to your bank and those bodies with which you hold investments. We received your bank letter and external confirmation for most of your investments. For those investments where external confirmations were not received we undertook alternative procedures, including agreeing the amounts to records held by the Council.
6.	Disclosures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Page 22 sets out the disclosure issues we have identified.

Other communication requirements continued

	Issue	Commentary
7.	Matters on which we report by exception	<p>We have not identified any issues where we would be required to report by exception in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the Annual Governance Statement does not meet the disclosure requirements set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance or is misleading or inconsistent with the information of which we are aware from our audit. • The information in the Narrative Report is materially inconsistent with the information in the audited financial statements or our knowledge of the Council acquired in the course of performing our audit, or otherwise misleading.
8.	Specified procedures for Whole of Government Accounts	<p>We are required to carry out specified procedures (on behalf of the NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) consolidation pack under WGA group audit instructions. This work is not required at the Council because the Council does not exceed the threshold set for the completion of the work.</p>

Adjusted misstatements

One adjustment to the draft accounts was identified during the audit process. We are required to report all non trivial misstatements to those charged with governance, whether or not the accounts have been adjusted by management. The table below sets out the adjustment arising from the audit which have been processed by management.

Impact of adjusted misstatements

All adjusted misstatements are set out in detail below along with the impact on the key statements and the reported net expenditure for the year.

Detail	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement £'000	Balance Sheet £'000	Impact on total net expenditure £000
1 We identified a school that had transferred to academy status in 2014-15 but for which the related cash balance of £704k was still included in the Council's accounts. This meant the Council's cash balance was over stated by £704k.	704	(704)	704
Overall impact	£704	£(704)	£704

Unadjusted misstatements

The table below provides details of adjustments identified during the audit which have not been made within the final set of financial statements. The [ABC] Committee is required to approve management's proposed treatment of all items recorded within the table below:

Detail	Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement £'000	Balance Sheet £'000	Reason for not adjusting
1 We identified that within the workings for the Cash Flow Statement there is a balancing figure of £879k. Officers have reviewed their workings to try and establish the reason for this but at this stage are unable to identify what the balancing figure may relate to. Officers have undertaken to keep this under review and to try to resolve it in the 2016/17 accounts. This does not impact on the Balance Sheet or the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.	N/A	N/A	Unable to pinpoint the reason for the balancing figure at this time.
2 As part of our review of Assets Held for Sale we identified that the closing balance for 2015/16 was understated by £801k. This is because the valuation of properties at Johnson's Lane was not updated for the latest valuation by Property Services. Assets Held for Sale on the Balance Sheet and in Note 20 is understated by £801k. Officers have undertaken to adjust this in the 2016/17 accounts.	N/A	801 (801)	To be adjusted in 2016/17.
Overall impact	£0	£0	

Misclassifications and disclosure changes

The table below provides details of misclassification and disclosure changes identified during the audit which have been made in the final set of financial statements.

Adjustment type	Value £'000	Account balance	Impact on the financial statements
1 Misclassification	1,856	N/A	Movement in Reserves Statement - review of Movement in Reserves Statement entries highlighted a reserve movement of £1,856k incorrectly included in 'Revaluation losses on PPE' rather than 'Amounts of Non-Current Assets Written Off on Disposal'. This is a misclassification and does not impact on the accounts overall. The misclassification has now been corrected.
2 Disclosure	378	11,846	Note 25 – Leases – the value of future operating lease rentals is understated by £378k because the most recent rental valuation for a property had not been used. This only impacts on the figures within this note and does not impact on the accounts overall. The figure has been corrected.
2 Disclosure	2,394	33,939	Note 30 – Financial Instruments – an amount of £2,394k was incorrectly included in the figure for Financial Liabilities at amortised cost within note 30. It should have been excluded as it relates to a statutory transaction which should not be included within financial instruments. This only impacts on the figures within this note and does not impact on the accounts overall. The figure has been corrected to exclude this amount.

Misclassifications and disclosure changes

The table below provides details of misclassification and disclosure changes identified during the audit which have been made in the final set of financial statements.

Adjustment type	Value £'000	Account balance	Impact on the financial statements
4 Disclosure	10,241	33,939	Note 30 – Financial Instruments – an amount of £10,241k was incorrectly included in the figure for Financial Liabilities at amortised cost within note 30. It should have been excluded as it relates to receipts in advance which should not be included within financial instruments. This only impacts on the figures within this note and does not impact on the accounts overall. The figure has been corrected to exclude this amount.
5 Disclosure	3,205	16,241	Note 30 – Financial Instruments – an amount of £3,205k was incorrectly included in the figure for loans and receivables within note 30. It should have been excluded as it relates to prepayments which should not be included within financial instruments. This only impacts on the figures within this note and does not impact on the accounts overall. The figure has been corrected to exclude this amount.
6 Misclassification	5,000	49,603	Note 30 – Financial Instruments – the maturity analysis misclassified an amount of £5,000k in relation to a loan as being due in less than 1 year when in fact it is a long term loan. This only impacts on the figures within this note and does not impact on the accounts overall. The figures have been corrected.

Section 3: Value for Money

01. Executive summary

02. Audit findings

03. Value for Money

04. Other statutory powers and duties

05. Fees, non-audit services and independence

06. Communication of audit matters

Background

We are required by section 21 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act) and the NAO Code of Audit Practice (the Code) to satisfy ourselves that the Council has put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. This is known as the Value for Money (VFM) conclusion.

We are required to carry out sufficient work to satisfy ourselves that proper arrangements are in place at the Council. The Act and NAO guidance state that for local government bodies, auditors are required to give a conclusion on whether the Council has put proper arrangements in place.

In carrying out this work, we are required to follow the NAO's Auditor Guidance Note 3 (AGN 03) issued in November 2015. AGN 03 identifies one single criterion for auditors to evaluate:

In all significant respects, the audited body had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.

AGN03 provides examples of proper arrangements against three sub-criteria but specifically states that these are not separate criteria for assessment purposes and that auditors are not required to reach a distinct judgement against each of these.

Risk assessment

We carried out an initial risk assessment in April 2016 and identified the following significant risks, which we communicated to you in our Audit Plan dated May 2016. Our findings in relation to these risks are set out on page 27.

Risks identified in our initial risk assessment:

Financial outlook

The council does not have a history of financial difficulty but the position is beginning to become more challenging. Initially a budget gap of £16m was identified for 16-17. This has now been addressed and savings and efficiencies identified but there remain budget gaps for the following three years.

Ofsted inspection of children's services

The most recent Ofsted report on children's services looked at a number of areas. The overall judgement was that children's services require improvement. This related to children who need help and protection, and leadership, management and governance. The Council did get a score of 'good' for children looked after and achieving permanence (both for adoption performance and experiences and progress of care leavers). Although the main risk would be if the mark was 'inadequate' we still need assurance the Council is addressing the recommendations as this is a high profile area.

Our assessment of the evidence and our actual findings in respect of these two potential risks is given on page 27 under Key Findings.

We identified risks in respect of specific areas of proper arrangements using the guidance contained in AGN03. We have continued our review of relevant documents up to the date of giving our report, and have not identified any further significant risks where we need to perform further work.

We carried out further work only in respect of the significant risks we identified from our initial and ongoing risk assessment. Where our consideration of the significant risks determined that arrangements were not operating effectively, we have used the examples of proper arrangements from AGN 03 to explain the gaps in proper arrangements that we have reported in our VFM conclusion.

Significant qualitative aspects

AGN 03 requires us to disclose our views on significant qualitative aspects of the Council's arrangements for delivering economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

We have focused our work on the significant risks that we identified in the Council's arrangements. In arriving at our conclusion, our main considerations were:

- a review of the budget outturn for 2015-16 and the consideration of any issue which may impact on Council finances in the near future
- review of the action plan to address the recommendations made by Ofsted and the arrangements to monitor progress against the action plan
- a review of key documents and discussion of issues with key officers.

We have set out more detail on the risks we identified, the results of the work we performed and the conclusions we drew from this work later in this section.

Overall conclusion

Based on the work we performed to address the significant risks, we concluded that:

- the Council had proper arrangements in all significant respects to ensure it delivered value for money in its use of resources. The text of our report, which confirms this can be found at Appendix A.

Key findings

We set out below our key findings against the significant risks we identified through our initial risk assessment and further risks identified through our ongoing review of documents.

Significant risk	Work to address	Findings and conclusions
<p>Financial outlook The Council does not have a history of financial difficulty but the position is beginning to become more challenging. Initially a budget gap of £16m was identified for 2016/17. This has now been addressed and savings and efficiencies identified but there remain budget gaps for the following three years.</p>	<p>Review of the budget setting process for 2015/16 and how the outturn was monitored through the year.</p> <p>Review of the medium term financial plan.</p> <p>Review of savings proposals for 2016/17.</p> <p>Review of proposals for fees and charges.</p>	<p>The Council has managed its finances carefully through 2015/16 in order to produce a positive year end outturn. It has continued this approach into 2016/17 so that the savings required to deliver a balanced budget are being monitored as the year progresses. This will need to continue through the remainder of the year in order to ensure that planned savings are being delivered or that appropriate action is taken to address any slippage, in order to achieve the budgeted outturn in 2016/17.</p> <p>The Council continues to forecast that it will face significant financial challenges in the period to 2019/20. The latest update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy continues to predict a gap of £17.5m for 2017/18, £9.2m for 2018/19 and £8m for 2019/20. The Council is now working to identify further savings and efficiencies to address the gaps.</p> <p>On that basis we concluded that the risk was sufficiently mitigated and the Council has proper arrangements in place.</p>
<p>Ofsted inspection of children's services The most recent Ofsted report on children's services looked at a number of areas. The overall judgement was that children's services require improvement. This related to children who need help and protection, and leadership, management and governance. The Council did get a score of 'good' for children looked after and achieving permanence (both for adoption performance and experiences and progress of care leavers). Although the main risk would be if the mark was 'inadequate' we still need assurance that the Council is addressing the recommendations as this is a high profile area.</p>	<p>Review of action plan and monitoring reports showing progress against the action plan.</p> <p>Review of work with partner and community organisations to improve Children's Services via minutes of meetings - for example the Investing in Children and Young People Board and review of the Children in Care Council (CICC) - Halton - work plan.</p> <p>Review audits undertaken internally to monitor progress.</p>	<p>The Council put into place an action plan to address the recommendations made by Ofsted and have monitored progress against these actions throughout the time since the Ofsted report.</p> <p>There are also regular performance reports produced to aid in monitoring the overall performance of Children's Services and a specific business plan for Children's Services has been put into place to ensure that the service improves and meet requirements going forward.</p> <p>Overall the Council has responded to the 'Requires Improvement' OFSTED report appropriately. The service was assessed as 'Requires Improvement' rather than 'inadequate' and was 'good' in some of the categories, so we have assessed whether the Council has the arrangements in place to address the improvements required. The Council has put into place appropriate action plans which are monitored at a strategic and operational level and are working in partnership with other agencies and with local children themselves to improve.</p>

Significant difficulties in undertaking our work

We did not identify any significant difficulties in undertaking our work on your arrangements which we wish to draw to your attention.

Significant matters discussed with management

There were no matters where no other evidence was available or matters of such significance to our conclusion or that we required written representation from management or those charged with governance.

Any other matters

There were no other matters from our work which were significant to our consideration of your arrangements to secure value for money in your use of resources.

Section 4: Fees, non-audit services and independence

01. Executive summary

02. Audit findings

03. Value for Money

04. Fees, non audit services and independence

05. Communication of audit matters

We confirm below our final fees charged for the audit and provision of non-audit services.

Fees

	Proposed fee £	Final fee £
Council audit	105,924	105,924
Grant certification	6,828	TBC
Total audit fees (excluding VAT)	112,752	TBC

The proposed fees for the year were in line with the scale fee set by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA).

Grant certification

Our fees for grant certification cover only housing benefit subsidy certification, which falls under the remit of Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Fees in respect of other grant work, such as reasonable assurance reports, are shown under 'Fees for other services'.

Fees for other services

Service	Fees £
Audit related services:	
• Teacher's Pension grant claim *	3,750
• Homes and Communities Agency **	TBC
• Mersey Gateway **	TBC
Non-audit services	
Vat reviews	10,375

* Teacher's Pension grant claim – fee agreed, work still to be undertaken.

** Work programme and fee to be agreed.

Independence and ethics

We confirm that there are no significant facts or matters that impact on our independence as auditors that we are required or wish to draw to your attention. We have complied with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards and therefore we confirm that we are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements.

We confirm that we have implemented policies and procedures to meet the requirements of the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards.

Section 5: Communication of audit matters

01. Executive summary

02. Audit findings

03. Value for Money

04. Other statutory powers and duties

05. Communication of audit matters

Communication to those charged with governance

International Standards on Auditing ISA (UK&I) 260, as well as other ISAs, prescribe matters which we are required to communicate with those charged with governance, and which we set out in the table opposite.

The Audit Plan outlined our audit strategy and plan to deliver the audit, while this Audit Findings report presents the key issues and other matters arising from the audit, together with an explanation as to how these have been resolved.

Respective responsibilities

The Audit Findings Report has been prepared in the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (<http://www.psa.co.uk/appointing-auditors/terms-of-appointment/>)

We have been appointed as the Council's independent external auditors by the Audit Commission, the body responsible for appointing external auditors to local public bodies in England at the time of our appointment. As external auditors, we have a broad remit covering finance and governance matters.

Our annual work programme is set in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice ('the Code') issued by the NAO (<https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/about-code/>). Our work considers the Council's key risks when reaching our conclusions under the Code.

It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that proper arrangements are in place for the conduct of its business, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. We have considered how the Council is fulfilling these responsibilities.

Our communication plan	Audit Plan	Audit Findings
Respective responsibilities of auditor and management/those charged with governance	✓	
Overview of the planned scope and timing of the audit. Form, timing and expected general content of communications	✓	
Views about the qualitative aspects of the entity's accounting and financial reporting practices, significant matters and issues arising during the audit and written representations that have been sought		✓
Confirmation of independence and objectivity	✓	✓
A statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, relationships and other matters which might be thought to bear on independence.	✓	✓
Details of non-audit work performed by Grant Thornton UK LLP and network firms, together with fees charged		
Details of safeguards applied to threats to independence		
Material weaknesses in internal control identified during the audit		✓
Identification or suspicion of fraud involving management and/or others which results in material misstatement of the financial statements		✓
Non compliance with laws and regulations		✓
Expected modifications to auditor's report		✓
Uncorrected misstatements		✓
Significant matters arising in connection with related parties		✓
Significant matters in relation to going concern		✓

Appendices

Appendix A: Audit opinion

We anticipate we will provide the Council with an unmodified audit report or amend as appropriate

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

We have audited the financial statements of Halton Borough Council (the "Authority") for the year ended 31 March 2016 under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the "Act"). The financial statements comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, the Collection Fund and the related notes. 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 2015/16.

This report is made solely to the members of the Authority, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Act and as set out in paragraph 43 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the members 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.

Respective responsibilities of the Operational Director - Finance and auditor

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Operational Director - Finance Responsibilities, the Operational Director - Finance 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 2015/16, which give a true and fair view. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Authority's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Operational Director - Finance; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the Narrative Report and the Annual Governance Statement to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

Opinion on financial statements

In our opinion the financial statements:

- present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2016 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2015/16 and applicable law.

Opinion on other matters

In our opinion, the other information published together with the audited financial statements in the Narrative Report and the Annual Governance Statement is consistent with the audited financial statements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We are required to report to you if:

- in our opinion the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with the guidance included in 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: a Framework' published by CIPFA/SOLACE in June 2007; or
- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Act; or
- we make a written recommendation to the Authority under section 24 of the Act; or
- we exercise any other special powers of the auditor under the Act.

We have nothing to report in these respects.

Conclusion on the Authority's arrangements to secure value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of its resources

Respective responsibilities of the Authority and auditor

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

We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Act 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,

Scope of the review of the Authority's arrangements to secure value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of its resources

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice prepared by the Comptroller and Auditor General as required by the Act (the "Code"), having regard to the guidance on the specified criteria issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in November 2015, as to whether the Authority had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly

informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people. The Comptroller and Auditor General determined these criteria as those necessary for us to consider under the Code in satisfying ourselves whether the Authority put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money through the economic, efficient and effective use of its resources for the year ended 31 March 2016.

We planned our work in accordance with the Code. Based on our risk assessment, we undertook such work as we considered necessary to form a view on whether in all significant respects the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of its resources.

Conclusion

On the basis of our work, having regard to the guidance on the specified criteria issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in November 2015, we are satisfied that in all significant respects *the Authority* has put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of its resources for the year ended 31 March 2016.

Certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of the accounts of the Authority in accordance with the requirements of the Act and the Code.

Mark Heap
for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Appointed Auditor

4 Hardman Square
Spinningfields
Manchester
M3 3EB

Date to be confirmed (2016)



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